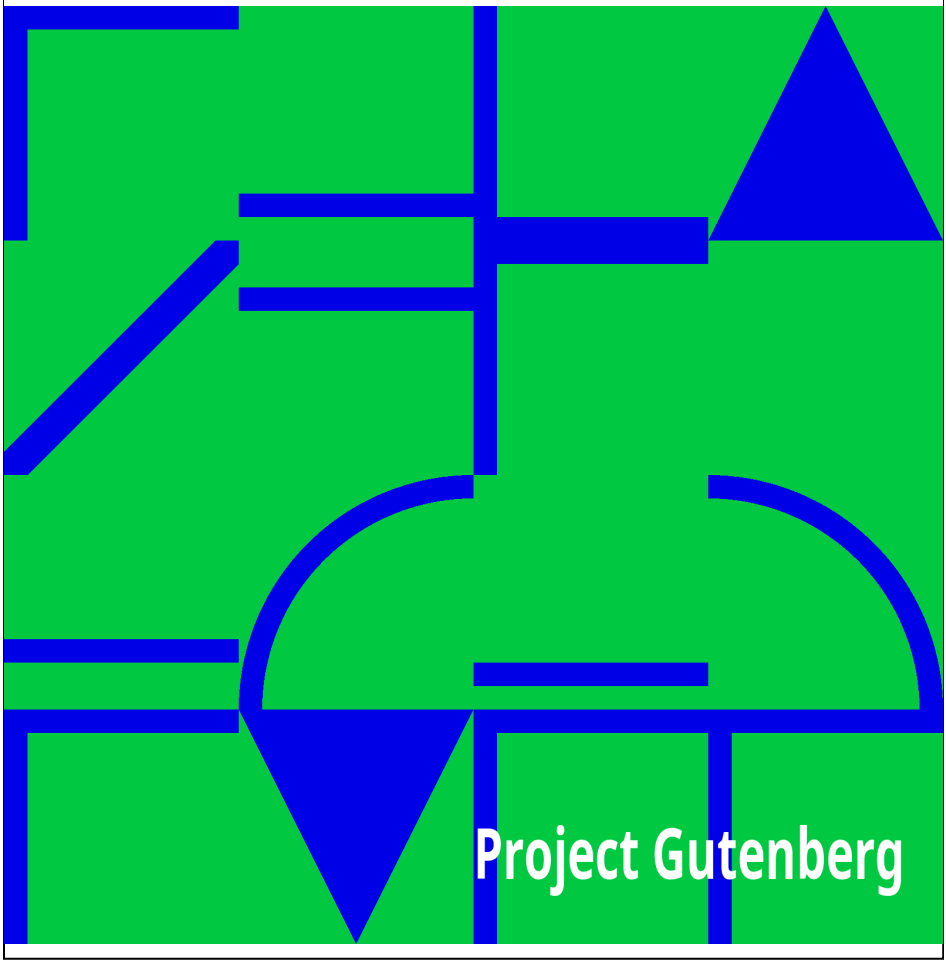
Orlando Furioso

Lodovico Ariosto



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Orlando Furioso

("Orlando Enraged")

By

Ludovico Ariosto

(1474-1533)

Translated by William Stewart Rose

This electronic edition was edited, proofed, and prepared by Douglas B. Killings (DeTroyes@AOL.COM), July, 1995. Additional corrections made September, 1995.

NOTE: Please let the preparer know of any textual errors that you find; this edition has been proofed once, but I am finding additional errors all the time.

INTRODUCTION:

This work is a continuation of the "Orlando Innamorato" of Matteo Maria Boiardo, which was left unfinished upon the author's death in 1494. It begins more or less at the point where Boiardo left it.

This is a brief synopsis of Boiardo's work, omitting most of the numerous digressions and incidental episodes associated with these events:

To the court of King Charlemagne comes Angelica (daughter to the king of Cathay, or India) and her brother Argalia. Angelica is the most beautiful woman any of the Peers have ever seen, and all want her. However, in order to take her as wife they must first defeat Argalia in combat. The two most stricken by her are Orlando and Ranaldo ("Rinaldo" in Rose).

When Argalia falls to the heathen knight Ferrau, Angelica flees — with Orlando and Ranaldo in hot pursuit. Along the way, both Angelica and Ranaldo drink magic waters — Angelica is filled with a burning love for Ranaldo, but Ranaldo is now indifferent.

Eventually, Orlando and Ranaldo arrive at Angelica's castle. Others also gather at Angelica's castle, including Agricane, King of Tartary; Sacripant, King of Circassia; Agramante, King of Africa and Marfisa ("Marphisa" in Rose), an Asian warrior-Queen. Except for Orlando and Ranaldo, all are heathen.

Meanwhile, France is threatened by heathen invaders. Led by King Gradasso of Sericana (whose principal reason for going to war is to obtain Orlando's sword, Durindana) and King Rodomonte of Sarzia, a Holy War between Pagans and Christians ensues.

Ranaldo leaves Angelica's castle, and Angelica and a very love-sick (but very chaste and proper) Orlando, set out for France in search of him. Again the same waters as before are drunk from, but this time in reverse — Ranaldo now burns for Angelica, but Angelica is now indifferent. Ranaldo and Orlando now begin to fight over her, but King Charlemagne

(fearing the consequences if his two best knights kill each other in combat) intervenes and promises Angelica to whichever of the two fights the best against the heathen; he leaves her in the care of Duke Namus. Orlando and Ranaldo arrive in Paris just in time to repulse an attack by Agramante.

Namus' camp is overrun by the heathen. Angelica escapes, with Ranaldo in pursuit. Also in pursuit is Ferrau, who (because he had defeated Argalia) considers Angelica his. It is at this point that the poem breaks off.

While the Orlando-Ranaldo-Angelica triangle is going on, the stories of other knights and their loves are mixed in. Most important of these is that of the female knight Bradamante (sister of Ranaldo), who falls in love with a very noble heathen knight named Ruggiero ("Rogero" in Rose). Ruggiero, who is said to be a descendent of Alexander the Great and Hector, also falls in love with Bradamante, but because they are fighting on opposite sides it is felt that their love is hopeless. Nevertheless, it is prophecised that they shall wed and found the famous Este line, who shall rise to become one of the major families of Medieval and Renaissance Italy (it is worth noting that the Estes where the patrons of both Boiardo and Ariosto). Opposed to this prophecy is Atlantes, an African wizard who seeks to derail fate and keep Ruggiero from becoming a Christian. By the end of the poem, Ruggiero is imprisoned in Atlantes' castle. However, Bradamante (who has decided to follow her heart) is in pursuit of her love, and is not too far away. It is the Bradamante-Ruggiero story that eventually takes center stage in Ariosto's work.

Other characters of importance: Astolfo, a Peer and friend of Orlando, who is kidnaped by the evil witch Morgana and her sister Alcina; Mandricardo, a fierce but hot-headed heathen; and a young knight named Brandimarte, who falls in love with (and wins the heart of) the beautiful Fiordelisa ("Flordelice" in Rose). All play major or semi-major roles in the events of Ariosto's poem.

—DBK

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CANTO 1

ARGUMENT
Angelica, whom pressing danger frights,
Flies in disorder through the greenwood shade.
Rinaldo's horse escapes: he, following, fights
Ferrau, the Spaniard, in a forest glade.
A second oath the haughty paynim plights,
And keeps it better than the first he made.
King Sacripant regains his long-lost treasure;
But good Rinaldo mars his promised pleasure.

I
OF LOVES and LADIES, KNIGHTS and ARMS, I sing,
Of COURTESIES, and many a DARING FEAT;
And from those ancient days my story bring,
When Moors from Afric passed in hostile fleet,
And ravaged France, with Agramant their king,
Flushed with his youthful rage and furious heat,
Who on king Charles', the Roman emperor's head
Had vowed due vengeance for Troyano dead.

II
In the same strain of Roland will I tell
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,
On whom strange madness and rank fury fell,
A man esteemed so wise in former time;
If she, who to like cruel pass has well
Nigh brought my feeble wit which fain would climb
And hourly wastes my sense, concede me skill
And strength my daring promise to fulfil.

III
Good seed of Hercules, give ear and deign,
Thou that this age's grace and splendour art,
Hippolitus, to smile upon his pain
Who tenders what he has with humble heart.
For though all hope to quit the score were vain,
My pen and pages may pay the debt in part;
Then, with no jealous eye my offering scan,
Nor scorn my gifts who give thee all I can.

IV
And me, amid the worthiest shalt thou hear,
Whom I with fitting praise prepare to grace,
Record the good Rogero, valiant peer,
The ancient root of thine illustrious race.
Of him, if thou wilt lend a willing ear,
The worth and warlike feats I shall retrace;
So thou thy graver cares some little time
Postponing, lend thy leisure to my rhyme.

V
Roland, who long the lady of Catay,
Angelica, had loved, and with his brand
Raised countless trophies to that damsel gay,
In India, Median, and Tartarian land,
Westward with her had measured back his way;
Where, nigh the Pyrenees, with many a band
Of Germany and France, King Charlemagne
Had camped his faithful host upon the plain.

VI
To make King Agramant, for penance, smite
His cheek, and rash Marsilius rue the hour;
This, when all trained with lance and sword to fight,
He led from Africa to swell his power;
That other when he pushed, in fell despite,

Against the realm of France Spain's martial flower.
'Twas thus Orlando came where Charles was tented
In evil hour, and soon the deed repented.

VII
For here was seized his dame of peerless charms,
(How often human judgment wanders wide)!
Whom in long warfare he had kept from harms,
From western climes to eastern shores her guide
In his own land, 'mid friends and kindred arms,
Now without contest severed from his side.
Fearing the mischief kindled by her eyes,
From him the prudent emperor reft the prize.

VIII
For bold Orlando and his cousin, free
Rinaldo, late contended for the maid,
Enamored of that beauty rare; since she
Alike the glowing breast of either swayed.
But Charles, who little liked such rivalry,
And drew an omen thence of feebler aid,
To abate the cause of quarrel, seized the fair,
And placed her in Bavarian Namus' care.

IX
Vowing with her the warrior to content,
Who in that conflict, on that fatal day,
With his good hand most gainful succour lent,
And slew most paynims in the martial fray.
But counter to his hopes the battle went,
And his thinned squadrons fled in disarray;
Namus, with other Christian captains taken,
And his pavilion in the rout forsaken.

X
There, lodged by Charles, that gentle bonnibel,
Ordained to be the valiant victor's meed,

Before the event had sprung into her sell,
And from the combat turned in time of need;
Presaging wisely Fortune would rebel
That fatal day against the Christian creed:
And, entering a thick wood, discovered near,
In a close path, a horseless cavalier.

XI
With shield upon his arm, in knightly wise,
Belted and mailed, his helmet on his head;
The knight more lightly through the forest hies
Than half-clothed churl to win the cloth of red.
But not from cruel snake more swiftly flies
The timid shepherdess, with startled tread,
Than poor Angelica the bridle turns
When she the approaching knight on foot discerns.

XII
This was that Paladin, good Aymon's seed,
Who Mount Albano had in his command;
And late Baiardo lost, his gallant steed,
Escaped by strange adventure from his hand.
As soon as seen, the maid who rode at speed
The warrior knew, and, while yet distant, scanned
The angelic features and the gentle air
Which long had held him fast in Cupid's snare.

XIII
The affrighted damsel turns her palfrey round,
And shakes the floating bridle in the wind;
Nor in her panic seeks to choose her ground,
Nor open grove prefers to thicket blind.
But reckless, pale and trembling, and astound,
Leaves to her horse the devious way to find.
He up and down the forest bore the dame,
Till to a sylvan river's bank he came.

XIV
Here stood the fierce Ferrau in grisly plight,
Begrimed with dust, and bathed with sweat and blood
Who lately had withdrawn him from the fight,
To rest and drink at that refreshing flood:
But there had tarried in his own despite,
Since bending from the bank, in hasty mood,
He dropped his helmet in the crystal tide,
And vainly to regain the treasure tried.

XV
Thither at speed she drives, and evermore
In her wild panic utters fearful cries;
And at the voice, upleaping on the shore,
The Saracen her lovely visage spies.
And, pale as is her cheek, and troubled sore,
Arriving, quickly to the warrior's eyes
(Though many days no news of her had shown)
The beautiful Angelica is known.

XVI
Courteous, and haply gifted with a breast
As warm as either of the cousins two;
As bold, as if his brows in steel were dressed,
The succour which she sought he lent, and drew
His faulchion, and against Rinaldo pressed,
Who saw with little fear the champion true.
Not only each to each was known by sight,
But each had proved in arms his foeman's might.

XVII
Thus, as they are, on foot the warriors vie
In cruel strife, and blade to blade oppose;
No marvel plate or brittle mail should fly,
When anvils had not stood the deafening blows.
It now behoves the palfrey swift to ply

His feet; for while the knights in combat close,
Him vexed to utmost speed, with goading spurs,
By waste or wood the frighted damsel stirs.

XVIII
After the two had struggled long to throw
Each other in the strife, and vainly still;
Since neither valiant warrior was below
His opposite in force and knightly skill:
The first to parley with his Spanish foe
Was the good master of Albano's hill
(As one within whose raging breast was pent
A reckless fire which struggled for a vent).

XIX
"Thou think'st," he said, "to injure me alone,
But know thou wilt thyself as much molest:
For if we fight because yon rising sun
This raging heat has kindled in thy breast.
What were thy gain, and what the guerdon won,
Though I should yield my life, or stoop my crest;
If she shall never be thy glorious meed,
Who flies, while vainly we in battle bleed?

XX
"Then how much better, since our stake's the same,
Thou, loving like myself, should'st mount and stay
To wait this battle's end, the lovely dame,
Before she fly yet further on her way.
The lady taken, we repeat our claim
With naked faulchion to that peerless prey:
Else by long toil I see not what we gain
But simple loss and unrequited pain."

XXI
The peer's proposal pleased the paynim well.
And so their hot contention was foregone;

And such fair truce replaced that discord fell,
So mutual wrongs forgot and mischief done;
That for departure seated in his sell,
On foot the Spaniard left not Aymon's son;
But him to mount his courser's crupper prayed;
And both united chased the royal maid.

XXII
Oh! goodly truth in cavaliers of old!
Rivals they were, to different faith were bred.
Not yet the weary warriors' wounds were cold —
Still smarting from those strokes so fell and dread.
Yet they together ride by waste and wold,
And, unsuspecting, devious dingle thread.
Them, while four spurs infest his foaming sides,
Their courser brings to where the way divides.

XXIII
And now the warlike pair at fault, for they
Knew not by which she might her palfrey goad,
(Since both, without distinction, there survey
The recent print of hoofs on either road),
Commit the chase to fortune. By this way
The paynim pricked, by that Rinaldo strode.
But fierce Ferrau, bewildered in the wood,
Found himself once again where late he stood.

XXIV
Beside the water, where he stoop'd to drink,
And dropt the knightly helmet, — to his cost,
Sunk in the stream; and since he could not think
Her to retrieve, who late his hopes had crossed.
He, where the treasure fell, descends the brink
Of that swift stream, and seeks the morion lost.
But the casque lies so bedded in the sands,
'Twill ask no light endeavour at his hands.

XXV

A bough he severs from a neighbouring tree,
And shreds and shapes the branch into a pole:
With this he sounds the stream, and anxiously
Fathoms, and rakes, and ransacks shelf and hole.
While angered sore at heart, and restless, he
So lingered, where the troubled waters roll,
Breast-high, from the mid river rose upright,
The apparition of an angry knight.

XXVI

Armed at all points he was, except his head,
And in his better hand a helmet bore:
The very casque, which in the river's bed
Ferrau sought vainly, toiling long and sore.
Upon the Spanish knight he frowned, and said:
"Thou traitor to thy word, thou perjured Moor,
Why grieve the goodly helmet to resign,
Which, due to me long since, is justly mine?

XXVII

"Remember, pagan, when thine arm laid low
The brother of Angelica. That knight
Am I; — thy word was plighted then to throw
After my other arms his helmet bright.
If Fortune now compel thee to forego
The prize, and do my will in thy despite,
Grieve not at this, but rather grieve that thou
Art found a perjured traitor to thy vow.

XXVIII

"But if thou seek'st a helmet, be thy task
To win and wear it more to thy renown.
A noble prize were good Orlando's casque;
Rinaldo's such, or yet a fairer crown;
Almontes', or Mambrino's iron masque:

Make one of these, by force of arms, thine own.
And this good helm will fitly be bestowed
Where (such thy promise) it has long been owed."

XXIX
Bristled the paynim's every hair at view
Of that grim shade, uprising from the tide,
And vanished was his fresh and healthful hue,
While on his lips the half-formed accents died.
Next hearing Argalia, whom he slew,
(So was the warrior hight) that stream beside,
Thus his unknightly breach of promise blame,
He burned all over, flushed with rage and shame.

XXX
Nor having time his falsehood to excuse,
And knowing well how true the phantom's lore,
Stood speechless; such remorse the words infuse.
Then by Lanfusa's life the warrior swore,
Never in fight, or foray would he use
Helmet but that which good Orlando bore
From Aspramont, where bold Almontes paid
His life a forfeit to the Christian blade.

XXXI
And this new vow discharged more faithfully
Than the vain promise which was whilom plight;
And from the stream departing heavily,
Was many days sore vexed and grieved in sprite;
And still intent to seek Orlando, he
Roved wheresoe'er he hoped to find the knight.
A different lot befel Rinaldo; who
Had chanced another pathway to pursue.

XXXII
For far the warrior fared not, ere he spied,
Bounding across the path, his gallant steed,

And, "Stay, Bayardo mine," Rinaldo cried,
"Too cruel care the loss of thee does breed."
The horse for this returned not to his side,
Deaf to his prayer, but flew with better speed.
Furious, in chase of him, Rinaldo hies.
But follow we Angelica, who flies.

XXXIII
Through dreary woods and dark the damsel fled,
By rude unharboured heath and savage height,
While every leaf or spray that rustled, bred
(Of oak, or elm, or beech), such new affright,
She here and there her foaming palfrey sped
By strange and crooked paths with furious flight;
And at each shadow, seen in valley blind,
Or mountain, feared Rinaldo was behind.

XXXIV
As a young roe or fawn of fallow deer,
Who, mid the shelter of its native glade,
Has seen a hungry pard or tiger tear
The bosom of its bleeding dam, dismayed,
Bounds, through the forest green in ceaseless fear
Of the destroying beast, from shade to shade,
And at each sapling touched, amid its pangs,
Believes itself between the monster's fangs,

XXXV
One day and night, and half the following day,
The damsel wanders wide, nor whither knows;
Then enters a deep wood, whose branches play,
Moved lightly by the freshening breeze which blows.
Through this two clear and murmuring rivers stray:
Upon their banks a fresher herbage grows;
While the twin streams their passage slowly clear,
Make music with the stones, and please the ear.

XXXVI

Weening removed the way by which she wends,
A thousand miles from loathed Rinaldo's beat,
To rest herself a while the maid intends,
Wearied with that long flight and summer's heat.
She from her saddle 'mid spring flowers descends
And takes the bridle from her courser fleet.
And loose along the river lets him pass,
Roving the banks in search of lusty grass.

XXXVII

Behold! at hand a thicket she surveys
Gay with the flowering thorn and vermeil rose:
The tuft reflected in the stream which strays
Beside it, overshadowing oaks enclose.
Hollow within, and safe from vulgar gaze,
It seemed a place constructed for repose;
With bows so interwoven, that the light
Pierced not the tangled screen, far less the sight.

XXXVIII

Within soft moss and herbage form a bed;
And to delay and rest the traveller woo.
'Twas there her limbs the weary damsel spread,
Her eye-balls bathed in slumber's balmy dew.
But little time had eased her drooping head,
Ere, as she weened, a courser's tramp she knew.
Softly she rises, and the river near,
Armed cap-a-pie, beholds a cavalier.

XXXIX

If friend or foe, she nothing comprehends,
(So hope and fear her doubting bosom tear)
And that adventure's issue mute attends,
Nor even with a sigh disturbs the air.
The cavalier upon the bank descends;

And sits so motionless, so lost in care,
(His visage propt upon his arm) to sight
Changed into senseless stone appeared the knight.

XL
Pensive, above an hour, with drooping head,
He rested mute, ere he began his moan;
And then his piteous tale of sorrow said,
Lamenting in so soft and sweet a tone,
He in a tiger's breast had pity bred,
Or with his mournful wailings rent a stone.
And so he sighed and wept; like rivers flowed
His tears, his bosom like an Aetna glowed.

XLI
"Thought which now makes me burn, now freeze with hate,
Which gnaws my heart and rankles at its root!
What's left to me," he said, "arrived too late,
While one more favoured bears away the fruit?
Bare words and looks scarce cheered my hopeless state,
And the prime spoils reward another's suit.
Then since for me nor fruit nor blossom hangs,
Why should I longer pine in hopeless pangs?

XLII
"The virgin has her image in the rose
Sheltered in garden on its native stock,
Which there in solitude and safe repose,
Blooms unapproached by sheperd or by flock.
For this earth teems, and freshening water flows,
And breeze and dewy dawn their sweets unlock:
With such the wistful youth his bosom dresses.
With such the enamored damsel braids her tresses.

XLIII
"But wanton hands no sooner this displace
From the maternal stem, where it was grown,

Than all is withered; whatsoever grace
It found with man or heaven; bloom, beauty, gone.
The damsel who should hold in higher place
Than light or life the flower which is her own,
Suffering the spoiler's hand to crop the prize,
Forfeits her worth in every other's eyes.

XLIV
"And be she cheap with all except the wight
On whom she did so large a boon bestow.
Ah! false and cruel Fortune! foul despite!
While others triumph, I am drown'd in woe.
And can it be that I such treasure slight?
And can I then my very life forego?
No! let me die; 'twere happiness above
A longer life, if I must cease to love."

XLV
If any ask who made this sorrowing,
And pour'd into the stream so many tears,
I answer, it was fair Circassia's king,
That Sacripant, oppressed with amorous cares.
Love is the source from which his troubles spring,
The sole occasion of his pains and fears;
And he to her a lover's service paid,
Now well remembered by the royal maid.

XLVI
He for her sake from Orient's farthest reign
Roved thither, where the sun descends to rest;
For he was told in India, to his pain,
That she Orlando followed to the west.
He after learned in France that Charlemagne
Secluded from that champion and the rest,
As a fit guerdon, mewed her for the knight
Who should protect the lilies best in fight.

XLVII

The warrior in the field had been, and viewed,
Short time before, king Charlemagne's disgrace;
And vainly had Angelica pursued,
Nor of the damsel's footsteps found a trace.
And this is what the weeping monarch rued,
And this he so bewailed in doleful case:
Hence, into words his lamentations run,
Which might for pity stop the passing sun.

XLVIII

While Sacripant laments him in this plight,
And makes a tepid fountain of his eyes;
And, what I deem not needful to recite,
Pours forth yet other plaints and piteous cries;
Propitious Fortune will his lady bright
Should hear the youth lament him in such wise:
And thus a moment compassed what, without
Such chance, long ages had not brought about.

XLIX

With deep attention, while the warrior weeps,
She marks the fashion of the grief and tears
And words of him, whose passion never sleeps;
Nor this the first confession which she hears.
But with his plaint her heart no measure keeps,
Cold as the column which the builder rears.
Like haughty maid, who holds herself above
The world, and deems none worthy of her love.

L

But her from harm amid those woods to keep,
The damsel weened she might his guidance need;
For the poor drowning caitiff, who, chin-deep,
Implores not help, is obstinate indeed.
Nor will she, if she let the occasion sleep,

Find escort that will stand her in such stead:
For she that king by long experience knew
Above all other lovers, kind and true.

LI
But not the more for this the maid intends
To heal the mischief which her charms had wrought,
And for past ills to furnish glad amends
In that full bliss by pining lover sought.
To keep the king in play are all her ends,
His help by some device or fiction bought,
And having to her purpose taxed his daring,
To reassume as wont her haughty bearing.

LII
An apparition bright and unforeseen,
She stood like Venus or Diana fair,
In solemn pageant, issuing on the scene
From out of shadowy wood or murky lair.
And "Peace be with you," cried the youthful queen,
"And God preserve my honour in his care,
Nor suffer that you blindly entertain
Opinion of my fame so false and vain!"

LIII
Not with such wonderment a mother eyes,
With such excessive bliss the son she mourned
As dead, lamented still with tears and sighs,
Since the thinned files without her boy returned.
— Not such her rapture as the king's surprise
And ecstasy of joy when he discerned
The lofty presence, cheeks of heavenly hue,
And lovely form which broke upon his view.

LIV
He, full of fond and eager passion, pressed
Towards his Lady, his Divinity;

And she now clasped the warrior to her breast,
Who in Catay had haply been less free.
And now again the maid her thoughts addressed
Towards her native land and empery:
And feels, with hope revived, her bosom beat
Shortly to repossess her sumptuous seat.

LV
Her chances all to him the damsel said,
Since he was eastward sent to Sericane
By her to seek the martial monarch's aid,
Who swayed the sceptre of that fair domain;
And told how oft Orlando's friendly blade
Had saved her from dishonour, death, and pain;
And how she so preserved her virgin flower
Pure as it blossomed in her natal hour.

LVI
Haply the tale was true; yet will not seem
Likely to one of sober sense possessed:
But Sacripant, who waked from worser dream,
In all without a cavil acquiesced:
Since love, who sees without one guiding gleam,
Spies in broad day but that which likes him best:
For one sign of the afflicted man's disease
Is to give ready faith to things which please.

LVII
"If good Anglante's lord the prize forbore,
Nor seized the fair occasion when he might,
The loss be his, if Fortune never more
Him to enjoy so fair a prize invite.
To imitate that lord of little lore
I think not," said, apart, Circassa's knight.
"To quit such proffered good, and, to my shame,
Have but myself on after-thought to blame.

LVIII
"No! I will pluck the fresh and morning rose,
Which, should I tarry, may be overblown.
To woman, (this my own experience shows),
No deed more sweet or welcome can be done.
Then, whatsoever scorn the damsel shows,
Though she awhile may weep and make her moan,
I will, unchecked by anger, false or true,
Or sharp repulse, my bold design pursue."

LIX
This said, he for the soft assault prepares,
When a loud noise within the greenwood shade
Beside him, rang in his astounded ears,
And sore against his will the monarch stayed.
He donned his helm (his other arms he wears),
Aye wont to rove in steel, with belted blade,
Replaced the bridle on his courser fleet,
Grappled his lance, and sprang into his seat.

LX
With the bold semblance of a valiant knight,
Behold a warrior threads the forest hoar.
The stranger's mantle was of snowy white,
And white alike the waving plume he wore.
Balked of his bliss, and full of fell despite,
The monarch ill the interruption bore,
And spurred his horse to meet him in mid space,
With hate and fury glowing in his face.

LXI
Him he defies to fight, approaching nigh,
And weens to make him stoop his haughty crest:
The other knight, whose worth I rate as high,
His warlike prowess puts to present test;
Cuts short his haughty threats and angry cry,

And spurs, and lays his levelled lance in rest.
In tempest wheels Circassia's valiant peer,
And at his foeman's head each aims his spear.

LXII
Not brindled bulls or tawny lions spring
To forest warfare with such deadly will
As those two knights, the stranger and the king.
Their spears alike the opposing bucklers thrill:
The solid ground, at their encountering,
Trembles from fruitful vale to naked hill:
And well it was the mail in which they dressed
Their bodies was of proof, and saved the breast.

LXIII
Nor swerved the chargers from their destined course;
Who met like rams, and butted head to head.
The warlike Saracen's ill-fated horse,
Well valued while alive, dropt short and dead:
The stranger's, too, fell senseless; but perforce
Was roused by rowel from his grassy bed.
That of the paynim king, extended straight,
Lay on his battered lord with all his weight.

LXIV
Upright upon his steed, the knight unknown,
Who at the encounter horse and rider threw,
Deeming enough was in the conflict done,
Cares not the worthless warfare to renew;
But endlong by the readiest path is gone,
And measures, pricking frith and forest through,
A mile, or little less, in furious heat,
Ere the foiled Saracen regains his feet.

LXV
As the bewildered and astonished clown
Who held the plough (the thunder storm o'erpast)

There, where the deafening bolt had beat him down,
Nigh his death-stricken cattle, wakes aghast,
And sees the distant pine without its crown,
Which he saw clad in leafy honours last;
So rose the paynim knight with troubled face,
The maid spectatress of the cruel case.

LXVI
He sighs and groans, yet not for mischief sore
Endured in wounded arm or foot which bled;
But for mere shame, and never such before
Or after, dyed his cheek so deep a red,
And if he rued his fall, it grieved him more
His dame should lift him from his courser dead.
He speechless had remained, I ween, if she
Had not his prisoned tongue and voice set free.

LXVII
"Grieve not," she said, "sir monarch, for thy fall;
But let the blame upon thy courser be!
To whom more welcome had been forage, stall,
And rest, than further joust and jeopardy;
And well thy foe the loser may I call,
(Who shall no glory gain) for such is he
Who is the first to quit his ground, if aught
Angelica of fighting fields be taught."

LXVIII
While she so seeks the Saracen to cheer,
Behold a messenger with pouch and horn,
On panting hackney! — man and horse appear
With the long journey, weary and forlorn.
He questions Sacripant, approaching near,
Had he seen warrior pass, by whom were borne
A shield and crest of white; in search of whom
Through the wide forest pricked the weary groom.

LXIX
King Sacripant made answer, "As you see,
He threw me here, and went but now his way:
Then tell the warrior's name, that I may be
Informed whose valour foiled me in the fray."
To him the groom, — "That which you ask of me
I shall relate to you without delay:
Know that you were in combat prostrate laid
By the tried valour of a gentle maid.

LXX
"Bold is the maid; but fairer yet than bold,
Nor the redoubted virgin's name I veil:
'Twas Bradamant who marred what praise of old
Your prowess ever won with sword and mail."
This said, he spurred again, his story told,
And left him little gladdened by the tale.
He recks not what he says or does, for shame,
And his flushed visage kindles into flame.

LXXI
After the woeful warrior long had thought
Upon his cruel case, and still in vain,
And found a woman his defeat had wrought,
For thinking but increased the monarch's pain,
He climbed the other horse, nor spake he aught;
But silently uplifted from the plain,
Upon the croup bestowed that damsel sweet,
Reserved to gladder use in safer seat.

LXXII
Two miles they had not rode before they hear
The sweeping woods which spread about them, sound
With such loud crash and trample, far and near,
The forest seemed to tremble all around;
And shortly after see a steed appear,

With housings wrought in gold and richly bound;
Who clears the bush and stream, with furious force
And whatsoever else impedes his course.

LXXIII
"Unless the misty air," the damsel cries,
"And boughs deceive my sight, yon noble steed
Is, sure, Bayardo, who before us flies,
And parts the wood with such impetuous speed.
— Yes, 'tis Bayardo's self I recognize.
How well the courser understands our need!
Two riders ill a foundered jade would bear,
But hither speeds the horse to end that care."

LXXIV
The bold Circassian lighted, and applied
His hand to seize him by the flowing rein,
Who, swiftly turning, with his heels replied,
For he like lightning wheeled upon the plain.
Woe to the king! but that he leaps aside,
For should he smite, he would not lash in vain.
Such are his bone and sinew, that the shock
Of his good heels had split a metal rock.

LXXV
Then to the maid he goes submissively,
With gentle blandishment and humble mood;
As the dog greets his lord with frolic glee,
Whom, some short season past, he had not viewed.
For good Bayardo had in memory
Albracca, where her hands prepared his food,
What time the damsel loved Rinaldo bold;
Rinaldo, then ungrateful, stern, and cold.

LXXVI
With her left hand she takes him by the bit,
And with the other pats his sides and chest:

While the good steed (so marvellous his wit),
Lamb-like, obeyed the damsel and caressed.
Meantime the king, who sees the moment fit,
Leapt up, and with his knees the courser pressed.
While on the palfrey, eased of half his weight,
The lady left the croup, and gained the seat.

LXXVII
Then, as at hazard, she directs her sight,
Sounding in arms a man on foot espies,
And glows with sudden anger and despite;
For she in him the son of Aymon eyes.
Her more than life esteems the youthful knight,
While she from him, like crane from falcon, flies.
Time was the lady sighed, her passion slighted;
'Tis now Rinaldo loves, as ill requited.

LXXVIII
And this effect two different fountains wrought,
Whose wonderous waters different moods inspire.
Both spring in Arden, with rare virtue fraught:
This fills the heart with amorous desire:
Who taste that other fountain are untaught
Their love, and change for ice their former fire.
Rinaldo drank the first, and vainly sighs;
Angelica the last, and hates and flies.

LXXIX
Mixed with such secret bane the waters glide,
Which amorous care convert to sudden hate;
The maid no sooner had Rinaldo spied,
Than on her laughing eyes deep darkness sate:
And with sad mien and trembling voice she cried
To Sacripant, and prayed him not to wait
The near approach of the detested knight,
But through the wood with her pursue his flight.

LXXX
To her the Saracen, with anger hot:
"Is knightly worship sunk so low in me,
That thou should'st hold my valour cheap, and not
Sufficient to make yonder champion flee?
Already are Albracca's fights forgot,
And that dread night I singly stood for thee?
That night when I, though naked, was thy shield
Against King Agrican and all his field?"

LXXXI
She answers not, and knows not in her fear
What 'tis she does; Rinaldo is too nigh:
And from afar that furious cavalier
Threats the bold Saracen with angry cry,
As soon as the known steed and damsel dear,
Whose charms such flame had kindled, meet his eye.
But what ensued between the haughty pair
I in another canto shall declare.

CANTO 2

ARGUMENT
A hermit parts, by means of hollow sprite,
The two redoubted rivals' dangerous play;
Rinaldo goes where Love and Hope invite,
But is dispatched by Charles another way;
Bradamont, seeking her devoted knight,
The good Rogero, nigh becomes the prey
Of Pinabel, who drops the damsel brave
Into the dungeon of a living grave.

I
Injurious love, why still to mar accord
Between desires has been thy favourite feat?

Why does it please thee so, perfidious lord,
Two hearts should with a different measure beat?
Thou wilt not let me take the certain ford,
Dragging me where the stream is deep and fleet.
Her I abandon who my love desires,
While she who hates, respect and love inspires.

II
Thou to Rinaldo show'st the damsel fair,
While he seems hideous to that gentle dame;
And he, who when the lady's pride and care,
Paid back with deepest hate her amorous flame,
Now pines, himself, the victim of despair,
Scorned in his turn, and his reward the same.
By the changed damsel in such sort abhorred,
She would choose death before that hated lord.

III
He to the Pagan cries: "Forego thy theft,
And down, false felon, from that pilfer'd steed;
I am not wont to let my own be reft.
And he who seeks it dearly pays the deed.
More — I shall take from thee yon lovely weft;
To leave thee such a prize were foul misdeed;
And horse and maid, whose worth outstrips belief,
Were ill, methinks, relinquished to a thief."

IV
"Thou liest," the haughty Saracen retorts,
As proud, and burning with as fierce a flame,
"A thief thyself, if Fame the truth reports:
But let good deeds decide our dubious claim,
With whom the steed or damsel fair assorts:
Best proved by valiant deeds: though, for the dame,
That nothing is so precious, I with thee
(Search the wide world throughout) may well agree."

V

As two fierce dogs will somtimes stand at gaze,
Whom hate or other springs of strife inspire,
And grind their teeth, while each his foe surveys
With sidelong glance and eyes more red than fire,
Then either falls to bites, and hoarsely bays,
While their stiff bristles stand on end with ire:
So from reproach and menace to the sword
Pass Sacripant and Clermont's angry lord.

VI

Thus kindling into wrath the knights engage:
One is on foot, the other on his horse:
Small gain to this; for inexperienced page
Would better rein his charger in the course.
For such Baiardo's sense, he will not wage
War with his master, or put out his force.
For voice, nor hand, nor manage, will he stir,
Rebellious to the rein or goading spur.

VII

He, when the king would urge him, takes the rest,
Or, when he curbs him, runs in giddy rings;
And drops his head beneath his spreading chest,
And plays his spine, and runs an-end and flings.
And now the furious Saracen distressed,
Sees 'tis no time to tame the beast, and springs,
With one hand on the pummel, to the ground;
Clear of the restless courser at a bound.

VIII

As soon as Sacripant, with well-timed leap,
Is from the fury of Bayardo freed,
You may believe the battle does not sleep
Between those champions, matched in heart and deed.
Their sounding blades such changeful measure keep,

The hammer-strokes of Vulcan with less speed
Descend in that dim cavern, where he heats,
And Jove's red thunders on his anvil beats.

IX
Sometimes they lunge, then feign the thrust and parry:
Deep masters of the desperate game they play;
Or rise upon the furious stroke, and carry
Their swords aloft, or stoop and stand at bay.
Again they close, again exhausted tarry;
Now hide, now show themselves, and now give way,
And where one knight an inch of ground has granted,
His foeman's foot upon that inch is planted.

X
When, lo! Rinaldo, now impatient grown,
Strikes full at Sacripant with lifted blade;
And he puts forth his buckler made of bone,
And well with strong and stubborn steel inlaid:
Though passing thick, Fusberta cleaves it: groan
Greenwood, and covert close, and sunny glade.
The paynim's arm rings senseless with the blow,
And steel and bone, like ice, in shivers go.

XI
When the fair damsel saw, with timid eye,
Such ruin follow from the faulchion's sway,
She, like the criminal, whose doom is nigh,
Changed her fair countenance through sore dismay,
And deemed that little time was left to fly
If she would not be that Rinaldo's prey,
Rinaldo loathed by her as much, as he
Doats on the scornful damsel miserably.

XII
So turned her horse into the gloomy chase,
And drove him through rough path and tangled ally

And oftentimes bent back her bloodless face,
And saw Rinaldo from each thicket sally.
Nor flying long had urged the frantic race,
Before she met a hermit in a valley.
Devotion in his aspect was expressed,
And his long beard descended on his breast.

XIII
Wasted he was as much by fasts as age,
And on an ass was mounted, slow and sure;
His visage warranted that never sage
Had conscience more precise or passing pure.
Though in his arteries time had stilled the rage
Of blood, and spake him feeble and demure,
At sight of the delighted damsel, he
Was inly stirred for very charity.

XIV
The lady prayed that kindly friar, that he
Would straight conduct her to some haven near,
For that she from the land of France might flee,
And never more of loathed Rinaldo hear.
The hermit, who was skilled in sorcery,
Ceased not to soothe the gentle damsel's fear.
And with the promise of deliverance, shook
His pocket, and drew forth a secret book.

XV
This opened, quick and mighty marvel wrought;
For not a leaf is finished by the sage,
Before a spirit, by his bidding brought,
Waits his command in likeness of a page:
He, by the magic writ constrained and taught,
Hastes where the warriors face to face engage,
In the cool shade — but not in cool disport —
And steps between, and stops their battle short.

XVI

"In courtesy," he cried, "let either show
What his foe's death to either can avail,
And what the guerdon conquest will bestow
On him who in the battle shall prevail,
If Roland, though he has not struck a blow,
Or snapt in fight a single link of mail,
To Paris-town conveys the damsel gay,
Who has engaged you in this bitter fray.

XVII

"Within an easy mile I saw the peer
Pricking to Paris with that lady bright;
Riding, in merry mood, with laugh and jeer,
And mocking at your fierce and fruitless fight.
Sure it were better, while they yet are near,
To follow peer and damsel in their flight:
For should he once in Paris place his prize
The lady never more shall meet your eyes."

XVIII

You might have seen those angry cavaliers
Change at the demon's tale for rage and shame;
And curse themselves as wanting eyes and ears,
To let their rival cheat them of the dame.
Towards his horse the good Rinaldo steers,
Breathing forth piteous sighs which seem of flame;
And, if he joins Orlando — ere they part —
Swears in his fury he will have his heart.

XIX

So, passing where the prompt Bayardo stood,
Leaps on his back, and leaves, as swift as wind,
Without farewell, his rival in the wood;
Much less invites him to a seat behind.
The goaded charger, in his heat of blood,

Forces whate'er his eager course confined,
Ditch, river, tangled thorn, or marble block;
He swims the river, and he clears the rock.

XX
Let it not, sir, sound strangely in your ear
Rinaldo took the steed thus readily,
So long and vainly followed far and near;
For he, endued with reasoning faculty,
Had not in vice lured on the following peer,
But fled before his cherished lord, that he
Might guide him whither went the gentle dame,
For whom, as he had heard, he nursed a flame.

XXI
For when Angelica, in random dread,
From the pavilion winged her rapid flight,
Bayardo marked the damsel as she fled,
His saddle lightened of Mount Alban's knight;
Who then on foot an equal combat sped,
Matched with a baron of no meaner might;
And chased the maid by woods, and floods, and strands,
In hopes to place her in the warrior's hands.

XXII
And, with desire to bring him to the maid,
Gallopped before him still with rampant play;
But would not let his master mount, afraid
That he might make him take another way.
So luring on Rinaldo through the shade,
Twice brought him to his unexpected prey;
Twice foiled in his endeavour: once by bold
Ferrau; then Sacripant, as lately told.

XXIII
Now good Bayardo had believed the tiding
Of that fair damsel, which produced the accord;

And in the devil's cunning tale confiding,
Renewed his wonted service to his lord.
Behold Rinaldo then in fury riding,
And pushing still his courser Paris-ward!
Though he fly fast, the champion's wishes go
Faster; and wind itself had seemed too slow.

XXIV

At night Rinaldo rests his steed, with pain
To meet Anglante's lord he burned so sore;
And lent such credit to the tidings vain
Of the false courier of that wizard hoar:
And that day and the next, with flowing rein,
Rode, till the royal city rose before
His eyes; where Charlemagne had taken post,
With the sad remnant of his broken host.

XXV

He, for he fears the Afric king's pursuit,
And sap and siege, upon his vassals calls
To gather in fresh victual, and recruit
And cleanse their ditches, and repair their walls.
And what may best annoy the foes, and suit
For safety, without more delay forestalls;
And plans an embassy to England, thence
To gather fresher forces for defence.

XXVI

For he is bent again to try the fate
Of arms in tented field, though lately shamed;
And send Rinaldo to the neighbouring state
Of Britain, which was after England named.
Ill liked the Paladin to cross the strait;
Not that the people or the land he blamed,
But that King Charles was sudden; nor a day
Would grant the valiant envoy for delay.

XXVII
Rinaldo never executed thing
Less willingly, prevented in his quest
Of that fair visage he was following,
Whose charms his heart had ravished from his breast.
Yet, in obediance to the christian king,
Prepared himself to do the royal hest.
To Calais the good envoy wends with speed,
And the same day embarks himself and steed.

XXVIII
And there, in scorn of cautious pilot's skill
(Such his impatience to regain his home),
Launched on the doubtful sea, which boded ill,
And rolled its heavy billows, white with foam.
The wind, enraged that he opposed his will,
Stirred up the waves; and, 'mid the gathering gloom,
So the loud storm and tempest's fury grew,
That topmast-high the flashing waters flew.

XXIX
The watchful mariners, in wary sort,
Haul down the mainsail, and attempt to wear;
And would put back in panic to the port,
Whence, in ill hour, they loosed with little care.
— "Not so," exclaims the wind, and stops them short,
"So poor a penance will not pay the dare."
And when they fain would veer, with fiercer roar
Pelts back their reeling prow and blusters more.

XXX
Starboard and larboard bears the fitful gale,
And never for a thought its ire assuages;
While the strained vessel drives with humble sail
Before the billows, as the tempest rages.
But I, who still pursue a varying tale,

Must leave awhile the Paladin, who wages
A weary warfare with the wind and flood;
To follow a fair virgin of his blood.

XXXI

I speak of that famed damsel, by whose spear
O'erthrown, King Sacripant on earth was flung;
The worthy sister of the valiant peer,
From Beatrix and good Duke Aymon sprung.
By daring deeds and puissance no less dear
To Charlemagne and France: Since proved among
The first, her prowess, tried by many a test,
Equal to good Rinaldo's shone confessed.

XXXII

A cavalier was suitor to the dame,
Who out of Afric passed with Agramant;
Rogero was his valiant father's name,
His mother was the child of Agolant.
And she, who not of bear or lion came,
Disdained not on the Child her love to plant,
Though cruel Fortune, ill their wishes meeting,
Had granted to the pair a single greeting.

XXXIII

Alone thenceforth she sought her lover (he
Was named of him to whom he owed his birth),
And roved as safe as if in company
Of thousands, trusting in her single worth.
She having made the king of Circassy
Salute the visage of old mother earth,
Traversed a wood, and that wood past, a mountain;
And stopt at length beside a lovely fountain.

XXXIV

Through a delicious mead the fountain-rill,
By ancient trees o'ershaded, glides away;

And him whose ear its pleasing murmurs fill,
Invites to drink, and on its banks to stay;
On the left side a cultivated hill
Excludes the fervors of the middle day.
As first the damsel thither turns her eyes,
A youthful cavalier she seated spies;

XXXV
A cavalier, who underneath the shade,
Seems lost, as in a melancholy dream;
And on the bank, which gaudy flowers displayed,
Reposing, overhangs the crystal stream.
His horse beneath a spreading beech is laid,
And from a bough the shield and helmet gleam.
While his moist eyes, and sad and downcast air,
Speak him the broken victim of despair.

XXXVI
Urged by the passion lodged in every breast,
A restless curiosity to know
Of others' cares, the gentle maid addressed
The knight, and sought the occasion of his woe.
And he to her his secret grief confessed,
Won by her gentle speech and courteous show,
And by that gallant bearing, which at sight,
Prepared who saw her for nimble knight.

XXXVII
"Fair sir, a band of horse and foot," he said,
"I brought to Charlemagne; and thither pressed,
Where he an ambush for Marsilius spread,
Descending from the Pyrenean crest;
And in my company a damsel led,
Whose charms with fervid love had fired my breast.
When, as we journey by Rhone's current, I
A rider on a winged courser spy.

XXXVIII

"The robber, whether he were man or shade,
Or goblin damned to everlasting woe,
As soon as he beheld my dear-loved maid,
Like falcon, who, descending, aims its blow,
Sank in a thought and rose; and soaring, laid
Hands on his prize, and snatched her from below.
So quick the rape, that all appeared a dream,
Until I heard in air the damsel's scream.

XXXIX

"The ravening kite so swoops and plunders, when
Hovering above the shelterd yard, she spies
A helpless chicken near unwatchful hen,
Who vainly dins the thief with after cries.
I cannot reach the mountain-robber's den,
Compassed with cliffs, or follow one who flies.
Besides, way-foundered is my weary steed,
Who 'mid these rocks has wasted wind and speed.

XL

"But I, like one who from his bleeding side
Would liefer far have seen his heart out-torn,
Left my good squadrons masterless, to ride
Along the cliffs, and passes least forlorn;
And took the way (love served me for a guide)
Where it appeared the ruthless thief had born,
Ascending to his den, the lovely prey,
What time he snatched my hope and peace away.

XLI

"Six days I rode, from morn to setting sun,
By horrid cliff, by bottom dark and drear;
And giddy precipice, where path was none,
Nor sign, nor vestiges of man were near.
At last a dark and barren vale I won,

Where caverned mountains and rude cliffs appear;
Where in the middle rose a rugged block,
With a fair castle planted on the rock.

XLII
"From far it shone like flame, and seemed not dight
Of marble or of brick; and in my eye
More wonderful the work, more fair to sight
The walls appeared, as I approached more nigh.
I, after, learned that it was built by sprite
Whom potent fumes had raised and sorcery:
Who on this rock its towers of steel did fix,
Case-hardened in the stream and fire of Styx.

XLIII
"Each polished turret shines with such a ray
That it defies the mouldering rust and rain:
The robber scours the country night and day,
And after harbours in this sure domain.
Nothing is safe which he would bear away;
Pursued with curses and with threats in vain.
There (fruitless every hope to foil his art)
The felon keeps my love, oh! say my heart.

XLIV
"Alas! what more is left me but to eye
Her prison on that cliff's aerial crest?
Like the she-fox, who hears her offspring cry,
Standing beneath the ravening eagle's nest;
And since she has not wings to rise and fly,
Runs round the rugged rock with hopeless quest.
So inaccessible the wild dominion
To whatsoever has not plume and pinion.

XLV
"While I so lingered where those rocks aspire,
I saw a dwarf guide two of goodly strain;

Whose coming added hope to my desire
(Alas! desire and hope alike were vain)
Both barons bold, and fearful in their ire:
The one Gradasso, King of Sericane,
The next, of youthful vigour, was a knight,
Prized in the Moorish court, Rogero hight.

XLVI
"The dwarf exclaimed, `These champions will assay
Their force with him who dwells on yonder steep,
And by such strange and unattempted way
Spurs the winged courser from his mountain-keep.'
And I to the approaching warriors say,
`Pity, fair sirs, the cruel loss I weep,
And, as I trust, yon daring spoiler slain,
Give my lost lady to my arms again.'

XLVII
"Then how my love was ravished I make known,
Vouching with bitter tears my deep distress.
They proffer aid, and down the path of stone
Which winds about the craggy mountain, press.
While I, upon the summit left alone,
Look on, and pray to God for their success.
Beneath the wily wizard's castle strong
Extends a little plain, two bow-shots long.

XLVIII
"Arrived beneath the craggy keep, the two
Contend which warrior shall begin the fight.
When, whether the first lot Gradasso drew,
Or young Rogero held the honor light,
The King of Sericane his bugle blew,
And the rock rang and fortress on the height;
And, lo! apparelled for the fearful course,
The cavalier upon his winged horse!

XLIX

"Upwards, by little and by little, springs
The winged courser, as the pilgrim crane
Finds not at first his balance and his wings,
Running and scarcely rising from the plain;
But when the flock is launched and scattered, flings
His pinions to the wind, and soars amain.
So straight the necromancer's upward flight,
The eagle scarce attempts so bold a height.

L

"When it seems fit, he wheels his courser round,
Who shuts his wings, and falling from the sky,
Shoots like a well trained falcon to the ground,
Who sees the quarry, duck or pigeon, fly:
So, through the parting air, with whizzing sound,
With rested lance, he darted from on high;
And while Gradasso scarcely marks the foe
He hears him swooping near, and feels the blow.

LI

"The wizard on Gradasso breaks his spear,
He wounds the empty air, with fury vain.
This in the feathered monster breeds no fear;
Who to a distance shifts, and swoops again.
While that encounter made the Alfana rear,
Thrown back upon her haunches, on the plain.
The Alfana that the Indian monarch rode,
The fairest was that ever man bestrode.

LII

"Up to the starry sphere with swift ascent
The wizard soars, then pounces from the sky,
And strikes the young Rogero, who, intent
Upon Gradasso, deems no danger nigh.
Beneath the wizard's blow the warrior bent,

Which made some deal his generous courser ply;
And when to smite the shifting foe he turned,
Him in the sky, and out of reach discerned.

LIII
"His blows Rogero, now Gradasso, bruise
On forehead, bosom, back, or flanks, between;
While he the warrior's empty blows eschews,
Shifting so quickly that he scarce is seen.
Now this, now that, the wizard seems to choose,
The monster makes such spacious rings and clean,
While the enchanter so deceives the knights,
They view him not, and know not whence he smites.

LIV
"Between the two on earth and him o' the sky,
Until that hour the warfare lasted there,
Which, spreading wide its veil of dusky dye,
Throughout the world, discolours all things fair.
What I beheld, I say; I add not, I,
A tittle to the tale; yet scarcely dare
To tell to other what I stood and saw;
So strange it seems, so passing Nature's law.

LV
"Well covered in a goodly silken case,
He, the celestial warrior, bore his shield;
But why delayed the mantle to displace
I know not, and its lucid orb concealed.
Since this no sooner blazes in his face,
Than his foe tumbles dazzled on the field;
And while he, like a lifeless body, lies,
Becomes the necromancer's helpless prize.

LVI
"LIke carbuncle, the magic buckler blazed,
No glare was ever seen which shone so bright:

Nor could the warriors choose but fall, amazed
And blinded by the clear and dazzling light.
I, too, that from a distant mountain gazed,
Fell senseless; and when I regained my sight,
After long time, saw neither knights nor page,
Nor aught beside a dark and empty stage.

LVII
"This while the fell enchanter, I supposed,
Dragged both the warriors to his prison-cell;
And by strange virtue of the shield disclosed,
I from my hope and they from freedom fell:
And thus I to the turrets, which enclosed
My heart, departing, bade a last farewell.
Now sum my griefs, and say if love combine
Other distress or grief to match with mine."

LVIII
The knight relapsed into his first disease,
After his melancholy tale was done.
This was Count Pinabel, the Maganzese,
Anselmo d'Altaripa's faithless son.
He, where the blood ran foul through all degrees,
Disdained to be the only virtuous one;
Nor played a simple part among the base,
Passing in vice the villains of his race.

LIX
With aspect changing still, the beauteous dame
Hears what the mournful Maganzese narrates;
And, at first mention of Rogero's name,
Her radiant face with eager joy dilates.
But, full of pity, kindles into flame
As Pinabel his cruel durance states.
Nor finds she, though twice told, the story stale;
But makes him oft repeat and piece his tale.

LX

And, after, when she deemed that all was clear,
Cried to the knight, "Repose upon my say.
To thee may my arrival well be dear,
And thou as fortunate account this day.
Straight wend me to the keep, sir cavalier,
Which holds a jewel of so rich a ray:
Nor shalt thou grudge thy labour and thy care,
If envious Fortune do but play me fair."

LXI

The knight replied, "Then nought to me remains
But that I yonder mountain-passes show;
And sure 'tis little loss to lose my pains,
Where every thing is lost I prize below.
But you would climb yon cliffs, and for your gains
Will find a prison-house, and be it so!
Whate'er betide you, blame yourself alone;
You go forewarned to meet a fate foreshown."

LXII

So said, the cavalier remounts his horse,
And serves the gallant damsel as a guide;
Who is prepared Rogero's gaol to force,
Or to be slain, or in his prison stied.
When lo! a messenger, in furious course,
Called to the dame to stay, and rode and cried.
This was the post who told Circassa's lord
What valiant hand had stretched him on the sward.

LXIII

The courier, who so plied his restless heel,
News of Narbonne and of Montpelier bore:
How both had raised the standard of Castile,
All Acquamorta siding with the Moor;
And how Marseilles' disheartened men appeal

To her, who should protect her straightened shore;
And how, through him, her citizens demand
Counsel and comfort at their captain's hand.

LXIV
This goodly town, with many miles of plain,
Which lie 'twixt Var and Rhone, upon the sea,
To her was given by royal Charlemagne:
Such trust he placed in her fidelity.
Still wont with wonder on the tented plain
The prowess of that valiant maid to see.
And now the panting courier, as I said,
Rode from Marseilles to ask the lady's aid.

LXV
Whether or not she should the call obey,
The youthful damsel doubts some little space;
Strong in one balance Fame and Duty weigh,
But softer thoughts both Fame and Duty chase:
And she, at length, resolved the emprize to assay,
And free Rogero from the enchanted place:
Or, should her valour in the adventure fail,
Would with the cherished lover share his jail.

LXVI
And did with such excuse that post appay,
He was contented on her will to wait:
Then turned the bridle to resume her way
With Pinabel, who seemed no whit elate.
Since of that line he knows the damsel gay,
Held in such open and such secret hate;
And future trouble to himself foresees,
Were he detected as a Maganzese.

LXVII
For 'twixt Maganza's and old Clermont's line
There was an ancient and a deadly feud:

And oft to blows the rival houses came,
And oft in civil blood their hands embrued.
And hence some treason to this gentle dame
In his foul heart, the wicked County brewed;
Or, as the first occasion served, would stray
Out of the road, and leave her by the way.

LXVIII
And so the traitor's troubled fancy rack
Fear, doubt, and his own native, rancorous mood,
That unawares he issued from the track,
And found himself within a gloomy wood:
Where a rough mountain reared its shaggy back,
Whose stony peak above the forest stood;
The daughter of Dodona's duke behind,
Dogging his footsteps through the thicket blind.

LXIX
He, when he saw himself within the brake,
Thought to abandon his unweeting foe;
And to the dame — " 'Twere better that we make
For shelter ere the gathering darkness grow;
And, yonder mountain past, (save I mistake)
A tower is seated in the vale below.
Do you expect me then, while from the peak
I measure the remembered place I seek."

LXX
So said, he pushed his courser up the height
Of that lone mountain; in his evil mind
Revolving, as he went, some scheme or sleight
To rid him of the gentle dame behind.
When lo! a rocky cavern met his sight,
Amid those precipices dark and blind:
Its sides descended thirty yards and more,
Worked smooth, and at the bottom was a door.

LXXI

A void was at the bottom, where a wide
Portal conducted to an inner room:
From thence a light shone out on every side,
As of a torch illumining the gloom.
Fair Bradamant pursued her faithless guide,
Suspended there, and pondering on her doom:
And came upon the felon where he stood,
Fearing lest she might lose him in the wood.

LXXII

When her approach the County's first intent
Made vain, the wily traitor sought to mend
His toils, and some new stratagem invent
To rid her thence, or bring her to her end.
And so to meet the approaching lady went,
And showed the cave, and prayed her to ascend;
And said that in its bottom he had seen
A gentle damsel of bewitching mien.

LXXIII

Who, by her lovely semblance and rich vest,
Appeared a lady of no mean degree;
But melancholy, weeping, and distressed,
As one who pined there in captivity:
And that when he towards the entrance pressed,
To learn who that unhappy maid might be,
One on the melancholy damsel flew,
And her within that inner cavern drew.

LXXIV

The beauteous Bradamant, who was more bold
Than wary, gave a ready ear; and, bent
To help the maid, imprisoned in that hold,
Sought but the means to try the deep descent.
Then, looking round, descried an elm-tree old,

Which furnished present means for her intent:
And from the tree, with boughs and foliage stored,
Lopt a long branch, and shaped it with her sword.

LXXV
The severed end she to the count commended,
Then, grasping it, hung down that entrance steep.
With her feet foremost, by her arms suspended:
When asking if she had the skill to leap,
The traitor, with a laugh, his hands extended.
And plunged his helpless prey into the deep.
"And thus," exclaimed the ruffian, "might I speed
With thee each sucker of thy cursed seed!"

LXXVI
But not, as was the will of Pinabel,
Such cruel lot fair Bradamant assayed;
For striking on the bottom of the cell,
The stout elm-bough so long her weight upstayed,
That, though it split and splintered where it fell,
It broked her fall, and saved the gentle maid.
Some while astounded there the lady lay,
As the ensuing canto will display.

CANTO 3

ARGUMENT
Restored to sense, the beauteous Bradamant
Finds sage Melissa in the vaulted tomb,
And hears from her of many a famous plant
And warrior, who shall issue from her womb.
Next, to release Rogero from the haunt
Of old Atlantes, learns how from the groom,
Brunello hight, his virtuous ring to take;
And thus the knight's and others' fetters break.

I
Who will vouchsafe me voice that shall ascend
As high as I would raise my noble theme?
Who will afford befitting words, and lend
Wings to my verse, to soar the pitch I scheme?
Since fiercer fire for such illustrious end,
Than what was wont, may well my song beseem.
For this fair portion to my lord is due
Which sings the sires from whom his lineage grew.

II
Than whose fair line, 'mid those by heavenly grace
Chosen to minister this earth below,
You see not, Phoebus, in your daily race,
One that in peace or war doth fairer show;
Nor lineage that hath longer kept its place;
And still shall keep it, if the lights which glow
Within me, but aright inspire my soul,
While the blue heaven shall turn about the pole.

III
But should I seek at full its worth to blaze,
Not mine were needful, but that noble lyre
Which sounded at your touch the thunderer's praise,
What time the giants sank in penal fire.
Yet should you instruments, more fit to raise
The votive work, bestow, as I desire,
All labour and all thought will I combine,
To shape and shadow forth the great design.

IV
Till when, this chisel may suffice to scale
The stone, and give my lines a right direction;
And haply future study may avail,
To bring the stubborn labour to perfection.
Return we now to him, to whom the mail

Of hawberk, shield, and helm, were small protection:
I speak of Pinabel the Maganzeze,
Who hopes the damsel's death, whose fall he sees.

V
The wily traitor thought that damsel sweet
Had perished on the darksome cavern's floor,
And with pale visages hurried his retreat
From that, through him contaminated door.
And, thence returning, clomb into his seat:
Then, like one who a wicked spirit bore,
To add another sin to evil deed,
Bore off with him the warlike virgin's steed.

VI
Leave we sometime the wretch who, while he layed
Snares for another, wrought his proper doom;
And turn we to the damsel he betrayed,
Who had nigh found at once her death and tomb.
She, after rising from the rock, dismayed
At her shrewd fall, and gazing through the gloom,
Beheld and passed that inner door, which gave
Entrance to other and more spacious cave.

VII
For the first cavern in a second ended,
Fashioned in form of church, and large and square;
With roof by cunning architect extended
On shafts of alabaster rich and rare.
The flame of a clear-burning lamp ascended
Before the central altar; and the glare,
Illuminating all the space about,
Shone through the gate, and lit the cave without.

VIII
Touched with the sanctifying thoughts which wait
On worthy spirit in a holy place,

She prays with eager lips, and heart elate,
To the Disposer of all earthly grace:
And, kneeling, hears a secret wicket grate
In the opposing wall; whence, face to face,
A woman issuing forth, the maid addresses,
Barefoot, ungirt, and with dishevelled tresses.

IX
"O generous Bradamant," the matron cried,
"Know thine arrival in this hallowed hold
Was not unauthorized of heavenly guide:
And the prophetic ghost of Merlin told,
Thou to this cave shouldst come by path untried,
Which covers the renowned magician's mould.
And here have I long time awaited thee,
To tell what is the heavens' pronounced decree.

X
"This is the ancient memorable cave
Which Merlin, that enchanter sage, did make:
Thou may'st have heard how that magician brave
Was cheated by the Lady of the Lake.
Below, beneath the cavern, is the grave
Which holds his bones; where, for that lady's sake,
His limbs (for such her will) the wizard spread.
Living he laid him there, and lies there dead.

XI
"Yet lives the spirit of immortal strain;
Lodged in the enchanter's corpse, till to the skies
The trumpet call it, or to endless pain,
As it with dove or raven's wing shall rise.
Yet lives the voice, and thou shalt hear how plain
From its sepulchral case of marble cries:
Since this has still the past and future taught
To every wight that has its counsel sought.

XII

"Long days have passed since I from distant land
My course did to this cemetery steer,
That in the solemn mysteries I scanned,
Merlin to me the truth should better clear;
And having compassed the design I planned,
A month beyond, for thee, have tarried here;
Since Merlin, still with certain knowledge summing
Events, prefixed this moment for thy coming."

XIII

The daughter of Duke Aymon stood aghast,
And silent listened to the speech; while she
Knew not, sore marvelling at all that passed,
If 'twere a dream or a reality.
At length, with modest brow, and eyes down cast,
Replied (like one that was all modesty),
"And is this wrought for me? and have I merit
Worthy the workings of prophetic spirit?"

XIV

And full of joy the adventure strange pursues,
Moving with ready haste behind the dame,
Who brings her to the sepulchre which mews
The bones and spirit, erst of Merlin's name.
The tomb, of hardest stone which masons use,
Shone smooth and lucid, and as red as flame.
So that although no sun-beam pierced the gloom,
Its splendour lit the subterraneous room.

XV

Whether it be the native operation
O certain stones, to shine like torch i' the dark,
Or whether force of spell or fumigation,
(A guess that seems to come more near the mark)
Or sign made under mystic constellation,

The blaze that came from the sepulchral ark
Discovered sculpture, colour, gems, and gilding,
And whatsoever else adorned the building.

XVI
Scarcely had Bradamant above the sill
Lifter her foot, and trod the secret cave,
When the live spirit, in clear tones that thrill,
Addressed the martial virgin from the grave;
"May Fortune, chaste and noble maid, fulfil
Thine every wish!" exclaimed the wizard brave.
"Since from thy womb a princely race shall spring,
Whose name through Italy and earth shall ring.

XVII
"The noble blood derived from ancient Troy,
Mingling in thee its two most glorious streams,
Shall be the ornament, and flower, and joy
Of every lineage on which Phoebus beams,
Where genial stars lend warmth, or cold annoy,
Where Indus, Tagus, Nile, or Danube gleams;
And in thy progeny and long drawn line
Shall marquises, counts, dukes and Caesers shine.

XVIII
"Captains and cavaliers shall spring from thee,
Who both by knightly lance and prudent lore,
Shall once again to widowed Italy
Her ancient praise and fame in arms restore;
And in her realms just lords shall seated be,
(Such Numa and Augustus were of yore),
Who with their government, benign and sage,
Shall re-create on earth the golden age.

XIX
"Then, that the will of Heaven be duly brought
To a fair end through thee, in fitting date,

Which from the first to bless thy love has wrought,
And destined young Rogero for thy mate,
Let nothing interpose to break that thought,
But boldly tread the path perscribed by fate;
Nor let aught stay thee till the thief be thrown
By thy good lance, who keeps thee from thine own."

XX

Here Merlin ceased, that for the solemn feat
Melissa might prepare with fitting spell,
To show bold Bradamant, in aspect meet,
The heirs who her illustrious race should swell.
Hence many sprites she chose; but from what seat
Evoked, I know not, or if called from hell;
And gathered in one place (so bade the dame),
In various garb and guise the shadows came.

XXI

This done, into the church she called the maid,
Where she had drawn a magic ring, as wide
As might contain the damsel, prostrate laid;
With the full measure of a palm beside.
And on her head, lest spirit should invade,
A pentacle for more assurance tied.
So bade her hold her peace, and stand and look,
Then read, and schooled the demons from her book.

XXII

Lo! forth of that first cave what countless swarm
Presses upon the circle's sacred round,
But, when they would the magic rampart storm,
Finds the way barred as if by fosse or mound;
Then back the rabble turns of various form;
And when it thrice with bending march has wound
About the circle, troops into the cave,
Where stands that beauteous urn, the wizard's grave.

XXIII

"To tell at large the puissant acts and worth,
And name of each who, figured in a sprite,
Is present to our eyes before his birth,"
Said sage Melissa to the damsel bright;
"To tell the deeds which they shall act on earth,
Were labour not to finish with the night.
Hence I shall call few worthies of thy line,
As time and fair occasion shall combine.

XXIV

"See yonder first-born of thy noble breed,
Who well reflects thy fair and joyous face;
He, first of thine and of Rogero's seed,
Shall plant in Italy thy generous race.
In him behold who shall distain the mead,
And his good sword with blood of Pontier base;
The mighty wrong chastised, and traitor's guilt,
By whom his princely father's blood was spilt.

XXV

"By him King Desiderius shall be pressed,
The valiant leader of the Lombard horde:
And of the fiefs of Calaon and Este;
For this imperial Charles shall make him lord.
Hubert, thy grandson, comes behind; the best
Of Italy, with arms and belted sword:
Who shall defend the church from barbarous foes,
And more than once assure her safe repose.

XXVI

"Alberto next, unconquered captain, see,
Whose trophies shall so many fanes array.
Hugh, the bold son, is with the sire, and he
Shall conquer Milan, and the snakes display.
Azo, that next approaching form shall be,

And, his good brother dead, the Insubri sway.
Lo! Albertazo! by whose rede undone,
See Berengarius banished, and his son.

XXVII
"With him shall the imperial Otho join
In wedlock worthily his daughter fair.
And lo! another Hugh! O noble line!
O! sire succeeded by an equal heir!
He, thwarting with just cause their ill design,
Shall thrash the Romans' pride who overbear;
Shall from their hands the sovereign pontiff take,
With the third Otho, and their leaguer break.

XXVIII
"See Fulke, who to his brother will convey
All his Italian birth-right, and command
To take a mighty dukedom far away
From his fair home, in Almayn's northern land.
There he the house of Saxony shall stay,
And prop the ruin with his saving hand;
This in his mother's right he shall possess,
And with his progeny maintain and bless.

XXIX
"More famed for courtesy than warlike deed,
Azo the second, he who next repairs!
Bertoldo and Albertazo are his seed:
And, lo! the father walkes between his heirs.
By Parma's walls I see the Germans bleed,
Their second Henry quelled; such trophy bears
The one renowned in story's future page:
The next shall wed Matilda, chaste and sage.

XXX
"His virtues shall deserve so fair a flower,
(And in his age, I wot, no common grace)

To hold the half of Italy in dower,
With that descendent of first Henry's race.
Rinaldo shall succeed him in his power,
Pledge of Bertoldo's wedded love, and chase
Fierce Frederick Barbarossa's hireling bands,
Saving the church from his rapacious hands.

XXXI

"Another Azo rules Verona's town,
With its fair fields; and two great chiefs this while
(One wears the papal, one the imperial crown),
The baron, Marquis of Ancona style.
But to show all who rear the gonfalon
Of the consistory, amid that file,
Were task too long; as long to tell each deed
Achieved for Rome by thy devoted seed.

XXXII

"See Fulke and Obyson, more Azos, Hughs!
Both Henrys! — mark the father and his boy.
Two Guelphs: the first fair Umbria's land subdues,
And shall Spoleto's ducal crown enjoy.
Behold the princely phantom that ensues,
Shall turn fair Italy's long grief to joy;
I speak of the fifth Azo of thy strain,
By whom shall Ezelin be quelled and slain.

XXXIII

"Fierce Ezelin, that most inhuman lord,
Who shall be deemed by men a child of hell.
And work such evil, thinning with the sword
Who in Ausonia's wasted cities dwell;
Rome shall no more her Anthony record,
Her Marius, Sylla, Nero, Cajus fell.
And this fifth Azo shall to scathe and shame
Put Frederick, second Caeser of the name.

XXXIV

"He, with his better sceptre well contented,
Shall rule the city, seated by the streams,
Where Phoebus to his plaintive lyre lamented
The son, ill-trusted with the father's beams;
Where Cygnus spread his pinions, and the scented
Amber was wept, as fabling poet dreams.
To him such honour shall the church decree;
Fit guerdon of his works, and valour's fee.

XXXV

"But does no laurel for his brother twine,
Aldobrandino, who will carry cheer
To Rome (when Otho, with the Ghibelline,
Into the troubled capital strikes fear),
And make the Umbri and Piceni sign
Their shame, and sack the cities far and near;
Then hopeless to relieve the sacred hold,
Sue to the neighbouring Florentine for gold:

XXXVI

"And trust a noble brother to his hands,
Boasting no dearer pledge, the pact to bind:
And next, victorious o'er the German bands,
Give his triumphant ensigns to the wind:
To the afflicted church restore her lands,
And take due vengeance of Celano's kind.
Then die, cut off in manhood's early flower,
Beneath the banners of the Papal power?

XXXVII

"He, dying, leaves his brother Azo heir
Of Pesaro and fair Ancona's reign,
And all the cities which 'twixt Tronto are,
And green Isauro's stream, from mount to main;
With other heritage, more rich and rare,

Greatness of mind, and faith without a strain.
All else is Fortune's in this mortal state;
But Virtue soars beyond her love and hate.

XXXVIII
"In good Rinaldo equal worth shall shine,
(Such is the promise of his early fire)
If such a hope of thine exalted line.
Dark Fate and Fortune wreck not in their ire.
Alas! from Naples in this distant shrine,
Naples, where he is hostage for his sire,
His dirge is heard: A stripling of thy race,
Young Obyson, shall fill his grandsire's place.

XXXIX
"This lord to his dominion shall unite
Gay Reggio, joined to Modena's bold land.
And his redoubted valour lend such light,
The willing people call him to command.
Sixth of the name, his Azo rears upright
The church's banner in his noble hand:
Fair Adria's fief to him in dower shall bring
The child of second Charles, Sicilia's king.

XL
"Behold in yonder friendly group agreed.
Many fair princes of illustrious name;
Obyson, Albert famed for pious deed,
Aldobrandino, Nicholas the lame.
But we may pass them by, for better speed,
Faenza conquered, and their feats and fame;
With Adria (better held and surer gain)
Which gives her title to the neighbouring main:

XLI
"And that fair town, whose produce is the rose,
The rose which gives it name in Grecian speech:

That, too, which fishy marshes round enclose,
And Po's two currents threat with double breach;
Whose townsmen loath the lazy calm's repose,
And pray that stormy waves may lash the beach.
I pass, mid towns and towers, a countless store,
Argenta, Lugo, and a thousand more.

XLII
"See Nicholas, whom in his tender age,
The willing people shall elect their lord;
He who shall laugh to scorn the civil rage
Of the rebellious Tideus and his horde;
Whose infantine delight shall be to wage
The mimic fight, and sweat with spear and sword:
And through the discipline such nurture yields,
Shall flourish as the flower of martial fields.

XLIII
"By him rebellious plans are overthrown,
And turned upon the rash contriver's head;
And so each stratagem of warfare blown,
That vainly shall the cunning toils be spread.
To the third Otho this too late is known,
Of Parma and the pleasant Reggio dread;
Who shall by him be spoiled in sudden strife,
Of his possessions and his wretched life.

XLIV
"And still the fair dominion shall increase,
And without wrong its spreading bounds augment;
Nor its glad subjects violate the peace,
Unless provoked some outrage to resent,
And hence its wealth and welfare shall not cease;
And the Divine Disposer be content
To let it flourish (such his heavenly love!)
While the celestial spheres revolve above.

XLV

"Lo! Lionel! lo! Borse great and kind!
First duke of thy fair race, his realm's delight;
Who reigns secure, and shall more triumphs find
In peace, than warlike princes win in fight.
Who struggling Fury's hands shall tie behind
Her back, and prison Mars, removed from sight.
His fair endeavours bent to bless and stay
The people, that his sovereign rule obey.

XLVI

"Lo! Hercules, who may reproach his neighbour,
With foot half burnt, and halting gait and slow,
That at Budrio, with protecting sabre,
He saved his troops from fatal overthrow;
Not that, for guerdon of his glorious labour,
He should distress and vex him as a foe;
Chased into Barco. It were hard to say,
If most he shine in peace or martial fray.

XLVII

"Lucania, Puglia, and Calabria's strand,
Shall with the rumour of his prowess ring:
Where he shall strive in duel, hand to hand,
And gain the praise of Catalonia's king.
Him, with the wisest captains of the land
His worth shall class; such fame his actions bring;
And he the fief shall win like valiant knight,
Which thirty years before was his of right.

XLVIII

"To him his grateful city owes a debt,
The greatest subjects to their lord can owe;
Not that he moves her from a marsh, to set
Her stones, where Ceres' fruitful treasures grow.
Nor that he shall enlarge her bounds, nor yet

That he shall fence her walls against the foe;
Nor that he theatre and dome repairs,
And beautifies her streets and goodly squares;

XLIX
"Not that he keeps his lordship well defended
From the winged lions' claws and fierce attacks;
Nor that, when Gallic ravage is extended,
And the invader all Italia sacks,
His happy state alone is unoffended;
Unharassed, and ungalled by toll or tax.
Not for these blessings I recount, and more
His grateful realm shall Hercules adore;

L
"So much as that from him shall spring a pair
Of brothers, leagued no less by love than blood;
Who shall be all that Leda's children were;
The just Alphonso, Hippolite the good.
And as each twin resigned the vital air
His fellow to redeem from Stygian flood,
So each of these would gladly spend his breath,
And for his brother brave perpetual death.

LI
"In these two princes' excellent affection,
Their happy lieges more assurance feel,
Than if their noble town, for its protection,
Were girded twice by Vulcan's works of steel.
And so Alphonso in his good direction,
Justice, with knowledge and with love, shall deal,
Astrea shall appear returned from heaven,
To this low earth to varying seasons given.

LII
"Well is it that his wisdom shines as bright
As his good sire's, nor is his valour less;

Since here usurping Venice arms for fight,
And her full troops his scanty numbers press,
There she (I know not if more justly hight
Mother or stepmother) brings new distress;
But, if a mother, scarce to him more mild
Than Progue or Medea to her child.

LIII
"This chief, what time soever he shall go
Forth with his faithful crew, by night or day,
By water or by land, will shame the foe,
With memorable rout and disarray;
And this too late Romagna's sons shall know.
Led against former friends in bloody fray,
Who shall bedew the campaign with their blood,
By Santern, Po, and Zaniolus' flood.

LIV
"This shall the Spaniard know, to his dismay,
'Mid the same bounds, whom papal gold shall gain,
Who shall from him Bastia win and slay,
With cruel rage, her hapless Castellain,
The city taken; but shall dearly pay;
His crime, the town retrieved, and victor slain:
Since in the rescued city not a groom
Is left alive, to bear the news to Rome.

LV
" 'Tis he, who with his counsel and his lance,
Shall win the honours of Romagna's plain,
And open to the chivalry of France
The victory over Julius, leagued with Spain.
Paunch-deep in human blood shall steeds advance
In that fierce strife, and struggle through the slain,
'Mid crowded fields, which scarce a grace supply,
Where Greek, Italian, Frank, and Spaniard die.

LVI

"Lo! who in priestly vesture clad, is crowned
With purple hat, conferred in hallowed dome!
'Tis he, the wise, the liberal, the renowned
Hippolitus, great cardinal of Rome;
Whose actions shall in every region sound,
Where'er the honoured muse shall find a home:
To whose glad era, by indulgent heaven,
As to Augustus' is a Maro given.

LVII

"His deeds adorn his race, as from his car
The glorious sun illumes the subject earth
More than the silver moon or lesser star;
So far all others he transcends in worth.
I see this captain, ill bested for war,
Go forth afflicted, and return in mirth:
Backed by few foot, and fewer cavaliers,
He homeward barks, and fifteen gallies steers.

LVIII

"Two Sigismonds, the first, the second, see;
To these Alphonso's five good sons succeed;
Whose glories spread o'er seas and land shall be.
The first shall wed a maid of France's seed.
This is the second Hercules; and he,
(That you may know their every name and deed),
Hippolitus; who with the light shall shine,
Of his wise uncle, gilding all his line.

LIX

"Francis the third comes next; the other two
Alphonsos both; — but yet again I say,
Thy line through all its branches to pursue,
Fair virgin, would too long protract thy stay;
And Phoebus, many times, to mortal view,

Would quench and light again the lamp of day.
Then, with thy leave, 'tis time the pageant cease,
And I dismiss the shades and hold my peace."

LX
So with the lady's leave the volume closed,
Whose precepts to her will the spirits bent.
And they, where Merlin's ancient bones reposed,
From the first cavern disappearing, went.
Then Bradamant her eager lips unclosed,
Since the divine enchantress gave consent;
"And who," she cried, "that pair of sorrowing mien,
Alphonso and Hippolitus between?

LXI
"Sighing, those youths advanced amid the show,
Their brows with shame and sorrow overcast,
With downward look, and gait subdued and slow:
I saw the brothers shun them as they passed."
Melissa heard the dame with signs of woe,
And thus, with streaming eyes, exclaim'd at last:
"Ah! luckless youths, with vain illusions fed,
Whither by wicked men's bad counsel led!

LXII
"O, worthy seed of Hercules the good,
Let not their guilt beyond thy love prevail;
Alas! the wretched pair are of thy blood,
So many prevailing pity turn the scale!"
And in a sad and softer tone pursued,
"I will not further press the painful tale.
Chew on fair fancy's food: Nor deem unmeet
I will not with a bitter chase the sweet.

LXIII
"Soon as to-morrow's sun shall gild the skies
With his first light, myself the way will show

To where the wizard knight Rogero sties;
And built with polished steel the ramparts glow:
So long as through deep woods thy journey lies,
Till, at the sea arrived, I shall bestow
Such new instructions for the future way,
That thou no more shalt need Melissa's stay."

LXIV
All night the maid reposes in the cave,
And the best part in talk with Merlin spends;
While with persuasive voice the wizard grave
To her Rogero's honest love commends;
Till from the vault goes forth that virgin brave,
As through the sky the rising sun ascends,
By path, long space obscure on either side,
The weird woman still her faithful guide.

LXV
They gain a hidden glen, which heights inclose,
And mountains inaccessible to man:
And they all day toil on, without repose,
Where precipices frowned and torrents ran.
And (what may some diversion interpose)
Sweet subjects of discourse together scan,
In conference, which best might make appear
The rugged road less dismal and severe.

LXVI
Of these the greater portion served to guide
(Such the wise woman's scope) the warlike dame;
And teach by what device might be untied
Rogero's gyves, if stedfast were her flame.
"If thou wert Mars himself, or Pallas," cried
The sage Melissa, "though with thee there came
More than King Charles or Agramant command,
Against the wizard foe thou could'st not stand.

LXVII

"Besides that it is walled about with steel,
And inexpugnable his tower, and high;
Besides that his swift horse is taught to wheel,
And caracol and gallop in mid sky,
He bears a mortal shield of power to seal,
As soon as 'tis exposed, the dazzled eye;
And so invades each sense, the splendour shed,
That he who sees the blaze remains as dead.

LXVIII

"And lest to shut thine eyes, thou should'st suppose
Might serve, contending with the wizard knight;
How would'st thou know, when both in combat close,
When he strikes home, or when eschews the fight?
But to escape the blaze which blinds his foes,
And render vain each necromantic sleight,
Have here a speedy mean which cannot miss;
Nor can the world afford a way but this.

LXIX

"King Agramant of Africa a ring.
Thieved from an Indian queen by subtle guiles,
Has to a baron of his following
Consigned, who now precedes us by few miles;
Brunello he. Who wears the gift shall bring
To nought all sorceries and magic wiles.
In thefts and cheats Brunello is as well
Instructed, as the sage in charm and spell.

LXX

"Brunello, he so practised and so sly
As now I tell thee, by his king is sent,
That he with aid of mother wit may try,
And of this ring, well proved in like event,
To take Rogero from the castle high;

So has he boasted, by the wizard pent:
And to his lord such promise did impart,
Who has Rogero's presence most at heart.

LXXI
"That his escape to thee alone may owe,
Not to the king, the youthful cavalier,
How to release Rogero from his foe
And his enchanted cage, prepare to hear.
Three days along the shingle shalt thou go,
Beside the sea, whose waves will soon appear;
Thee the third day shall to a hostel bring,
Where he shall come who bears the virtuous ring.

LXXII
"That thou may'st recognise the man, in height
Less than six palms, observe one at this inn
Of black and curly hair, the dwarfish wight!
Beard overgrown about the cheek and chin;
With shaggy brow, swoln eyes, and cloudy sight,
A nose close flattened, and a sallow skin;
To this, that I may make my sketch complete,
Succinctly clad, like courier, goes the cheat.

LXXIII
"Thy conversation with this man shall turn
Upon enchantment, spell, and mystic pact;
And thou shalt, in thy talk, appear to yearn
To prove the wizard's strength, as is the fact.
But, lady, let him not thy knowledge learn
Of his good ring, which mars all magic act:
He shall propose to bring thee as a guide
To the tall castle, whither thou would'st ride.

LXXIV
"Follow him close, and viewing (for a sign),
Now near, the fortress of the enchanter hoar;

Let no false pity there thy mind incline
To stay the execution of my lore.
Give him his death; but let him not divine
Thy thought, nor grant him respite; for before
Thine eyes, concealed by it, the caitiff slips
If once he place the ring between his lips."

LXXV
Discoursing thus, they came upon the sea
Where Garonne near fair Bordeaux meets the tide;
Here, fellow travellers no more to be,
Some natural tears they drop and then divide.
Duke Aymon's child, who slumbers not till she
Release her knight, holds on till even-tide:
'Twas then the damsel at a hostel rested,
Where Sir Brunello was already guested.

LXXVI
The maid Brunello knows as soon as found
(So was his image on her mind impressed),
And asks him whence he came, and whither bound;
And he replies and lies, as he is pressed.
The dame, who is forewarned, and knows her ground,
Feigns too as well as he, and lies her best:
And changes sex and sect, and name and land,
And her quick eye oft glances at his hand;

LXXVII
Oft glances at his resless hand, in fear
That he might undetected make some prize;
Nor ever lets the knave approach too near,
Well knowing his condition: In this guise
The couple stand together, when they hear
A sudden sound: but what that sound implies
I, sir, shall tell hereafter with its cause;
But first shall break my song with fitting pause.

CANTO 4

ARGUMENT
The old Atlantes suffers fatal wreck,
Foiled by the ring, and young Rogero freed,
Who soars in air till he appears a speck,
Mounted upon the wizard's winged steed.
Obediant to the royal Charles's beck,
He who had followed Love's imperious lead,
Rinaldo, disembarks on British land,
And saves Genevra, doomed to stake and brand.

I
Though an ill mind appear in simulation,
And, for the most, such quality offends;
'Tis plain that this in many a situation
Is found to further beneficial ends,
And save from blame, and danger, and vexation;
Since we converse not always with our friends,
In this, less clear than clouded, mortal life,
Beset with snares, and full of envious strife.

II
If after painful proof we scarcely find
A real friend, through various chances sought,
To whom we may communicate our mind,
Keeping no watch upon our wandering thought;
What should the young Rogero's lady kind
Do with Brunello, not sincere, but fraught
With treasons manifold, and false and tainted,
As by the good enchantress truly painted?

III
She feigns as well with that deceitful scout;
(Fitting with him the father of all lies)
Watches his thievish hands in fear and doubt;

And follows every motion with her eyes.
When lo! a mighty noise is heard without!
"O mighty mother! king of heaven!" she cries,
"What thing is this I hear?" and quickly springs
Towards the place from whence the larum rings,

IV

And sees the host and all his family,
Where, one to door, and one to window slips,
With eyes upturned and gazing at the sky,
As if to witness comet or eclipse.
And there the lady views, with wondering eye,
What she had scarce believed from other's lips,
A feathered courser, sailing through the rack,
Who bore an armed knight upon his back.

V

Broad were his pinions, and of various hue;
Seated between, a knight the saddle pressed,
Clad in steel arms, which wide their radiance threw,
His wonderous course directed to the west:
There dropt among the mountains lost to view.
And this was, as that host informed his guest,
(And true the tale) a sorcerer, who made
Now farther, now more near, his frequent raid.

VI

"He, sometimes towering, soars into the skies;
Then seems, descending, but to skim the ground:
And of all beauteous women makes a prize,
Who, to their mischief, in these parts are found.
Hence, whether in their own or other's eyes,
Esteemed as fair, the wretched damsels round,
(And all in fact the felon plunders) hine;
As fearing of the sun to be descried.

VII
"A castle on the Pyrenean height
The necromancer keeps, the work of spell."
(The host relates) "of steel, so fair and bright,
All nature cannot match the wonderous shell.
There many cavaliers, to prove their might,
Have gone, but none returned the tale to tell.
So that I doubt, fair sir, the thief enthralls
Or slays whoever in the encounter falls."

VIII
The watchful maid attends to every thing,
Glad at her heart, and trusting to complete
(What she shall compass by the virtuous ring)
The downfall of the enchanter and his seat.
Then to the host — "A guide I pray thee bring,
Who better knows than me the thief's retreat.
So burns my heart. (nor can I choose but go)
To strive in battle with this wizard foe."

IX
"It shall not need," exclaimed the dwarfish Moor,
"For I, myself, will serve you as a guide;
Who have the road set down, with other lore,
So that you shall rejoice with me to ride."
He meant the ring, but further hint forbore;
Lest dearly he the avowed should abide.
And she to him — "Your guidance gives me pleasure."
Meaning by this she hoped to win his treasure.

X
What useful was to say, she said, and what
Might hurt her with the Saracen, concealed.
Well suited to her ends, the host had got
A palfrey, fitting for the road or field.
She bought the steed, and as Aurora shot

Her rosy rays, rode forth with spear and shield:
And maid and courier through a valley wind,
Brunello now before and now behind.

XI
From wood to wood, from mount to mountain hoar,
They clomb a summit, which in cloudless sky
Discovers France and Spain, and either shore.
As from a peak of Apennine the eye
May Tuscan and Sclavonian sea explore,
There, whence we journey to Camaldoli.
Then through a rugged path and painful wended,
Which thence into a lowly vale descended.

XII
A rock from that deep valley's centre springs;
Bright walls of steel about its summit go:
And this as high that airy summit flings,
As it leaves all the neighbouring cliffs below.
He may not scale the height who has not wings,
And vainly would each painful toil bestow.
"Lo! where his prisoners!" Sir Brunello cries,
"Ladies and cavaliers, the enchanter sties."

XIII
Scarped smooth upon four parts, the mountain bare
Seemed fashioned with the plumb, by builder's skill
Nor upon any side was path or stair,
Which furnished man the means to climb the hill.
The castle seemed the very nest and lair
Of animal, supplied with plume and quill.
And here the damsel knows 'tis time to slay
The wily dwarf, and take the ring away.

XIV
But deems it foul, with blood of man to stain
Unarmed and of so base a sort, her brand;

For well, without his death, she may obtain
The costly ring; and so suspends her hand.
Brunello, off his guard, with little pain,
She seized, and strongly bound with girding band:
Then to a lofty fir made fast the string;
But from his finger first withdrew the ring.

XV

Neither by tears, nor groans, nor sound of woe,
To move the stedfast maid the dwarf had power:
She down the rugged hill descended slow,
Until she reached the plain beneath the tower.
Then gave her bugle breath, the keep below,
To call the castled wizard to the stower:
And when the sound was finished, threatening cried,
And called him to the combat and defied.

XVI

Not long within his gate the enchanter stayed,
After he heard the voice and bugle ring.
Against the foe, who seemed a man, arrayed
In arms, with him the horse is on the wing.
But his appearance well consoled the maid,
Who, with small cause for fear, beheld him bring
Nor mace, nor rested lance, nor bitting sword,
Wherewith the corselet might be bruised or gored.

XVII

On his left arm alone his shield he took,
Covered all o'er with silk of crimson hue;
In his right-hand he held an open book,
Whence, as the enchanter read, strange wonder grew:
For often times, to sight, the lance he shook;
And flinching eyelids could not hide the view;
With tuck or mace he seemed to smite the foe:
But sate aloof and had not struck a blow.

XVIII

No empty fiction wrought by magic lore,
But natural was the steed the wizard pressed;
For him a filly to griffin bore;
Hight hippogryph. In wings and beak and crest,
Formed like his sire, as in the feet before;
But like the mare, his dam, in all the rest.
Such on Riphaean hills, though rarely found,
Are bred, beyond the frozen ocean's bound.

XIX

Drawn by enchantment from his distant lair,
The wizard thought but how to tame the foal;
And, in a month, instructed him to bear
Saddle and bit, and gallop to the goal;
And execute on earth or in mid air,
All shifts of manege, course and caracole;
He with such labour wrought. This only real,
Where all the rest was hollow and ideal.

XX

This truth by him with fictions was combined,
Whose sleight passed red for yellow, black for white:
But all his vain enchantments could not blind
The maid, whose virtuous ring assured her sight:
Yet she her blows discharges at the wind;
And spurring here and there prolongs the fight.
So drove or wheeled her steed, and smote at nought,
And practised all she had before been taught.

XXI

When she sometime had fought upon her horse,
She from the courser on her feet descends:
To compass and more freely put in force,
As by the enchantress schooled, her wily ends.
The wizard, to display his last resource,

Unweeting the defence, towards her wends.
He bares the shield, secure to blind his foe,
And by the magic light, astonished, throw.

XXII
The shield might have been shown at first, nor he
Needed to keep the cavaliers at bay;
But that he loved some master-stroke to see,
Achieved by lance or sword in single fray.
As with the captive mouse, in sportive glee,
The wily cat is sometimes seen to play;
Till waxing wroth, or weary of her prize,
She bites, and at a snap the prisoner dies.

XXIII
To cat and mouse, in battles fought before,
I liken the magician and his foes;
But the comparison holds good no more:
For, with the ring, the maid against him goes;
Firm and attentive still, and watching sore,
Lest upon her the wizard should impose:
And as she sees him bare the wondrous shield,
Closes her eyes and falls upon the field.

XXIV
Not that the shining metal could offend,
As wont those others, from its cover freed;
But so the damsel did, to make descend
The vain enchanter from his wondrous steed.
Nor was in ought defeated of her end;
For she no sooner on the grassy mead
Had laid her head, than wheeling widely round,
The flying courser pitched upon the ground.

XXV
Already cased again, the shield was hung,
By the magician, at his sadle bow.

He lights and seeks her, who like wolf among
The bushes, couched in thicket, waits the roe;
She without more delay from ambush sprung,
As he drew near, and grappled fast the foe.
That wretched man, the volume by whose aid
He all his battles fought, on earth had laid:

XXVI
And ran to bind her with a chain, which he,
Girt round about him for such a purpose, wore;
Because he deemed she was no less to be
Mastered and bound than those subdued before.
Him hath the dame already flung; by me
Excused with reason, if he strove not more.
For fearful were the odds between that bold
And puissant maid, and warrior weak and old!

XXVII
Intending to behead the fallen foe,
She lifts her conquering hand; but in mid space,
When she beholds his visage, stops the blow,
As if disdaining a revenge so base.
She sees in him, her prowess has laid low,
A venerable sire, with sorrowing face;
Whose hair and wrinkles speak him, to her guess,
Of years six score and ten, or little less.

XXVIII
"Kill me, for love of God!" (afflicted sore,
The old enchanter full of wrath did cry).
But the victorious damsel was not more
Averse to kill, than he was bent to die.
To know who was the necromancer hoar
The gentle lady had desire, and why
The tower he in that savage place designed,
Doing such outrage foul to all mankind.

XXIX

"Nor I, by malice moved, alas! poor wight,"
(The weeping necromancer answer made,)
"Built the fair castle on the rocky height,
Nor yet for rapine ply the robber's trade;
But only to redeem a gentle knight
From danger sore and death, by love was swayed;
Who, as the skies foreshow, in little season,
Is doomed to die a Christian, and by treason.

XXX

"The sun beholds not 'twixt the poles, a Child
So excellent as him, and passing fair;
Who from his infancy, Rogero styled,
(Atlantes I) was tutored by my care.
By love of fame and evil stars beguiled,
He follows into France Troyano's heir.
Him, in my eyes, than son esteemed more dear,
I seek to snatch from France and peril near.

XXXI

"I only built the beauteous keep to be
Rogero's dungeon, safely harboured there;
Who whilom was subdued in fight by me,
As I to-day had hoped thyself to snare,
And dames and knights, and more of high degree,
Have to this tower conveyed, his lot to share,
That with such partners of his prison pent,
He might the loss of freedom less lament.

XXXII

"Save they should seek to break their dungeon's bound,
I grant my inmates every other pleasure.
For whatsoever in the world is found,
Search its four quarters, in this keep I treasure;
(Whatever heart can wish or tongue can sound)

Cates, brave attire, game, sport, or mirthful measure.
My field well sown, I well had reaped my grain.
But that thy coming makes my labour vain.

XXXIII
"Ah! then unless thy heart less beauteous be
Than thy sweet face, mar not my pious care;
Take my steel buckler, this I give to thee,
And take that horse, which flies so fast in air,
Nor meddle with my castle more; or free
One or two captive friends, the rest forbear —
Or (for I crave but this) release them all,
So that Rogero but remain my thrall.

XXXIV
"Or if disposed to take him from my sight,
Before the youth be into France conveyed,
Be pleased to free my miserable sprite
From its now rotted bark, long decayed."
"Prate as thou wilt, I shall restore the knight
To liberty," replied the martial maid,
"Nor offer shield and courser to resign,
Which are not in thy gift, — already mine.

XXXV
"Nor were they thine to take or to bestow,
Would it appear that such exchange were wise;
Thou sayest to save him from what stars foreshow,
And cheat an evil influence of the skies
Rogero is confined. Thou canst not know,
Or knowing, canst not change his destinies:
For, if unknown an ill so near to thee,
Far less mayest thou another's fate foresee.

XXXVI
"Seek not thy death from me; for the petition
Is made in vain; but if for death thou sigh,

Though the whole world refused the requisition,
A soul resolved would find the means to die.
But ope thy gates to give thy guests dismission
Before thine hand the knot of life untie."
So spake the scornful dame with angry mock,
Speeding her captive still towards the rock.

XXXVII
Round by the conqueror with the chain he bore,
Atlantes walked, the damsel following nigh,
Who trusted not to the magician hoar,
Although he seemed subdued in port and eye.
Nor many paces went the pair, before
They at the mountain's foot the cleft espy,
With steps by which the rugged hill to round;
And climb, till to the castle-gate they wound:

XXXVIII
Atlantes from the threshold, graved by skill,
With characters and wondrous signs, upturned
A virtuous stone, where, underneath the sill,
Pots, with perpetual fire and secret, burned.
The enchanter breaks them; and at once the hill
To an inhospitable rock is turned.
Nor wall nor tower on any side is seen,
As if no castle there had ever been.

XXXIX
Then from the lady's toils the wizard clears
His limbs, as thrush escapes the fowler's snare;
With him as well his castle disappears,
And leaves the prisoned troop in open air;
From their gay lodgings, dames and cavaliers,
Unhoused upon that desert, bleak and bare.
And many at the freedom felt annoy,
Which dispossessed them of such life of joy.

XL

There is Gradasso, there is Sacripant,
There is Prasildo, noble cavalier,
Who with Rinaldo came from the Levant;
Iroldo, too, Prasildo's friend sincere.
And there, at last, the lovely Bradamant
Discerns Rogero, long desired and dear;
Who, when assured it was that lady, flew
With joyful cheer to greet the damsel true;

XLI

As her he prized before his eyes, his heart,
His life; from that day cherished when she stood
Uncasqued for him, and from the fight apart;
And hence an arrow drank her virgin blood.
'Twere long to tell who launched the cruel dart,
And how the lovers wandered in the wood;
Now guided by the sun, and now benighted,
Here first since that encounter reunited.

XLII

Now that the stripling sees her here, and knows
Alone she freed him from the wizard's nest,
He deems, his bosom with such joy overflows,
That he is singly fortunate and blest.
Thither, where late the damsel conquered, goes
The band, descending from the mountain's crest;
And finds the hippogryph, who bore the shield,
But in its case of crimson silk concealed.

XLIII

To take him by the rein the lady there
Approached, and he stood fast till she was nigh,
Then spread his pinions to the liquid air,
And at short distance lit, half-mountain high:
And, as she follows him with fruitless care,

Not longer flight nor shorter will he try.
'Tis thus the raven, on some sandy beach,
Lures on the dog, and flits beyond his reach.

XLIV
Gradasso, Sacripant, Rogero, who
With all those other knights below were met,
Where'er, they hope he may return, pursue
The beast, and up and down, each pass beset.
He having led those others, as he flew,
Often to rocky height, and bottom wet,
Among the rocks of the moist valley dropt,
And at short distance from Rogero stopt.

XLV
This was Atlantes the enchanter's deed,
Whose pious wishes still directed were,
To see Rogero from his peril freed:
This was his only thought, his only care;
Who for such end dispatched the winged steed,
Him out of Europe by this sleight to bear.
Rogero took his bridle, but in vain;
For he was restive to the guiding rein.

XLVI
Now the bold youth from his Frontino flings
(Frontino was his gentle courser hight)
Then leaps on him who towers in air, and stings
And goads his haughty heart with rowels bright.
He runs a short career; then upward springs.
And through mid ether soars a fairer flight
Than hawk, from which the falconer plucks away
In time the blinding hood, and points her prey.

XLVII
When her Rogero the fair dame discerned,
In fearful peril, soar so high a strain,

She stood long space amazed, ere she returned
To her right judgement, and sound wits again:
And what she erst of Ganymede had learned,
Snatched up to heaven from his paternal reign,
Feared might befall the stripling, born through air,
As gentle as young Ganymede and fair.

XLVIII
She on Rogero looks with stedfast eyes
As long as feeble sight can serve her use;
And in her mind next tracks him through the skies,
When sight in vain the cherished youth pursues.
And still renewing tears, and groans, and sighs,
Will not afford her sorrow peace or truce.
After the knight had vanished from her view,
Her eyes she on the good Frontino threw.

XLIX
And lest the courser should become the prey
Of the first traveller, who passed the glen,
Him will not leave; but thence to bear away
Resolves, in trust to see his lord again.
The griffin soars, nor can Rogero stay
The flying courser; while, beneath his ken,
Each peak and promontory sinks in guise,
That he discerns not flat from mountain-rise.

L
After the hippogryph has won such height,
That he is lessened to a point, he bends
His course for where the sun, with sinking light,
When he goes round the heavenly crab, descends;
And shoots through air, like well-greased bark and light,
Which through the sea a wind propitious sends.
Him leave we on his way, who well shall speed,
And turn we to Rinaldo in his need.

LI
Day after day the good Rinaldo fares,
Forced by the wind, the spacious ocean through;
Now westward borne, and now toward the Bears;
For night and day the ceaseless tempest blew.
Scotland at last her dusky coast uprears,
And gives the Caledonian wood to view;
Which, through its shadowy groves of ancient oak,
Oft echoes to the champion's sturdy stroke.

LII
Through this roves many a famous cavalier,
Renowned for feat in arms, of British strain;
And throng from distant land, or country near,
French, Norse, of German knights, a numerous train.
Let none, save he be valiant, venture here,
Where, seeking glory, death may be his gain.
Here Arthur, Galahalt, and Gauvaine fought,
And well Sir Launcelot and Tristram wrought.

LIII
And other worthies of the table round;
(Of either table, whether old or new)
Whose trophies yet remain upon the ground;
Proof of their valiant feats, Rinaldo true
Forthwith his armour and Bayardo found,
And landed on the woody coast: The crew
He bade, with all the haste they might, repair
To Berwick's neighbouring port, and wait him there.

LIV
Without a guide or company he went
Through that wide forest; choosing now this way,
Now that, now other, as it might present
Hope of adventurous quest or hard assay:
And, ere the first day's circling sun is spent,

The peer is guested in an abbey gray:
Which spends much wealth in harbouring those who claim
Its shelter, warlike knight or wandering dame.

LV
The monks and abbot to Mount Alban's peer
A goodly welcome in their house accord;
Who asked, but not before with savoury cheer
He amply had his wearied strength restored,
If in that tract, by errant cavalier,
Often adventurous quest might be explored,
In which a man might prove, by dangerous deed,
If blame or glory were his fitting meed.

LVI
They answered, in those woods he might be sure
Many and strange adventures would be found;
But deeds, there wrought, were, like the place, obscure,
And, for the greater part, not bruited round.
"Then seek (they said) a worthier quest, secure
Your works will not be buried underground.
So that the glorious act achieved, as due,
Fame may your peril and your pain pursue.

LVII
"And if you would your warlike worth assay,
Prepare the worthiest enterprize to hear,
That, e'er in times of old or present day,
Was undertaken by a cavalier.
Our monarch's daughter needs some friendly stay,
Now sore bested, against a puissant peer:
Lurcanio is the doughty baron's name,
Who would bereave her both of life and fame.

LVIII
"Her he before her father does pursue,
Perchance yet more for hatred than for right;

And vouches, to a gallery she updrew
A lover, seen by him, at dead of night.
Hence death by fire will be the damsel's due,
Such is our law, unless some champion fight
On her behalf, and, ere a month go by,
(Nigh spent) upon the accuser prove the lie.

LIX
"Our impious Scottish law, severe and dread,
Wills, that a woman, whether low or high
Her state, who takes a man into her bed,
Except her husband, for the offence shall die.
Nor is there hope of ransom for her head,
Unless to her defence some warrior hie;
And as her champion true, with spear and shield,
Maintain her guiltless in the listed field.

LX
"The king, sore grieving for Geneura bright,
For such is his unhappy daughter's name,
Proclaims by town and city, that the knight
Who shall deliver her from death and shame,
He to the royal damsel will unite,
With dower, well suited to a royal dame;
So that the valiant warrior who has stood
In her defence, be come of gentle blood.

LXI
"But if within a month no knight appear,
Or coming, conquer not, the damsel dies.
A like emrpize were worthier of your spear
Than wandering through these woods in lowly guise.
Besides, the eternal trophy you shall rear,
You by the deed shall gain a glorious prize,
The sweetest flower of all the ladies fair
That betwixt Ind and Atlas' pillars are.

LXII
"And you with wealth and state shall guerdoned be,
So that you evermore may live content,
And the king's grace, if through your means he see
His honour raised anew, now well-nigh spent.
Besides, you by the laws of chivalry
Are bound to venge the damsel foully shent.
For she, whose life is by such treason sought,
Is chaste and spotless in the common thought."

LXIII
Rinaldo mused awhile, and then replied,
"And must a gentle damsel die by fire,
Because she with a lover's wish complied,
And quenched within her arms his fond desire?
Cursed be the law by which the dame is tried!
Cursed he who would permit a doom so dire!
Perish (such fate were just!) who cruel proves!
Not she that life bestows on him who loves.

LXIV
"Or true or false Geneura's tale of shame;
If she her lover blessed I little heed:
For this my praise the lady well might claim,
If manifest were not that gentle deed.
My every thought is turned to aid the dame.
Grant me but one to guide my steps, and lead
Quickly to where the foul accuser stands,
I trust in God to loose Geneura's bands.

LXV
"I will not vouch her guiltless in my thought,
In fear to warrant what is false; but I
Boldly maintain, in such an act is nought
For which the damsel should deserve to die;
And ween unjust, or else of wit distraught,

Who statutes framed of such severity;
Which, as iniquitous, should be effaced,
And with a new and better code replaced.

LXVI
"If like desire, and if an equal flame
Move one and the other sex, who warmly press
To that soft end of love (their goal the same)
Which to the witless crowd seems rank excess;
Say why shall woman — merit scathe or blame,
Though lovers, one or more, she may caress;
While man to sin with whom he will is free,
And meets with praise, not mere impunity?

LXVII
"By this injurious law, unequal still,
On woman is inflicted open wrong;
And to demonstrate it a grievous ill,
I trust in God, which has been borne too long."
To good Rinaldo's sentence, with one will,
Deeming their sires unjust, assents the throng,
Their sires who such outrageous statute penned,
And king, who might, but does not, this amend.

LXVIII
When the new dawn, with streaks of red and white,
Broke in the east, and cleared the hemisphere,
Rinaldo took his steed and armour bright:
A squire that abbey furnished to the peer.
With him, for many leagues and miles, the knight
Pricked through the dismal forest dark and drear;
While they towards the Scottish city ride,
Where the poor damsel's cause is to be tried.

LXIX
Seeking their way to shorten as they wound,
They to the wider track a path preferred;

When echoing through the gloomy forest round,
Loud lamentations nigh the road were heard.
Towards a neighbouring vale, whence came the sound,
This his Bayardo, that his hackney spurred;
And viewed, between two grisly ruffians there,
A girl, who seemed at distance passing fair.

LXX
But woe begone and weeping was the maid
As ever damsel dame, or wight was seen:
Hard by the barbarous twain prepared the blade,
To deluge with that damsel's blood the green.
She to delay her death awhile essayed,
Until she pity moved with mournful mien.
This when Rinaldo near approaching eyes,
He thither drives with threats and furious cries.

LXXI
The ruffians turn their backs and take to flight
As soon as they the distant succour view,
And squat within a valley out of sight:
Nor cares the good Rinaldo to pursue.
To her approaching, sues Mount Alban's knight,
To say what on her head such evil drew;
And, to save time, commands his squire to stoop,
And take the damsel on his horse's croup.

LXXII
And as the lady nearer he surveyed,
Her wise behaviour marked and beauty's bloom;
Though her fait countenance was all dismayed,
And by the fear of death o'erspread with gloom.
Again to know, the gentle knight essayed,
Who had prepared for her so fell a doom;
And she began to tell in humble tone
What to another canto I postpone.

CANTO 5

ARGUMENT
Lurcanio, by a false report abused,
Deemed by Geneura's fault his brother dead,
Weening the faithless duke, whom she refused,
Was taken by the damsel to her bed;
And her before the king and peers accused:
But to the session Ariodantes led,
Strives with his brother in disguise. In season
Rinaldo comes to venge the secret treason.

I
Among all other animals who prey
On earth, or who unite in friendly wise,
Whether they mix in peace or moody fray,
No male offends his mate. In safety hies
The she bear, matched with hers, through forest gray:
The lioness beside the lion lies:
Wolves, male and female, live in loving cheer;
Nor gentle heifer dreads the wilful steer.

II
What Fury, what abominable Pest
Such poison in the human heart has shed,
That still 'twixt man and wife, with rage possessed,
Injurious words and foul reproach are said?
And blows and outrage hase their peace molest,
And bitter tears still wash the genial bed;
Not only watered by the tearful flood,
But often bathed by senseless ire with blood?

III
Not simply a rank sinner, he appears
To outrage nature, and his God to dare,
Who his foul hand against a woman rears,

Or of her head would harm a single hair.
But who what drug the burning entrail sears,
Or who for her would knife or noose prepare,
No man appears to me, though such to sight
He seem, but rather some infernal sprite.

IV

Such, and no other were those ruffians two,
Whom good Rinaldo from the damsel scared,
Conducted to these valleys out of view,
That none might wot of her so foully snared.
I ended where the damsel, fair of hue,
To tell the occasion of her scathe prepared,
To the good Paladin, who brought release;
And in conclusion thus my story piece.

V

"Of direr deed than ever yet was done,"
The gentle dame began, "Sir cavalier,
In Thebes, Mycene, Argos, or upon
Other more savage soil, prepare to hear;
And I believe, that if the circling sun
To these our Scottish shores approach less near
Than other land, 'tis that he would eschew
A foul ferocious race that shocks his view.

VI

"All times have shown that man has still pursued
With hair, in every clime, his natural foe;
But to deal death to those who seek our good
Does from too ill and foul a nature flow.
Now, that the truth be better understood,
I shall from first to last the occasion show,
Why in my tender years, against all right,
Those caitiffs would have dome me foul despite.

VII
" 'Tis fitting you should know, that in the spring
Of life, I to the palace made resort;
There served long time the daughter of the king,
And grew with her in growth, well placed in court.
When cruel love, my fortune envying,
Willed I should be his follower and his sport;
And made, beyond each Scottish lord and knight,
Albany's duke find favour in my sight.

VIII
"And for he seemed to cherish me above
All mean; his love a love as ardent bred.
We hear, indeed, and see, but do not prove
Man's faith, nor is his bosom's purpose read.
Believing still, and yielding to my love,
I ceased not till I took him to my bed;
Nor, of all chambers, in that evil hour,
Marked I was in Geneura's priviest bower.

IX
"Where, hoarded, she with careful privacy
Preserved whatever she esteemed most rare;
There many times she slept. A gallery
From thence projected into the open air.
Here oft I made my lover climb to me,
And (what he was to mount) a hempen stair,
When him I to my longing arms would call,
From the projecting balcony let fall.

X
"For here my passion I as often fed
As good Geneura's absence made me bold;
Who with the varying season changed her bed,
To shun the burning heat or pinching cold,
And Albany, unseen and safely sped;

For, fronting a dismantled street, and old,
Was built that portion of the palace bright;
Nor any went that way by day or night.

XI
"So was for many days and months maintained
By us, in secrecy, the amorous game;
Still grew by love, and such new vigour gained,
I in my inmost bosom felt the flame;
And that he little loved, and deeply feigned
Weened not, so was I blinded to my shame:
Though, in a thousand certain signs betrayed,
The faithless knight his base deceit bewrayed.

XII
"After some days, of fair Geneura he
A suitor showed himself; I cannot say
If this began before he sighed for me,
Or, after, of this love he made assay:
But judge, alas! with what supremacy
He ruled my heart, how absolute his sway!
Since this he owned, and thought no shame to move
Me to assist him in his second love.

XIII
"Unlike what he bore me, he said, indeed,
That was not true which he for her displayed;
But so pretending love, he hoped to speed,
And celebrate due spousals with the maid.
He with her royal sire might well succeed,
Were she consenting to the boon he prayed;
For after our good king, for wealth and birth
In all the realm, was none of equal worth.

XIV
"Me he persuades, if through my ministry
He the king's son-in-law elected were,

For I must know he next the king would be
Advanced as high, as subject could repair,
The merit should be mine, and ever he
So great a benefit in mind would bear;
And he would cherish me above his bride,
And more than every other dame beside.

XV
"I, who to please him was entirely bent,
Who never could or would gainsay his will,
Upon those days alone enjoy content,
When I find means his wishes to fulfil:
And snatch at all occasions which present
A mode, his praise and merits to instil:
And for my lover with all labour strain,
And industry, Geneura's love to gain.

XVI
"With all my heart, in furtherance of his suit,
I wrought what could be done, God truly knows;
But with Geneura this produced no friut,
Nor her to grace my duke could I dispose.
For that another love had taken root
In her, whose every fond affection flows
Towards a gentle knight of courteous lore,
Who sought our Scotland from a distant shore:

XVII
"And with a brother, then right young, to stay
In our king's court, came out of Italy:
And there of knightly arms made such assay,
Was none in Britain more approved than he;
Prized by the king, who (no ignoble pay),
Rewarding him like his nobility,
Bestowed upon the youth, with liberal hand,
Burghs, baronies, and castles, woods and land.

XVIII

"Dear to the monarch, to the daughter still
This lord was dearer, Ariodantes hight.
Her with affection might his valour fill;
But knowledge of his love brought more delight.
Nor old Vesuvius, nor Sicilia's hill,
Nor Troy-town, ever, with a blaze so bright,
Flamed, as with all his heart, the damsel learned,
For love of her young Ariodantes burned.

XIX

"The passion which she bore the lord, preferred
And loved with perfect truth and all her heart,
Was the occassion I was still unheard;
Nor hopeful answer would she e'er impart:
And still the more my lover's suit I stirred,
And to obtain his guerdon strove with art,
Him she would censure still, and ever more
Was strengthened in the hate she nursed before.

XX

"My wayward lover often I excite
So vain and bootless an emprize to quit;
Nor idly hope to turn her stedfast sprite,
Too deeply with another passion smit;
And make apparent to the Scottish knight,
Ariodantes such a flame had lit
In the young damsel's breast, that seas in flood
Would not have cooled one whit her boiling blood.

XXI

"This Polinesso many times had heard
From me (for such the Scottish baron's name)
Well warranted by sight as well as word,
How ill his love was cherished by the dame.
To see another to himself preferred

Not only quenched the haughty warrior's flame,
But the fond love, which in his bosom burned
Into despiteful rage and hatred turned.

XXII
"Between Geneura and her faithful knight
Such discord and ill will he schemed to shed,
And put betwixt the pair such foul despite.
No time should heal the quarrel he had bred;
Bringing such scandal on that damsel bright,
The stain should cleave to her, alive or dead:
Nor, bent to wreck her on this fatal shelf,
Counselled with me, or other but himself.

XXIII
" `Dalinda mine,' he said, his project brewed,
(Dalinda is my name) `you needs must know,
That from the root although the trunk be hewed,
Successive suckers many times will grow.
Thus my unhappy passion is renewed,
Tenacious still of life, and buds; although
Cut off by ill success, with new increase:
Nor, till I compass my desire, will cease.

XXIV
" `Nor hope of pleasure this so much has wrought,
As that to compass my design would please;
And, if not in effect, at least in thought
To thrive, would interpose some little ease.
Then every time your bower by me is sought,
When in her bed Geneura slumbers, seize
What she puts off, and be it still your care
To dress yourself in all her daily wear.

XXV
" `Dispose your locks and deck yourself as she
Goes decked; and, as you can, with cunning heed,

Imitate her; then to the gallery
You, furnished with the corded stair, shall speed:
I shall ascend it in the phantasy
That you are she, of whom you wear the weed:
And hope, that putting on myself this cheat,
I in short time shall quench my amorous heat.'

XXVI
"So said the knight; and I, who was distraught,
And all beside myself, was not aware
That the design, in which he help besought,
Was manifestly but too foul a snare;
And in Geneura's clothes disguised, as taught,
Let down (so oft I used) the corded stair.
Nor I the traitor's foul deceit perceived,
Until the deadly mischief was achieved.

XXVII
"The duke, this while, to Ariodantes' ears
Had these, or other words like these, addressed;
(For leagued in friendship were the cavaliers,
Till, rivals, they pursued this common quest)
"I marvel, since you are of all my peers
He, whom I must have honoured and caressed,
And held in high regard, and cherished still,
You should my benefits repay so ill.

XXVIII
" `I am assured you comprehend and know
Mine and Geneura's love, and old accord;
And, in legitimate espousal, how
I am about to claim her from my lord:
Then why disturb my suit, and why bestow
Your heart on her who offers no reward?
By Heaven, I should respect your claim and place,
Were your condition mine, and mine your case.'

XXIX

" `And I,' cried Ariodantes, `marvel more'
(In answer to the Scottish lord) `at you,
Since I of her enamoured was, before
That gentle damsel ever met your view;
And know, you are assured how evermore
We two have loved; — was never love more true —
Are certain she alone would share my lot;
And are as well assured she loves you not.

XXX

" `Why have not I from you the same respect,
To which, for friendship past, you would pretend
From me; and I should bear you in effect,
If your hope stood more fair to gain its end?
No less than you, to wed her I expect;
And if your fortunes here my wealth transcend,
As favoured of the king, as you, above
You, am I happy in his daughter's love.'

XXXI

" `Of what a strange mistake,' (to him replied
The duke) `your foolish passion is the root!
You think yourself beloved; I, on my side,
Believe the same; this try we by the fruit.
You of your own proceeding nothing hide,
And I will tell the secrets of my suit:
And let the man who proves least favoured, yield,
Provide himself elsewhere, and quit the field.

XXXII

" `I am prepared, if such your wish, to swear
Nothing of what is told me to reveal;
And will that you assure me, for your share,
You shall what I recount as well conceal.'
Uniting in the pact, the rival pair

Their solemn vows upon the Bible seal:
And when they had the mutual promise plighted,
Ariodantes first his tale recited.

XXXIII
"Then plainly, and by simple facts averred,
How with Geneura stood his suit, avows;
And how, engaged by writing and by word,
She swore she would not be another's spouse.
How, if to him the Scottish king demurred,
Virgin austerity she ever vows;
And other bridal bond for aye eschewed,
To pass her days in barren solitude.

XXXIV
"Then added, how he hoped by worth, which he
Had more than once avouched, with knightly brand,
And yet might vouch, to the prosperity
And honour of the king, and of his land,
To please so well that monarch, as to be
By him accounted worthy of the hand
Of his fair child, espoused with his consent:
Since he in this her wishes would content.

XXXV
"Then so concludes — `I stand upon this ground,
Nor I intruder fear, encroaching nigh;
Nor seek I more; 'tis here my hopes I bound;
Nor, striving for Geneura's love, would I
Seek surer sign of it than what is found,
By God allowed, in wedlock's lawful tie;
And other suit were hopeless, am I sure,
So excellent she is, and passing pure.'

XXXVI
"When Ariodantes had, with honest mind,
Told what reward he hoped should quit his pain,

False Polinesso, who before designed
To make Geneura hateful to her swain,
Began — `Alas! you yet are far behind
My hopes, and shall confess your own are vain;
And say, as I the root shall manifest
Of my good fortune, I alone am blest.

XXXVII
" `With you Geneura feigns, nor pays nor prizes
Your passion, which with hopes and words is fed;
And, more than this, your foolish love despises:
And this to me the damsel oft has said,
Of hers I am assured; of no surmises,
Vain, worthless words, or idle promise bred.
And I to you the fact in trust reveal,
Though this I should in better faith conceal.

XXXVIII
" `There passes not a month, but in that space
Three nights, four, six, and often ten, the fair
Receives me with that joy in her embrace,
Which seems to second so the warmth we share.
This you may witness, and shall judge the case;
If empty hopes can with my bliss compare.
Then since my happier fortune is above
Your wishes, yield, and seek another love.'

XXXIX
" `This will I not believe,' in answer cried
Ariodantes, `well assured you lie,
And that you have this string of falsehoods tied,
To scare me from the dear emprize I try.
But charge, so passing foul, you shall abide,
And vouch what you have said in arms; for I
Not only on your tale place no reliance;
But as a traitor hurl you my defiance.'

XL
"To him rejoined the duke, 'I ween 'twere ill
To take the battle upon either part,
Since surer mean our purpose may fulfill;
And if it please, my proof I can impart.'
Ariodantes trembled, and a chill
Went through his inmost bones; and sick at heart,
Had he in full believed his rival's boast,
Would on the spot have yielded up the ghost.

XLI
"With wounded heart, and faltering voice, pale face,
And mouth of gall, he answered, 'When I see
Proofs of thy rare adventure, and the grace
With which the fair Geneura honours thee,
I promise to forego the fruitless chase
Of one, to thee so kind, so cold to me.
But think not that thy story shall avail,
Unless my very eyes confirm the tale.'

XLII
" `To warn in due time shall be my care.'
(Said Polinesso) and so went his way.
Two nights were scarecly passed, ere his repair
To the known bower was fixed for the assay.
And, ready now to spring his secret snare,
He sought his rival on the appointed day,
And him to hide, the night ensuing, prayed
I' the street, which none their habitation made.

XLIII
"And to the youth a station over-right
The balcony, to which he clambered, shows.
Ariodantes weened, this while, the knight
Would him to seek that hidden place dispose,
As one well suited to his fell despite,

And, bent to take his life, this ambush chose,
Under the false pretence to make him see
What seemed a sheer impossibility.

XLIV
"To go the peer resolved, but in such guise,
He should not be with vantage overlaid;
And should he be assaulted by surprise,
He need not be by fear of death dismay'd.
He had a noble brother, bold and wise,
First of the court in arms; and on his aid,
Lurcanio hight, relied with better heart
Than if ten others fought upon his part.

XLV
"He called him to his side, and willed him take
His arms; and to the place at evening led:
Yet not his secret purpose would be break;
Nor this to him, or other would have read:
Him a stone's throw removed he placed, and spake:
` — Come if thou hearest he cry,' the warrior said;
`But as thou lovest me (whatsoe'er befall)
Come not and move not, brother, till I call.'

XLVI
" `Doubt not' (the valiant brother said) `but go';
And thither went that baron silently,
And hid within the lonely house, and low,
Over against my secret gallery.
On the other side approached the fraudful foe,
So pleased to work Geneura's infamy;
And, while I nothing of the cheat divine,
Beneath my bower renews the wonted sign.

XLVII
"And I in costly robe, in which were set
Fair stripes of gold upon a snowy ground,

My tresses gathered in a golden net,
Shaded with tassels of vermillion round,
Mimicking fashions, which were only met
In fair Geneura, at the accustomed sound,
The gallery mount, constructed in such mode,
As upon every side my person showed.

XLVIII
"This while Lurcanio, either with a view
To snares which might beset his brother's feet,
Or with the common passion to pursue,
And play the spy on other, where the street
Was darkest, and its deepest shadows threw,
Followed him softly to his dim retreat:
And not ten paces from the knight aloof,
Bestowed himself beneath the self same roof.

XLIX
"Suspecting nought, I seek the balcony,
In the same habits which I mentioned, dressed;
As more than once or twice (still happily)
I did before; meanwhile the goodly vest
Was in the moonlight clearly seen, and I,
In aspect not unlike her, in the rest
Resembling much Geneura's shape and cheer,
One visage well another might appear.

L
"So much the more, that there was ample space
Between the palace and the ruined row:
Hence the two brothers, posted in that place,
Were lightly cheated by the lying show.
Now put yourself in his unhappy case,
And figure what the wretched lover's woe,
When Polinesso climbed the stair, which I
Cast down to him, and scaled the gallery.

LI
"Arrived, my arms about his neck I throw,
Weening that we unseen of others meet,
And kiss his lips and face with loving show,
As him I hitherto was wont to greet;
And he assayed, with more than wonted glow,
Me to caress, to mask his hollow cheat.
Led to the shameful spectacle, aghast,
That other, from afar, viewed all that passed,

LII
"And fell into such fit of deep despair,
He there resolved to die; and, to that end,
Planted the pommel of his falchion bare
I' the ground, its point against his breast to bend.
Lurcanio, who with marvel by that stair,
Saw Polinesso to my bower ascend,
But knew not who the wight, with ready speed
Sprang forward, when he saw his brother's deed.

LIII
"And hindered him in that fell agony
From turning his own hand against his breast.
Had the good youth been later, or less nigh,
To his assistance he had vainly pressed.
Then, `Wretched brother, what insanity.'
(He cried) `your better sense has dispossessed?
Die for a woman! rather let her kind
Be scattered like the mist before the wind!

LIV
" `Compass her death! 'tis well deserved; your own
Reserve, as due to more illustrious fate.
'Twas well to love, before her fraud was shown,
But she, once loved, now more deserves your hate:
Since, witnessed by your eyes, to you is known

A wanton of what sort you worshipped late.
Her fault before the Scottish king to attest,
Reserve those arms you turn against your breast.'

LV
"Ariodantes, so surprised, forewent,
Joined by his brother, the design in show;
But resolute to die, in his intent
Was little shaken: Rising thence to go,
He bears away a heart not simply rent,
But dead and withered with excess of woe:
Yet better comfort to Lurcanio feigns,
As if the rage were spent which fired his veins.

LVI
"The morn ensuing, without further say
To his good brother, or to man beside,
He from the city took his reckless way
With deadly desperation for his guide;
Nor, save the duke and knight, for many a day
Was there who knew what moved the youth to ride:
And in the palace, touching this event,
And in the realm, was various sentiment.

LVII
"But eight days past or more, to Scotland's court
A traveller came, and to Geneura he
Related tidings of disastrous sort;
That Ariodantes perished in the sea:
Drowned of his own free will was the report,
No wind to blame for the calamity!
Since from a rock, which over ocean hung,
Into the raging waves he headlong sprung;

LVIII
" `Who said, before he reached that frowning crest,
To me, whom he encountered by the way,

Come with me, that your tongue may manifest,
And what betides me to Geneura say;
And tell her, too, the occasion of the rest,
Which you shall witness without more delay;
In having seen too much, the occasion lies;
Happy had I been born without these eyes!"

LIX
" `By chance, upon a promontory we
Were standing, overright the Irish shore;
When, speaking thus on that high headland, he
Plunged from a rock amid the watery roar.
I saw him leap, and left him in the sea;
And, hurrying thence, to you the tidings bore.'
Geneura stood amazed, her colour fled,
And, at the fearful tale, remained half dead.

LX
"O God! what said, what did she, when alone,
She on her faithful pillow layed her head!
She beat her bosom, and she tore her gown,
And in despite her golden tresses shed;
Repeating often, in bewildered tone,
The last sad words which Ariodantes said; —
That the sole source of such despair, and such
Disaster, was that he had seen too much.

LXI
"Wide was the rumour scattered that the peer
Had slain himself for grief; nor was the cry
By courtly dame, or courtly cavalier,
Or by the monarch, heard with tearless eye.
But, above all the rest, his brother dear
Was whelmed with sorrow of so deep a dye,
That, bent to follow him, he well nigh turned
His hand against himself, like him he mourned.

LXII
"And many times repeating in his thought,
It was Geneura who his brother slew,
Who was to self-destruction moved by nought
But her ill deed, which he was doomed to view,
So on his mind the thirst of vengeance wrought,
And so his grief his season overthrew;
That he thought little, graced of each estate,
To encounter king and people's common hate;

LXIII
"And, when the throng was fullest in the hall,
Stood up before the Scottish king, and said,
`Of having marred my brother's wits withal,
Sir king, and him to his destruction led,
Your daughter only can I guilty call:
For in his inmost soul such sorrow bred
The having seen her little chastity,
He loathed existence, and preferred to die.

LXIV
" `He was her lover; and for his intent
Was honest, this I seek not, I, to veil;
And to deserve her by his valour meant
Of thee, if faithful service might avail;
But while he stood aloof, and dared but scent
The blossoms, he beheld another scale,
Scale the forbidden tree with happier boot,
And bear away from him the wished-for fruit.'

LXV
"Then added, how into the gallery came
Geneura, and how dropped the corded stair;
And how into the chamber of the dame
Had climbed a leman of that lady fair;
Who, for disguise (he knew not hence his name),

Had changed his habits, and concealed his hair;
And, in conclusion, vowed that every word
So said, he would avouch with lance and sword.

LXVI
"You may divine how grieves the sire, distraught
With woe, when he the accusation hears:
As well that what he never could have thought,
He of his daughter learns with wondering ears,
As that he knows, if succour be not brought
By cavalier, that in her cause appears,
Who may upon Lurcanio prove the lie,
He cannot choose, but doom the maid to die.

LXVII
"I do not think our Scottish law to you
Is yet unknown, which sentences to fire
The miserable dame, or damsel, who
Grants other than her wedded lord's desire.
She dies, unless a champion, good and true,
Arm on her side before a month expire;
And her against the accuser base maintain
Unmeriting such death, and free from stain.

LXVIII
"The king has made proclaim by town and tower,
(For he believes her wronged, his child to free)
Her he shall have to wife, with ample dower,
Who saves the royal maid from infamy.
But each to the other looks, and to this hour
No champion yet, 'tis said, appears: for he,
Lurcanio, is esteemed so fierce in fight,
It seems as he were feared of every knight.

"And evil Fate has willed her brother dear,
Zerbino, is not here the foe to face;
Since many months has roved the cavalier,

Proving his matchless worth with spear and mace;
For if the valiant champion were more near,
(Such is his courage) or in any place,
Whither in time the news might be conveyed,
He would not fail to bear his sister aid.

LXX

"The king, mean time, who would the quest pursue,
And by more certain proof than combat, try
If the accuser's tale be false or true,
And she deserve, or merit not, to die,
Arrests some ladies of her retinue,
That, as he weens, the fact can verify.
Whence I foresaw, that if I taken were,
Too certain risque the duke and I must share.

LXXI

"That very night I from the palace flee,
And to the duke repair, escaped from court;
And, were I taken, make him plainly see
How much it either's safety would import:
He praised, and bade me of good courage be,
And, for his comfort, prayed me to resort
To a strong castle which he held hard by;
And gave me two to bear me company.

LXXII

"With what full proofs, sir stranger, you have heard,
I of my love assured the Scottish peer;
And clearly can discern, if so preferred,
That lord was justly bound to hold me dear.
Mark, in conclusion, what was my reward;
The glorious meed of my great merit hear!
And say if woman can expect to earn,
However well she love, her love's return.

LXXIII
"For this perfidious, foul, ungrateful man,
At length suspicious of my faith and zeal,
And apprehending that his wily plan,
In course of time, I haply might reveal,
Feigned that meanwhile the monarch's anger ran
Too high, he would withdraw me, and conceal
Within a fortress of his own, where I
(Such was his real end) was doomed to die.

LXXIV
"For secretly the duke enjoined the guide,
Who with me through the gloomy forest went,
The worthy guerdon of a faith so tried,
To slay me; and had compassed his intent,
But for your ready succour, when I cried.
Behold! what wages love's poor slaves content."
Thus to Rinaldo did Dalinda say,
As they together still pursued their way.

LXXV
Above all other fortune, to the knight
Was welcome to have found the gentle maid,
Who the whole story of Geneura bright,
And her unblemished innocence displayed;
And, if he hoped, although accused with right,
To furnish the afflicted damsel aid,
Persuaded of the calumny's disproof,
He with more courage warred in her behoof.

LXXVI
And for St. Andrew's town, with eager speed,
Where was the king with all his family,
And where the single fight, in listed mead,
Upon his daughter's quarrel, was to be,
The good Rinaldo pricked, nor spared his steed,

Until, within an easy distance, he
Now near the city, met a squire who brought
More recent tidings than the damsel taught:

LXXVII
That thither had repaired a stranger knight,
To combat in Geneura's quarrel bent,
With ensigns strange, not known of living wight,
Since ever close concealed the warrior went;
Not, since he had been there, had bared to sight
His visage, aye within his helmet pent:
And that the very squire who with him came,
Swore that he knew not what the stranger's name.

LXXVIII
Not far they ride before the walls appear,
And now before the gate their coursers stand.
To advance the sad Dalinda was in fear,
Yet followed, trusting in Rinaldo's brand.
The gate was shut, and to the porter near,
What this implies Rinaldo makes demand:
To him was said, the people, one and all,
Were trooped to see a fight without the wall:

LXXIX
Beyond the city, fought upon accord,
Between Lurcanio and a stranger knight;
Where, on a spacious meadow's level sward,
The pair already had begun the fight.
The porter opened to Mount Alban's lord,
And straight behind the peer the portal hight.
Rinaldo through the empty city rode,
But in a hostel first the dame bestowed:

LXXX
And will that she (he will not long delay
To seek her there) till his return repose;

And quickly to the lists pursued his way,
Where the two made that fell exchange of blows,
And strove and struggled yet in bloody fray.
Lurcanio's heart with vengeful hatred glows
Against Geneura; while that other knight
As well maintains the quarrel for her right.

LXXXI
Six knights on foot within the palisade
Stand covered with the corslet's iron case;
Beneath the Duke of Albany arrayed,
Borne on a puissant steed of noble race:
Who there, as lord high-constable obeyed,
Was keeper of the field and of the place,
And joyed Geneura's peril to espy
With swelling bosom and exulting eye.

LXXXII
Rinaldo pierces through the parted swarm,
(So wide is felt the good Bayardo's sway,)
And he who hears the courser come in storm,
Halts not, in his desire to make him way:
Above is seen Rinaldo's lofty form,
The flower of those who mix in martial fray.
He stops his horse before the monarch's chair,
While all to hear the paladin repair.

LXXXIII
"Dread sir," to him the good Rinaldo said,
"Let not the pair this combat longer ply;
Since whichsoever of the two falls dead,
Know, that you let him perish wrongfully:
This thinks that he is right, and is misled,
Vouches the false, and knows not 'tis a lie:
Since that which brought his brother to his end,
Moves him in causeless battle contend.

LXXXIV
"That, in pure gentleness, with little care
If what he here maintains be wrong or right,
Because he would preserve a maid so fair,
Perils his person in the furious fight.
To injured innocence I safety bear,
And to the evil man its opposite.
But first, for love of God, the battle stay;
Then list, sir king, to what I shall display."

LXXXV
So moved the king the grave authority
Of one who seemed so worthy, by his cheer,
That he made sign the battle should not be
Further continued then with sword or spear:
To whom, together with his chivalry,
And barons of the realm and others near
Rinaldo all the treacherous plot displayed,
Which Polinesso for Geneura layed.

LXXXVI
Next that he there in arms would testify
The truth of what he vouched, the warrior cried.
False Polinesso, called, with troubled eye,
Stood forth, but daringly the tale denied.
To him the good Rinaldo in reply;
"By deeds be now the doubtful quarrel tried."
The field was cleared, and, ready armed, the foes,
Without more let, in deadly duel close.

LXXXVII
How was the hope to king and people dear,
The proof might show Geneura innocent!
All trust that God will make the treason clear,
And show she was accused with foul intent:
For Polinesso, greedy and severe,

And proud was held, and false and fraudulent.
So that none there, of all assembled, deemed
It marvel, if the knight such fraud had schemed.

LXXXVIII
False Polinesso, with a mien distressed,
A pallid cheek, and heart which thickly beat,
At the third trumpet, laid his lance in rest;
As well Rinaldo spurred the knight to meet,
And levelled at his evil foeman's breast,
Eager to finish at a single heat.
Nor counter to his wish was the event;
Since through the warrior half his weapon went.

LXXXIX
Him, through his breast, impaled upon the spear,
More than six yards beyond his horse he bore.
With speed alighted Mount Albano's peer,
And, ere he rose, unlaced the helm he wore:
But he for mercy prayed with humble cheer,
Unfit to strive in joust or warfare more:
And, before king and court, with faltering breath,
Confessed the fraud which brought him to his death.

XC
He brings not his confession to a close,
And pangs of death the failing accents drown:
The prince, who ended saw his daughter's woes,
Redeemed from death and scorn, her virtue shown,
With more delight and rapture overflows,
Than if he, having lost his kingly crown,
Then saw it first upon his head replaced;
So that he good Rinaldo singly graced.

XCI
And when, through his uplifted casque displaid,
Features, well known before, the king descried,

His thanks to God with lifted hands he paid,
That he had deigned such succour to provide.
That other cavalier, who bared his blade,
Unknown of all, upon Geneura's side,
And thither came from far, his aid to impart,
Looked upon all that passed, and stood apart.

XCII
Him the good king entreated to declare
His name, or, at the least, his visage shew;
That he might grace him with such guerdon fair,
As to his good intent was justly due.
The stranger, after long and earnest prayer,
Lifted to covering casque, and bared to view
What in the ensuing canto will appear,
If you are fain the history to hear.

CANTO 6

ARGUMENT
Ariodantes has, a worthy meed,
With his loved bride, the fief of Albany.
Meantime Rogero, on the flying steed,
Arrives in false Alcina's empery:
There from a myrtle-tree her every deed,
A human myrtle hears, and treachery,
And thence would go; but they who first withdrew
Him from one strife, engage him in a new.

I
Wretched that evil man who lives in trust
His secret sin is safe in his possession!
Since, if nought else, the air, the very dust
In which the crime is buried, makes confession,
And oftentimes his guilt compels the unjust,

Though sometime unarraigned in worldly session,
To be his own accuser, and bewray,
So God has willed, deeds hidden from the day.

II
The unhappy Polinesso hopes had nursed,
Wholly his secret treason to conceal.
By taking off Dalinda, who was versed
In this, and only could the fact reveal;
And adding thus a second to his first
Offence, but hurried on the dread appeal,
Which haply he had stunned, at least deferred;
But he to self-destruction blindly spurred.

III
And forfeited estate, and life, and love
Of friends at once, and honour, which was more.
The cavalier unknown, I said above,
Long of the king and court entreated sore,
At length the covering helmet did remove,
And showed a visage often seen before,
The cherished face of Ariodantes true,
Of late lamented weeping Scotland through;

IV
Ariodantes, whom with tearful eye
His brother and Geneura wept as dead,
And king, and people, and nobility:
Such light his goodness and his valour shed.
The pilgrim therefore might appear to lie
In what he of the missing warrior said.
Yet was it true that from a headland, he
Had seen him plunge into the foaming sea.

V
But, as it oft befalls despairing wight,
Who grisly Death desires till he appear;

But loathes what he had sought, on nearer sight;
So painful seems the cruel pass and drear.
Thus, in the sea engulphed, the wretched knight,
Repentant of his deed, was touched with fear;
And, matchless both for spirit and for hand,
Beat back the billows, and returned to land.

VI
And, now despising, as of folly bred,
The fond desire which did to death impell,
Thence, soaked and dripping wet, his way did tread,
And halted at a hermit's humble cell:
And housed within the holy father's shed,
There secretly awhile designed to dwell;
Till to his ears by rumour should be voiced,
If his Geneura sorrowed or rejoiced.

VII
At first he heard that, through excess of woe,
The miserable damsel well-nigh died:
For so abroad the doleful tidings go,
'Twas talked of in the island, far and wide:
Far other proof than that deceitful show,
Which to his cruel grief he thought he spied!
And next against the fair Geneura heard
Lurcanio to her sire his charge preferred:

VIII
Nor for his brother felt less enmity
Than was the love he lately bore the maid;
For he too foul, and full of cruelty,
Esteemed the deed, although for him essayed;
And, hearing after, in her jeopardy,
That none appeared to lend the damsel aid,
Because so puissant was Lurcanio's might,
All dreaded an encounter with the knight,

IX
And that who well the youthful champion knew,
Believed he was so wary and discreet,
That, had what he related been untrue,
He never would have risqued so rash a feat,
— For this the greater part the fight eschew,
Fearing in wrongful cause the knight to meet —
Ariodantes (long his doubts are weighed)
Will meet his brother in Geneura's aid.

X
"Alas! (he said) I cannot bear to see
Thus by my cause the royal damsel die;
My death too bitter and too dread would be,
Did I, before my own, her death descry;
For still my lady, my divinity
She is; — the light and comfort of my eye.
Her, right or wrong, I cannot choose but shield,
And for her safety perish in the field.

XI
"I know I choose the wrong, and be it so!
And in the cause shall die: nor this would move;
But that, alas! my death, as well I know,
Will such a lovely dame's destruction prove,
To death I with one only comfort go,
That, if her Polinesso bears her love,
To her will manifestly be displayed,
That hitherto he moves not in her aid.

XII
"And me, so wronged by her, the maid shall view
Encounter death in her defence; and he,
My brother, who such flames of discord blew,
Shall pay the debt of vengeance due to me.
For well I ween to make Lurcanio rue

(Informed of the event) his cruelty,
Who will have thought to venge me with his brand,
And will have slain me with his very hand."

XIII
He, having this concluded in his thought,
Made new provision of arms, steed, and shield;
Black was the vest and buckler which he bought,
Where green and yellow striped the sable field:
By hazard found, with him a squire he brought,
A stranger in that country; and, concealed
(As is already told) the unhappy knight,
Against his brother came, prepared for fight.

XV
And yielding to his natural inclination,
And at the suit of all his court beside,
And mostly at Rinaldo's instigation,
Assigned the youth the damsel as his bride.
Albany's duchy, now in sequestration,
Late Polinesso's, who in duel died,
Could not be forfeited in happier hour;
Since this the monarch made his daughter's dower.

XVI
Rinaldo for Dalinda mercy won;
Who from her fault's due punishment went free.
She, satiate of the world, (and this to shun,
The damsel so had vowed) to God will flee:
And hence, in Denmark's land, to live a nun,
Straight from her native Scotland sailed the sea.
But it is time Rogero to pursue,
Who on his courser posts the welkin through.

XVII
Although Rogero is of constant mind,
Not from his cheek the wonted hues depart.

I ween that faster than a leaf i' the wind
Fluttered within his breast the stripling's heart.
All Europe's region he had left behind
In his swift course; and, issuing in that part,
Passed by a mighty space, the southern sound
Where great Alcides fixed the sailor's bound.

XVIII
That hippogryph, huge fowl, and strange to sight,
Bears off the warrior with such rapid wing,
He would have distanced, in his airy flight,
The thunder bearing bird of Aether's king:
Nor other living creature soars such height,
Him in his mighty swiftness equalling.
I scarce believe that bolt, or lightning flies,
Or darts more swiftly from the parted skies.

XIX
When the huge bird his pinions long had plied,
In a straight line, without one stoop or bend,
He, tired of air, with sweeping wheel and wide,
Began upon an island to descend;
Like that fair region, whither, long unspied
Of him, her wayward mood did long offend,
Whilom in vain, through strange and secret sluice,
Passed under sea the Virgin Arethuse.

XX
A more delightful place, wherever hurled
Through the whole air, Rogero had not found:
And, had he ranged the universal world,
Would not have seen a lovelier in his round,
Than that, where, wheeling wide, the courser furled
His spreading wings, and lighted on the ground,
'Mid cultivated plain, delicious hill,
Moist meadow, shady bank, and crystal rill.

XXI

Small thickets, with the scented laurel gay,
Cedar, and orange, full of fruit and flower,
Myrtle and palm, with interwoven spray,
Pleached in mixed modes, all lovely, form a bower;
And, breaking with their shade the scorching ray,
Make a cool shelter from the noontide hour.
And nightingales among those branches wing
Their flight, and safely amorous descants sing.

XXII

Amid red roses and white lilies there,
Which the soft breezes freshen as they fly,
Secure the cony haunts, and timid hare,
And stag, with branching forehead broad and high.
These, fearless of the hunter's dart or snare,
Feed at their ease, or ruminating lie:
While, swarming in those wilds, from tuft or steep
Dun deer or nimble goat, disporting, leap.

XXIII

When the hyppogryph above the island hung,
And had approached so nigh that landscape fair,
That, if his rider from the saddle sprung,
He might the leap with little danger dare,
Rogero lit the grass and flowers among,
But held him, lest he should remount the air:
And to a myrtle, nigh the rolling brine,
Made fast, between a bay-tree and a pine.

XXIV

And there, close-by where rose a bubbling fount,
Begirt the fertile palm and cedar-tree,
He drops the shield, the helmet from his front
Uplifts, and, either hand from gauntlet free,
Now turning to the beach, and now the mount,

Catches the gales which blow from hill or sea,
And, with a joyous murmur, lightly stir
The lofty top of beech, or feathery fir:

XXV
And, now, to bathe his burning lips he strains;
Now dabbles in the crystal wave, to chase
The scorching heat which rages in his veins,
Caught from the heavy corslet's burning case.
Nor is it marvel if the burden pains;
No ramble his in square or market-place!
Three thousand miles, without repose, he went,
And still, at speed, in ponderous armour pent.

XXVI
Meanwhile the courser by the myrtle's side,
Whom he left stabled in the cool retreat,
Started at something in the wood descried,
Scared by I know not what; and in his heat
So made the myrtle shake where he was tied,
He brought a shower of leaves about his feet;
He made the myrtle shake and foliage fall,
But, struggling, could not loose himself withal.

XXVII
As in a stick to feed the chimney rent,
Where scanty pith ill fills the narrow sheath,
The vapour, in its little channel pent,
Struggles, tormented by the fire beneath;
And, till its prisoned fury find a vent,
Is heard to hiss and bubble, sing and seethe:
So the offended myrtle inly pined,
Groaned, murmured, and at last unclosed its rind:

XXVIII
And hence a clear, intelligible speech
Thus issued, with a melancholy sound;

"If, as thy cheer and gentle presence teach,
Thou courteous art and good, his reign unbound,
Release me from this monster, I beseech:
Griefs of my own inflict sufficient wound:
Nor need I, compassed with such ills about,
Other new pain to plague me from without."

XXIX
At the first sound, Rogero turns to see
Whence came the voice, and, in unused surprise,
Stands, when he finds it issues from the tree;
And swiftly to remove the courser hies.
Then, with a face suffused with crimson, he
In answer to the groaning myrtle, cries;
"Pardon! and, whatsoe'er thou art, be good,
Spirit of man, or goddess of the wood!

XXX
"Unweeting of the wonderous prodigy
Of spirit, pent beneath the knotty rind,
To your fair leaf and living body I
Have done this scathe and outrage undesigned.
But not the less for that, to me reply,
What art thou, who, in rugged case confined,
Dost live and speak? And so may never hail
From angry heaven your gentle boughs assail!

XXXI
"And if I now or ever the despite
I did thee can repair, or aid impart,
I, by that lady dear, my promise plight,
Who in her keeping has my better part,
To strive with word and deed, till thou requite
The service done with praise and grateful heart."
Rogero said; and, as he closed his suit,
That gentle myrtle shook from top to root.

XXXII

Next drops were seen to stand upon the bark,
As juice is sweated by the sapling-spray,
New-severed, when it yields to flame and spark,
Sometime in vain kept back and held at bay.
And next the voice began: "My story dark,
Forced by thy courteous deed, I shall display; —
What once I was — by whom, through magic lore,
Changed to a myrtle on the pleasant shore.

XXXIII

"A peer of France, Astolpho was my name,
Whilom a paladin, sore feared in fight;
Cousin I was to two of boundless fame,
Orlando and Rinaldo. I by right
Looked to all England's crown; my lawful claim
After my royal father, Otho hight.
More dames than one my beauty served to warm,
And in conclusion wrought my single harm.

XXXIV

"Returning from those isles, whose eastern side
The billows of the Indian ocean beat,
Where good Rinaldo and more knights beside
With me were pent in dark and hollow seat,
Thence, rescued by illustrious Brava's pride,
Whose prowess freed us from that dark retreat,
Westward I fared along the sandy shores,
On which the stormy north his fury pours.

XXXV

"Pursuing thus our rugged journey, we
Came (such our evil doom) upon the strand,
Where stood a mansion seated by the sea:
Puissant Alcina owned the house and land.
We found her, where, without her dwelling, she

Had taken on the beach her lonely stand;
And though nor hook nor sweeping net she bore,
What fish she willed, at pleasure drew to shore.

XXXVI
"Thither swift dolphins gambol, inly stirred,
And open-mouthed the cumbrous tunnies leap;
Thither the seal or porpus' wallowing herd
Troop at her bidding, roused from lazy sleep;
Raven-fish, salmon, salpouth, at her word,
And mullet hurry through the briny deep,
With monstrous backs above the water, sail
Ork, physeter, sea-serpent, shark, and whale.

XXXVII
"There we behold a mighty whale, of size
The hugest yet in any water seen:
More than eleven paces, to our eyes,
His back appears above the surface green:
And (for still firm and motionless he lies,
And such the distance his two ends between)
We all are cheated by the floating pile,
And idly take the monster for an isle.

XXXVIII
"Alcina made the ready fish obey
By simple words and by mere magic lore:
Born with Morgana — but I cannot say
If at one birth, or after or before.
As soon as seen, my aspect pleased the fay;
Who showed it in the countenance she wore:
Then wrought with art, and compassed her intent,
To part me from the friends with whom I went.

XXXIX
"She came towards us with a cheerful face,
With graceful gestures, and a courteous air,

And said: 'So you my lodging please to grace,
Sir cavalier, and will with me repair,
You shall behold the wonders of my chace,
And note the different sorts of fish I snare;
Shaggy or smooth, or clad in scales of light,
And more in number than the stars of night:

XL
" 'And would you hear a mermaid sing so sweet,
That the rude sea grows civil at her song,
Wont at this hour her music to repeat,
(With that she showed the monster huge and long
— I said it seemed an island — as her seat)
Pass with me where she sings the shoals among.'
I, that was always wilful, at her wish,
I now lament my rashness, climb the fish.

XLI
"To Dudon and Rinaldo's signal blind,
I go, who warn me to misdoubt the fay.
With laughing face Alcina mounts behind,
Leaving the other two beside the bay.
The obedient fish performs the task assigned,
And through the yielding water works his way.
Repentant of my deed, I curse the snare,
Too far from land my folly to repair.

XLII
"To aid me swam Mount Alban's cavalier,
And was nigh drowned amid the waves that rise;
For a south-wind sprang up that, far and near,
Covered with sudden darkness seas and skies.
I know not after what befel the peer:
This while Alcina to console me tries,
And all that day, and night which followed, me
Detained upon that monster in mid-sea,

XLIII
"Till to this isle we drifted with the morn,
Of which Alcina keeps a mighty share;
By that usurper from a sister torn,
Who was her father's universal heir:
For that she only was in wedlock born,
And for those other two false sisters were
(So well-instructed in the story, said
One who rehearsed the tale) in incest bred.

XLIV
"As these are practised in iniquity,
And full of every vice and evil art;
So she, who ever lives in chastity,
Wisely on better things has set her heart.
Hence, leagued against her, in conspiracy,
Those others are, to drive her from her part:
And more than once their armies have o'errun
Her realm, and towns above a hundred won.

XLV
"Nor at this hour a single span of ground
Would Logistilla (such her name) command,
But that a mountain here, and there a sound,
Protects the remnant from the invading band.
'Tis thus the mountain and the river bound
England, and part it from the Scottish land.
Yet will the sisters give their foe no rest,
Till of her scanty remnant dispossest.

XLVI
"Because in wickedness and vice were bred
The pair, as chaste and good they loath the dame.
But, to return to what I lately said,
And to relate how I a plant became;
Me, full of love, the kind Alcina fed

With full delights; nor I a weaker flame
For her, within my burning heart did bear,
Beholding her so courteous and so fair.

XLVII
"Clasped in her dainty limbs, and lapt in pleasure,
I weened that I each separate good had won,
Which to mankind is dealt in different measure,
Little or more to some, and much to none.
I evermore contemplated my treasure,
Nor France nor aught beside I thought upon:
In her my every fancy, every hope
Centered and ended as their common scope.

XLVIII
"By her I was as much beloved, or more;
Nor did Alcina now for other care;
She left her every lover; for before,
Others, in truth, the fairy's love did share:
I was her close adviser evermore;
And served by her, where they commanded were.
With me she counselled, and to me referred;
Nor, night nor day, to other spake a word.

XLIX
"Why touch my wounds, to aggravate my ill,
And that, alas! without the hope of cure?
Why thus the good possessed remember still,
Amid the cruel penance I endure?
When kindest I believed Alcina's will,
And fondly deemed my happiness secure,
From me the heart she gave, the fay withdrew,
And yielded all her soul to love more new.

L
"Late I discerned her light and fickle bent,
Still loving and unloving at a heat:

Two months, I reigned not more, no sooner spent,
Than a new paramour assumed my seat;
And me, with scorn, she doomed to banishment,
From her fair grace cast out. 'Tis then I weet
I share a thousand lovers' fate, whom she
Had to like pass reduced, all wrongfully.

LI
"And these, because they should not scatter bruits,
Roaming the world, of her lascivious ways,
She, up and down the fruitful soil, transmutes
To olive, palm, or cedar, firs or bays.
These, as you see me changed, Alcina roots;
While this transformed into a monster strays;
Another melts into a liquid rill;
As suits that haughty fairy's wanton will.

LII
"Thou, too, that to this fatal isle art led
By way unwonted and till now unknown,
That some possessor of the fairy's bed,
May be for thee transformed to wave or stone,
Thou shalt, with more than mortal pleasures fed,
Have from Alcina seigniory and throne;
But shalt be sure to join the common flock,
Transformed to beast or fountain, plant or rock.

LIII
"I willingly to thee this truth impart,
Not that I hope with profit to advise:
Yet 'twill be better, that informed, in part,
Of her false ways, she harm not by surprise.
Perhaps, as faces differ, and in art
And wit of man an equal difference lies,
Thou may'st some remedy perchance apply
To the ill, which thousand others could not fly."

LIV
The good Rogero, who from Fame had learned
That he was cousin to the dame he wooed,
Lamented much the sad Astolpho, turned
From his true form, to barren plant and rude:
And for her love, for whom so sore he burned,
Would gladly serve the stripling if he cou'd:
But, witless how to give the wished relief,
Might but console the unhappy warrior's grief.

LV
As best he could, he strove to soothe his pain;
Then asked him, if to Logistil's retreat
Were passage, whether over hill or plain;
That he might so eschew Alcina's seat.
— `There was a way', the myrtle said again,
— `But rough with stones, and rugged to the feet —
If he, some little further to the right,
Would scale the Alpine mountain's very height:

LVI
`But that he must not think he shall pursue
The intended journey far; since by the way
He will encounter with a frequent crew,
And fierce, who serve as rampart to the fay,
That block the road against the stranger, who
Would break her bounds, and the deserter stay.'
Rogero thanked the tree for all, and taught,
Departed thence with full instructions fraught.

LVII
The courser from the myrtle he untied,
And by the bridle led behind him still;
Nor would he, as before, the horse bestride,
Lest he should bear him off against his will:
He mused this while how safely he might find

A passage to the land of Logistil;
Firm in his purpose every nerve to strain,
Lest empire over him Alcina gain.

LVIII
He to remount the steed, and through the air
To spur him to a new career again
Now thought; but doubted next, in fear to fare
Worse on the courser, restive to the rein.
"No, I will win by force the mountain stair,"
Rogero said; (but the resolve was vain)
Nor by the beach two miles his way pursued,
Ere he Alcina's lovely city viewed.

LIX
A lofty wall at distance meets his eye
Which girds a spacious town within its bound;
It seems as if its summit touched the sky,
And all appears like gold from top to ground.
Here some one says it is but alchemy
— And haply his opinion is unsound —
And haply he more wittily divines:
For me, I deem it gold because it shines.

LX
When he was nigh the city-walls, so bright,
The world has not their equal, he the straight
And spacious way deserts, the way which dight
Across the plain, conducted to the gate;
And by that safer road upon the right,
Strains now against the mountain; but, in wait,
Encounters soon the crowd of evil foes,
Who furiously the Child's advance oppose.

LXI
Was never yet beheld a stranger band,
Of mien more hideous, or more monstrous shape.

Formed downwards from neck like men, he scanned
Some with the head of cat, and some of ape;
With hoof of goat that other stamped the sand;
While some seemed centaurs, quick in fight and rape;
Naked, or mantled in outlandish skin.
These doting sires, those striplings bold in sin.

LXII
This gallops on a horse without a bit;
This backs the sluggish ass, or bullock slow;
These mounted on the croup of centaur sit:
Those perched on eagle, crane, or estridge, go.
Some male, some female, some hermaphrodit,
These drain the cup and those the bungle blow.
One bore a corded ladder, one a book;
One a dull file, or bar of iron shook.

LXIII
The captain of this crew, which blocked the road,
Appeared, with monstrous paunch and bloated face;
Who a slow tortoise for a horse bestrode,
That passing sluggishly with him did pace:
Down looked, some here, some there, sustained the load,
For he was drunk, and kept him in his place.
Some wipe his brows and chin from sweat which ran,
And others with their vests his visage fan.

LXIV
One, with a human shape and feet, his crest,
Fashioned like hound, in neck and ears and head,
Bayed at the gallant Child with angry quest,
To turn him to the city whence he fled.
"That will I never, while of strength possessed
To brandish this," the good Rogero said:
With that his trenchant faulchion he displayed,
And pointed at him full the naked blade.

LXV

That monster would have smote him with a spear,
But swiftly at his foe Rogero sprung,
Thrust at his paunch, and drove his faulchion sheer
Through his pierced back a palm; his buckler flung
Before him, and next sallied there and here:
But all too numerous was the wicked throng.
Now grappled from behind, now punched before,
He stands, and plies the crowd with warfare sore.

LXVI

One to the teeth, another to the breast,
Of that foul race he cleft; since no one steeled
In mail, his brows with covering helmet dressed,
Or fought, secured by corslet or by shield;
Yet is he so upon all quarters pressed,
That it would need the Child, to clear the field,
And to keep off the wicked crew which swarms,
More than Briareus' hundred hands and arms.

LXVII

If he had thought the magic shield to show,
(I speak of that the necromancer bore,
Which dazed the sight of the astonished foe,
Left at his saddle by the wizard Moor)
That hideous band, in sudden overthrow,
Blinded by this, had sunk the knight before.
But haply he despised such mean as vile,
And would prevail by valour, not by guile.

LXVIII

This as it may: the Child would meet his fate,
Ere by so vile a band be prisoner led;
When, lo! forth issuing from the city's gate,
Whose wall appeared like shining gold I said,
Two youthful dames, not born in low estate,

If measured by their mien and garb, nor bred
By swain, in early wants and troubles versed;
But amid princely joys in palace nursed!

LXIX
On unicorn was seated either fair,
A beast than spotless ermine yet more white;
So lovely were the damsels, and so rare
Their garb, and with such graceful fashion dight,
That he who closely viewed the youthful pair,
Would need a surer sense than mortal sight,
To judge between the two. With such a mien
Embodied Grace and Beauty would be seen.

LXX
Into the mead rode this and the other dame,
Where the foul crew opposed the Child's retreat.
The rabble scattered as the ladies came,
Who with extended hand the warrior greet.
He, with a kindling visage, red with shame,
Thanked the two damsels for their gentle feat;
And was content upon their will to wait,
With them returning to that golden gate.

LXXI
Above, a cornice round the gateway goes,
Somedeal projecting from the colonnade,
In which is not a single part but glows,
With rarest gems of India overlaid.
Propp'd at four points, the portal did repose
On columns of one solid diamond made.
Whether what met the eye was false or true,
Was never sight more fair or glad to view.

LXXII
Upon the sill and through the columns there,
Ran young and wanton girls, in frolic sport;

Who haply yet would have appeared more fair,
Had they observed a woman's fitting port.
All are arrayed in green, and garlands wear
Of the fresh leaf. Him these in courteous sort,
With many proffers and fair mien entice,
And welcome to this opening Paradise:

LXXIII
For so with reason I this place may call,
Where, it is my belief, that Love had birth;
Where life is spent in festive game and ball,
And still the passing moments fleet in mirth.
Here hoary-headed Thought ne'er comes at all,
Nor finds a place in any bosom. Dearth,
Nor yet Discomfort, never enter here,
Where Plenty fills her horn throughout the year.

LXXIV
Here, where with jovial and unclouded brow,
Glad April seems to wear a constant smile,
Troop boys and damsels: One, whose fountains flow,
On the green margin sings in dulcet style;
Others, the hill or tufted tree below,
In dance, or no mean sport the hours beguile.
While this, who shuns the revellers' noisy cheer,
Tells his love sorrows in his comrade's ear.

LXXV
Above the laurel and pine-tree's height,
Through the tall beech and shaggy fir-tree's spray,
Sport little loves, with desultory flight:
These, at their conquests made, rejoiced and gay:
These, with the well-directed shaft, take sight
At hearts, and those spread nets to catch their prey;
One wets his arrows in the brook which winds,
And one on whirling stone the weapon grinds.

LXXVI

To good Rogero here was brought a steed,
Puissant and nimble, all of sorel hue;
Who was caparisoned with costly weed,
Broidered with gold, and jewels bright to view.
That other winged horse, which, at his need,
Obedient to the Moorish wizard flew,
The friendly damsels to a youth consigned,
Who led him at a slower pace behind.

LXXVII

That kindly pair who, by the wicked band
Offended fate, had saved the youthful knight;
The wicked crew, that did the Child withstand,
When he the road had taken on his right,
Exclaimed, "Fair sir, your works already scanned
By us, who are instructed of your might,
Embolden us, in our behalf, to pray
You will the prowess of your arm assay.

LXXVIII

"We soon shall reach a bottom which divides
The plain into two parts: A cruel dame
A bridge maintains, which there a stream bestrides,
Eriphila the savage beldam's name;
Who cheats, and robs, and scathes, whoever rides
To the other shore, a giantess in frame;
Who has long poisonous teeth her prey to tear,
And scratches with her talons like a bear.

LXXIX

"Besides that she infests the public way,
Which else were free; she often ranging through
All this fair garden, puts in disarray
This thing or that. Of the assassin crew,
That people who without the portal gay,

Lately with brutal rage assaulted you,
Many her sons, the whole her followers call,
As greedy and inhospitable all."

LXXX
"For you not only her I would assail,
But do a hundred battles, well content:
Then of my person, where it may avail,
Dispose (Rogero said) to you intent.
Silver and land to conquer, plate or mail
I swear not, I, in warlike cuirass pent;
But to afford my aid to others due;
And, most of all, to beauteous dames like you."

LXXXI
Their grateful thanks the ladies, worthily
Bestowed on such a valiant champion, paid:
They talking thus the bridge and river see,
And at her post the haughty dame arraid
(Sapphire and emerald decked the panoply)
In arms of gold: but I awhile delay
Till other strain the issue of the fray.

CANTO 7

ARGUMENT
Rogero, as directed by the pair,
The giantess Eriphila o'erthrows.
That done, he to Alcina's labyrinth, where
More than one knight is tied and prisoned, goes.
To him Melissa sage the secret snare,
And remedy for that grave evil shows.
Whence he, by her advised, with downcast eye,
And full of shame forthwith resolves to fly.

I

The traveller, he, whom sea or mountain sunder
From his own country, sees things strange and new;
That the misjudging vulgar, which lies under
The mist of ignorance, esteems untrue:
Rejecting whatsoever is a wonder,
Unless 'tis palpable and plain to view:
Hence inexperience, as I know full well,
Will yield small credence to the tale I tell.

II

But this be great or small, I know not why
The rabble's silly judgement I should fear,
Convinced you will not think the tale a lie,
In whom the light of reason shines so clear.
And hence to you it is I only try
The fruit of my fatigues to render dear.
I ended where Eriphila in guard
Of bridge and stream was seen, the passage barred.

III

Of finest metal was her armour bright,
With gems of many colours overspread,
The tawny jacinth, yellow chyrsolite,
The emerald green of hue, and ruby red.
Mounted, but not on palfrey, for the fight:
In place of that, she on a wolf had sped,
Sped on a wolf towards the pass; and rode
On sell, that rich beyond all custom showed.

IV

No larger wolf, I ween, Apulia roams;
More huge than bull, unguided by her hand;
Although upon no bit the monster foams,
Docile, I know not why, to her command.
The accursed Plague, arrayed in surcoat, comes

Above her arms, in colour like the sand;
That, saving in its dye, was of the sort
Which bishops and which prelates wear at court.

V
The giantess's crest and shield appear,
For ensign, decked with swoln and poisonous toad.
Her the two damsels to the cavalier
Before the bridge, prepared for battle, showed,
Threatening, as wont to some, with levelled spear,
To do the warrior scorn and bar the road.
Bidding him turn, she to Rogero cries;
A lance he takes, and threats her and defies.

VI
As quick and daring, the gigantic Pest
Spurred her wolf, seated well for that dread game:
In mid career she laid her lance in rest,
And made earth quake beneath her as she came;
Yet at the encounter fierce the champaign pressed;
For underneath the casque, with stedfast aim,
So hard Rogero smote her, that he bore
The beldam backward six good yards and more:

VII
And came already with his lifted blade,
Drawn for that end, to take her haughty head;
To him an easy task; for she was laid
Among the grass and flowers, like one that's dead.
But, " 'Tis enough that she is vanquished," said
The pair, "No further press thy vengeance dread.
Sheathe, courteous cavalier, thy sword anew:
Pass we the river, and our way pursue."

VIII
Along the path, which through a forest lay,
Roughish and somedeal ill to beat, they went.

Besides that strait and stony was the way,
This, nigh directly, scaled a hill's ascent.
But, when arrived upon the summit, they
Issued upon a mead of vast extent;
And a more pleasant palace on that green
Beheld, and brighter than was ever seen.

IX
To meet the Child, Alcina, fair of hue,
Advanced some way beyond the outer gate;
And, girded by a gay and courtly crew,
Rogero there received in lordly state:
While all the rest to him such honour do,
And on the knight with such deep reverence wait,
They could not have displayed more zeal and love,
Had Jove descended from the choirs above.

X
Not so much does the palace, fair to see,
In riches other princely domes excel,
As that the gentlest, fairest, company
Which the whole world contains, within it dwell:
Of either sex, with small variety
Between, in youth and beauty matched as well:
The fay alone exceeds the rest as far
As the bright sun outshines each lesser star.

XI
Her shape is of such perfect symmetry,
As best to feign the industrious painter knows,
With long and knotted tresses; to the eye
Not yellow gold with brighter lustre glows.
Upon her tender cheek the mingled dye
Is scattered, of the lily and the rose.
Like ivory smooth, the forehead gay and round
Fills up the space, and forms a fitting bound.

XII

Two black and slender arches rise above
Two clear black eyes, say suns of radiant light,
Which ever softly beam and slowly move;
Round these appears to sport in frolic flight,
Hence scattering all his shafts, the little Love,
And seems to plunder hearts in open sight.
Thence, through mid visage, does the nose descend,
Where Envy finds not blemish to amend.

XIII

As if between two vales, which softly curl,
The mouth with vermeil tint is seen to glow:
Within are strung two rows of orient pearl,
Which her delicious lips shut up or show.
Of force to melt the heart of any churl,
However rude, hence courteous accents flow:
And here that gentle smile receives its birth,
Which opes at will a paradise on earth.

XIV

Like milk the bosom, and the neck of snow;
Round is the neck, and full and large the breast;
Where, fresh and firm, two ivory apples grow,
Which rise and fall, as, to the margin pressed
By pleasant breeze, the billows come and go.
Not prying Argus could discern the rest.
Yet might the observing eye of things concealed
Conjecture safely, from the charms revealed.

XV

To all her arms a just proportion bear,
And a white hand is oftentimes descried,
Which narrow is, and somedeal long; and where
No knot appears, nor vein is signified.
For finish of that stately shape and rare,

A foot, neat, short, and round, beneath is spied.
Angelic visions, creatures of the sky,
Concealed beneath no covering veil can lie.

XVI
A springe is planted in Rogero's way,
On all sides did she speak, smile, sing, or move;
No wonder then the stripling was her prey,
Who in the fairy saw such show of love.
With him the guilt and falsehood little weigh,
Of which the offended myrtle told above.
Nor will he think that perfidy and guile
Can be united with so sweet a smile.

XVII
No! he could now believe, by magic art,
Astolpho well transformed upon the plain,
For punishment of foul ungrateful heart,
And haply meriting severer pain.
And, as for all he heard him late impart,
'Twas prompted by revenge, 'twas false and vain.
By hate and malice was the sufferer stung,
To blame and wound the fay with slanderous tongue.

XVIII
The beauteous lady whom he loved so well
Is newly banished from his altered breast;
For (such the magic of Alcina's spell)
She every ancient passion dispossessed;
And in his bosom, there alone to dwell,
The image of her love, and self impressed.
So witched, Rogero sure some grace deserves,
If from his faith his frail affection swerves.

XIX
At board lyre, lute and harp of tuneful string,
And other sounds, in mixed diversity,

Made, round about, the joyous palace ring,
With glorious concert and sweet harmony.
Nor lacked there well-accorded voice to sing
Of love, its passion and its ecstasy;
Nor who, with rare inventions, choicely versed,
Delightful fiction to the guests rehearsed.

XX

What table, spread by whatsoever heir
Of Ninus, though triumphant were the board,
Or what more famous and more costly, where
Cleopatra feasted with the Latian lord,
Could with this banquet's matchless joys compare,
By the fond fairy for Rogero stored?
I think not such a feast is spread above,
Where Ganymede presents the cup to Jove.

XXI

They form a ring, the board and festive cheer
Removed, and sitting, play a merry game:
Each asks, still whispering in a neighbour's ear,
What secret pleases best; to knight and dame
A fair occasion, without let or fear,
Their love, unheard of any, to proclaim.
And in conclusion the two lovers plight
Their word, to meet together on that night.

XXII

Soon, and much sooner than their wont, was ended
The game at which the palace inmates play:
When pages on the troop with torches tended,
And with their radiance chased the night away.
To seek his bed the paladin ascended,
Girt with that goodly squadron, in a gay
And airy bower, appointed for his rest,
Mid all the others chosen as the best.

XXIII

And when of comfits and of cordial wine
A fitting proffer has been made anew,
The guests their bodies reverently incline,
And to their bowers depart the courtly crew.
He upon perfumed sheets, whose texture fine
Seemed of Arachne's loom, his body threw:
Hearkening this while with still attentive ears,
If he the coming of the lady hears.

XXIV

At every movement heard on distant floor,
Hoping 'twas her, Rogero raised his head:
He thinks he hears; but it is heard no more,
Then sighs at his mistake: ofttimes from bed
He issued, and undid his chamber door,
And peeped abroad, but still no better sped;
And cursed a thousand times the hour that she
So long retarded his felicity.

XXV

"Yes, now she comes," the stripling often said,
And reckoned up the paces, as he lay,
Which from her bower where haply to be made
To that where he was waiting for the fay.
These thoughts, and other thoughts as vain, he weighed
Before she came, and restless at her stay,
Often believed some hinderance, yet unscanned,
Might interpose between the fruit and hand.

XXVI

At length, when dropping sweets the costly fay
Had put some end to her perfumery,
The time now come she need no more delay,
Since all was hushed within the palace, she
Stole from her bower alone, through secret way,

And passed towards the chamber silently,
Where on his couch the youthful cavalier
Lay, with a heart long torn by Hope and Fear.

XXVII
When the successor of Astolpho spies
Those smiling stars above him, at the sight
A flame, like that of kindled sulphur, flies
Through his full veins, as ravished by delight
Out of himself; and now up to the eyes
Plunged in a sea of bliss, he swims outright.
He leaps from bed and folds her to his breast,
Nor waits until the lady he undressed;

XXVIII
Though but in a light sendal clad, that she
Wore in the place of farthingale or gown;
Which o'er a shift of finest quality,
And white, about her limbs the fay had thrown:
The mantle yielded at his touch, as he
Embraced her, and that veil remained alone,
Which upon every side the damsel shows,
More than clear glass the lily or the rose.

XXIX
The plant no closer does the ivy clip,
With whose green boughs its stem is interlaced.
Than those fond lovers, each from either's lip
The balmy breath collecting, he embraced:
Rich perfume this, whose like no seed or slip
Bears in sweet Indian or Sabacan waste;
While so to speak their joys is either fixed,
That oftentimes those meeting lips are mixed.

XXX
These things were carried closely by the dame
And youth, or if surmised, were never bruited;

For silence seldom was a cause for blame,
But oftener as a virtue well reputed.
By those shrewd courtiers, conscious of his claim,
Rogero is with proffers fair saluted:
Worshipped of all those inmates, who fulfil
In this the enamoured far, Alcina's will.

XXXI

No pleasure is omitted there; since they
Alike are prisoners in Love's magic hall.
They change their raiment twice or thrice a day,
Now for this use, and now at other call.
'Tis often feast, and always holiday;
'Tis wrestling, tourney, pageant, bath, and ball.
Now underneath a hill by fountain cast,
They read the amorous lays of ages past:

XXXII

Now by glad hill, or through the shady dale,
They hunt the fearful hare, and now they flush
With busy dog, sagacious of the trail,
Wild pheasant from the stubble-field or bush.
Now where green junipers perfume the gale,
Suspend the snare, or lime the fluttering thrush:
And casting now for fish, with net or book,
Disturb their secret haunts in pleasant brook.

XXXIII

Rogero revels there, in like delight,
While Charles and Agramant are troubled sore.
But not for him their story will I slight,
Nor Bradamant forget: who evermore,
Mid toilsome pain and care, her cherished knight,
Ravished from her, did many a day deplore;
Whom by unwonted ways, transported through
Mid air, the damsel saw, nor whither knew.

XXXIV

Of her I speak before the royal pair,
Who many days pursued her search in vain;
By shadowy wood, or over champaign bare,
By farm and city, and by hill and plain;
But seeks her cherished friend with fruitless care,
Divided by such space of land and main:
Often she goes among the Paynim spears,
Yet never aught of her Rogero hears.

XXXV

Of hundreds questioned, upon every side,
Each day, no answer ever gives content.
She roams from post to post, and far and wide
Searches pavilion, lodging, booth, or rent,
And this, mid foot or horsemen, unespied,
May safely do, without impediment,
Thanks to the ring, whose more than mortal aid,
When in her mouth, conceals the vanished maid.

XXXVI

She cannot, will not, think that he is dead;
Because the wreck of such a noble knight
Would, from Hydaspes' distant waves have spread,
To where the sun descends with westering light.
She knows not what to think, nor whither sped,
He roams in earth or air; yet, hapless wight,
Him ever seeks, and for attendant train
Has sobs and sighs, and every bitter pain.

XXXVII

At length to find the wondrous cave she thought,
Where the prophetic homes of Merlin lie,
And there lament herself until she wrought
Upon the pitying marble to reply;
For thence, if yet he lived would she be taught,

Of this glad life to hard necessity
Had yielded up; and, when she was possessed
Of the seer's councils, would pursue the best.

XXXVIII
With this intention, Bradamant her way
Directed thither, where in Poictier's wood
The vocal tomb, containing Merlin's clay,
Concealed in Alpine place and savage, stood.
But that enchantress sage, who night and day
Thought of the damsel, watchful for her good,
She, I repeat, who taught her what should be
In that fair grotto her posterity;

XXXIX
She who preserved her with protecting care,
That same enchantress, still benign and wise,
Who, knowing she a matchless race should bear
Of men, or rather semi-deities,
Spies daily what her thoughts and actions are,
And lots for her each day, divining, tries; —
She all Rogero's fortune knew, how freed;
Then borne to India by the griffin steed:

XL
Him on that courser plainly she had eyed,
Who would not the controlling rein obey;
When, severed by such interval, he hied,
Borne through the perilous, unwonted way:
And knew that he sport, dance, and banquet plied,
And lapt in idleness and pleasure lay;
Nor memory of his lord nor of the dame,
Once loved so well, preserved, not of his fame.

XLI
And thus such gentle knight ingloriously
Would have consumed his fairest years and best,

In long inaction, afterwards to be,
Body and soul, destroyed; and that, possessed
Alone by us in perpetuity.
That flower, whose sweets outlive the fragile rest
Which quickens man when he in earth is laid,
Would have been plucked or severed in the blade.

XLII
But that enchantress kind, who with more care
Than for himself he watched, still kept the knight,
Designed to drag him, by rough road and bare,
Towards true virtue, in his own despite;
As often cunning leech will burn and pare
The flesh, and poisonous drug employ aright:
Who, though at first his cruel art offend,
Is thanked, since he preserves us in the end.

XLIII
She, not like old Atlantes, rendered blind
By the great love she to the stripling bore,
Set not on gifting him with life her mind,
As was the scope of that enchanter hoar;
Who, reckless all of fame and praise declined,
Wished length of days to his Rogero more
Than that, to win a world's applause, the peer
Should of his joyous life forego one year.

XLIV
By him he to Alcina's isle had been
Dispatched, that in her palace he might dwell,
Forgetting arms; and, as enchanter seen
In magic and the use of every spell,
The heart had fastened of that fairy-queen,
Enamoured of the gentle youth, so well,
That she the knot would never disengage,
Though he should live to more than Nestor's age.

XLV
Returning now to her that well foreknew
Whatever was to come to pass, I say
She thither did her journey straight pursue,
Where she met Aymon's daughter by the way
Forlorn and wandering: Bradamant at view
Of her enchantress, erst to grief a prey,
Changes it all to hope: the other tells
That with Alcina her Rogero dwells.

XLVI
Nigh dead the maid remains, in piteous guise,
Hearing of him so far removed, and more
Grieves that she danger to her love descries,
Save this some strong and speedy cure restore.
But her the enchantress comforts, and applies
A salve where it was needed most, and swore
That few short days should pass before anew
Rogero should return to glad her view.

XLVII
"Since thou, an antidote to sorcery,
Lady (she said), the virtuous ring dost wear,
I have no doubt if to yon island I
This, where thine every good is hidden, hear,
To foil Alcina's wiles and witchery,
And thence to bring thee back thy cherished care.
This evening, early, will I hence away,
And be in India by the break of day."

XLVIII
And told to her, the tale continuing,
The mode which she was purposing to employ,
From that effeminate, soft realm to bring
Back into warlike France the cherished boy.
Bradamant from her finger slipt the ring,

Nor this alone would have bestowed with joy;
But heart and life would at her feet have laid,
If she had deemed they could Rogero aid.

XLIX
Giving the ring, her cause she recommends
To her, and recommends Rogero more.
Countless salutes by her the damsel sends,
Then of Provence, departing seeks the shore.
The enchantress to another quarter wends;
And, for the execution of her lore,
Conjures, that eve, a palfrey, by her art,
With one foot red, black every other part.

L
Some Farfarello, or Alchino he,
I think, whom in that form she raised from hell;
And with loose hair, dishevelled horribly,
Ungirt and barefoot, mounted in the sell.
But, with wise caution, from her finger she
Withdrew the ring, lest it should mar the spell:
And then by him was with such swiftness born,
She in Alcina's isle arrived at morn.

LI
Herself she changed with wonderful disguise,
Adding a palm of stature to her height;
And made her limbs of a proportioned size;
And of the very measure seemed to sight,
As was she deemed, the necromancer wise,
Who with such care had reared the youthful knight.
With long-descending beard she clothed her chin,
And wrinkled o'er her front and other skin.

LII
To imitate his speech, and face, and cheer,
She knew so well, that, by the youth descried,

She might the sage Atlantes' self appear;
Next hid, and watched so long, that she espied
Upon a day (rare chance) the cavalier
At length detached from his Alcina's side:
For still, in motion or at rest, the fay
Ill bore the youth should be an hour away.

LIII
Alone she finds him, fitting well her will,
As he enjoys the pure and morning air
Beside a brook, which trickled from a hill,
Streaming towards a limpid lake and fair.
His fine, soft garments, wove with cunning skill,
All over, ease and wantonness declare;
These with her hand, such subtle toil well taught,
For him in silk and gold Alcina wrought.

LIV
About the stripling's neck, a splendid string
Of gems, descending to mid-breast, is wound;
On each once manly arm, now glittering
With the bright hoop, a bracelet fair is bound.
Pierced with golden wire, in form of ring,
Is either ear; and from the yellow round
Depend two precious pearls; not such the coast
Of Araby or sumptuous India boast.

LV
Crisped into comely ringlets was his hair,
Wet with the costliest odours and the best;
And soft and amorous all his gestures were,
Like one who does Valentian lady's hest.
In him, beside his name, was nothing fair,
And more than half corrupted all the rest.
So was Rogero found, within that dell,
Changed from his former self by potent spell.

LVI
Him in the figure of Atlantes sage
She fronts, who bore the enchanter's borrowed cheer;
With that grave face, and reverend with age,
Which he was always wonted to revere;
And with that eye, which in his pupillage,
Beaming with wrath, he whilom so did fear.
And sternly cries, "Is this the fruit at last
Which pays my tedious pain and labour past?

LVII
"The marrow of the lion and the bear
Didst thou for this thine early banquet make,
And, trained by me, by cliff or cavern-lair,
Strangle with infant hands the crested snake;
Their claws from tiger and from panther tear,
And tusks from living boar in tangled brake,
That, bred in such a school, in thee should I
Alcina's Atys or Adonis spy?

LVIII
"Is this the hope that stars, observed by me,
Signs in conjunction, sacred fibres, bred;
With what beside of dream or augury,
And all those lots I but too deeply read,
Which, while yet hanging at the breast, of thee,
When these thy years should be accomplished, said,
Thy fears should so be bruited far and near,
Thou justly should be deemed without a peer?

LIX
"This does, in truth, a fair beginning show;
A seed which, we may hope, will soon conceive
A Julius, Alexander, Scipio.
Who thee Alcina's bondsman could believe;
And (for the world the shameful fact might know)

That all should, manifest to sight, perceive
Upon thy neck and arms the servile chains,
Wherewith she at her will her captive trains?

LX
"If thine own single honour move not thee,
And the high deeds which thou art called to do,
Wherefore defraud thy fair posterity
Of what, was oft predicted, should ensue?
Alas! why seal the womb God willed should be
Pregnant by thee with an illustrious crew,
That far renowned, and more than human line,
Destined the sun in glory to outshine?

LXI
"Forbid not of the noblest souls the birth,
Formed in the ideas of Eternal Mind,
Destined, from age to age, to visit earth,
Sprung from thy stock, and clothed in corporal rind;
The spring of thousand palms and festal mirth,
Through which, to Italy with losses pined
And wounds, thy good descendants shall restore
The fame and honours she enjoyed of yore.

LXII
"Not only should these many souls have weight
To bend thy purpose, holy souls, and bright,
Which from thy fruitful tree shall vegetate;
But, though alone, a single couple might
Suffice a nobler feeling to create,
Alphonso and his brother Hyppolite:
Whose like was seldom witnessed to this time,
Through all the paths whence men to virtue climb.

LXIII
"I was more wont to dwell upon this pair
Than all the rest, of whom I prophesied;

As well that these a greater part should bear
In lofty virtues, as that I descried
Thee, listening to my lore with closer care,
Than to the tale of all thy seed beside.
I saw thee joy that such a pair would shine
Amid the heroes of thy noble line.

LXIV

"Say, what has she, thou makest thy fancy's queen,
More than what other courtezans possess?
Who of so many concubine has been;
How used her lovers in the end to bless,
Thou truly know'st: but that she may be seen
Without disguise, and in her real dress,
This ring, returning, on thy finger wear,
And thou shalt see the dame, and mark how fair."

LXV

Abashed and mute, Rogero, listening,
In vain to her reproof an answer sought:
Who on his little finger put the ring,
Whose virtue to himself the warrior brought.
And such remorse and shame within him spring,
When on his altered sense the change is wrought,
A thousand fathoms deep he fain would lie
Buried in earth, unseen of any eye.

LXVI

So speaking, to the natural shape she wore
Before his eyes returned the magic dame;
Nor old Atlantes' form was needed more,
The good effect obtained for which she came.
To tell you that which was not told before,
Melissa was the sage enchantress' name:
Who to Rogero now her purpose said,
And told with what design she thither sped:

LXVII
Dispatched by her, who him in anxious pain
Desires, nor longer can without him be,
With the intent to loose him from the chain
Wherewith he was begirt by sorcery;
And had put on, more credence to obtain,
Atlantes de Carena's form; but she,
Seeing his health restored, now willed the youth,
Through her should hear and see the very truth.

LXVIII
"That gentle lady who so loves thee, who
Were well deserving love upon thy part;
To whom (unless forgot, thou know'st how true
The tale) thou debtor for thy freedom art,
This ring, which can each magic spell undo,
Sends for thy succour, and would send her heart,
If with such virtue fraught, her heart could bring
Thee safely in thy perils, like the ring."

LXIX
How Bradamant had loved, and loves, she says,
Continuing to Rogero her relation;
To this, her worth commends with fitting praise,
Tempering in truth and fondness her narration;
And still employs the choicest mode and phrase,
Which fits one skilful in negociation,
And on the false Alcina brings such hate,
As on things horrible is wont to wait;

LXX
Brings hate on that which he so loved before;
Nor let the tale astonish which you hear,
For since his love was forced by magic lore,
The ring the false enchantment served to clear.
This too unmasked the charms Alcina wore,

And made all false, from head to food, appear.
None of her own, but borrowed, all he sees,
And the once sparkling cup now drugged with lees.

LXXI
Like boy who somewhere his ripe fruit bestows,
And next forgets the place where it is laid,
Then, after many days, conducted goes
By chance, where he the rich deposit made,
And wonders that the hidden treasure shows,
Not what it is, but rotten and decayed;
And hates, and scorns, and loathes, with altered eyes,
And throws away what he was used to prize.

LXXII
Rogero thus, when by Melissa's lore
Advised, he to behold the fay returned,
And that good ring of sovereign virtue wore,
Which, on the finger placed, all spells o'erturned;
For that fair damsel he had left before,
To his surprise, so foul a dame discerned,
That in this ample world, examined round,
A hag so old and hideous is not found.

LXXIII
Pale, lean, and wrinkled was the face, and white,
And thinly clothed with hair Alcina's head;
Her stature reached not to six palms in height,
And every tooth was gone; for she had led
A longer life than ever mortal wight,
Than Hecuba or she in Cuma bred;
But thus by practice, to our age unknown,
Appeared with youth and beauty not her own.

LXXIV
By art she gave herself the lovely look,
Which had on many like Rogero wrought;

But now the ring interpreted the book,
Which secrets, hid for many ages, taught.
No wonder then that he the dame forsook,
And banished from his mind all further thought
Of love for false Alcina, found in guise
Which no new means of slippery fraud supplies.

LXXV
But, as Melissa counselled him, he wore
His wonted semblance for a time, till he
Was with his armour, many days before
Laid by, again accoutred cap-a-pee.
And, lest Alcina should his end explore,
Feigned to make proof of his agility;
Feigned to make proof if for his arms he were
Too gross, long time unwont the mail to bear.

LXXVI
Next Balisarda to his flank he tied
(For so Rogero's trenchant sword was hight),
And took the wondrous buckler, which, espied,
Not only dazzled the beholder's sight,
But seemed, when its silk veil was drawn aside,
As from the body if exhaled the sprite:
In its close cover of red sendal hung,
This at his neck the youthful warrior slung.

LXXVII
Provided thus, he to the stables came,
And bade with bridle and with saddle dight
A horse more black than pitch; for so the dame
Counselled, well-taught how swift the steed and light.
Him Rabicano those who know him name,
And he the courser was, that with the knight,
Who stands beside the sea, the breeze's sport,
The whale of yore conducted to that port.

LXXVIII
The hippogryph he might have had at need,
Who next below good Rabican was tied,
But that the dame had cried to him, "Take heed,
Thou know'st how ill that courser is to ride";
And said the following day the winged steed
'Twas her intention from that realm to guide,
Where he should be instructed at his leisure,
To rein and run him every where at pleasure:

LXXIX
Nor, if he took him not, would he suggest
Suspicion of the intended flight: The peer
This while performed Melissa's every hest,
Who, still invisible, was at his ear.
So feigning, from the wanton dome possessed
By that old strumpet, rode the cavalier;
And pricking forth drew near unto a gate,
Whence the road led to Logistilla's state.

LXXX
Assaulting suddenly the guardian crew,
He, sword in hand, the squadron set upon;
This one he wounded, and that other slew,
And, point by point made good, the drawbridge won:
And ere of his escape Alcina knew,
The gentle youth was far away and gone.
My next shall tell his route, and how he gained
At last the realm where Logistilla reigned.

CANTO 8

ARGUMENT
Rogero flies; Astolpho with the rest,
To their true shape Melissa does restore;
Rinaldo levies knights and squadrons, pressed

In aid of Charles assaulted by the Moor:
Angelica, by ruffians found at rest,
Is offered to a monster on the shore.
Orlando, warned in visions of his ill,
Departs from Paris sore against his will.

I

How many enchantresses among us! oh,
How many enchanters are there, though unknown!
Who for their love make man or woman glow,
Changing them into figures not their own.
Nor this by help of spirits from below,
Nor observation of the stars is done:
But these on hearts with fraud and falsehood plot,
Binding them with indissoluble knot.

II

Who with Angelica's, or rather who
Were fortified with Reason's ring, would see
Each countenance, exposed to open view,
Unchanged by art or by hypocrisy.
This now seems fair and good, whose borrowed hue
Removed, would haply foul and evil be.
Well was it for Rogero that he wore
The virtuous ring which served the truth to explore!

III

Rogero, still dissembling, as I said,
Armed, to the gate on Rabican did ride;
Found the guard unprepared, not let his blade,
Amid that crowd, hang idle at his side:
He passed the bridge, and broke the palisade,
Some slain, some maimed; then t'wards the forest hied;
But on that road small space had measured yet,
When he a servant of the fairy met.

IV

He on his fist a ravening falcon bore,
Which he made fly for pastime every day;
Now on the champaign, now upon the shore
Of neighbouring pool, which teemed with certain prey;
And rode a hack which simple housings wore,
His faithful dog, companion of his way.
He, marking well the haste with which he hies,
Conjectures truly what Rogero flies.

V

Towards him came the knave, with semblance haught,
Demanding whither in such haste he sped:
To him the good Rogero answers naught.
He hence assured more clearly that he fled,
Within himself to stop the warrior thought,
And thus, with his left arm extended, said:
"What, if I suddenly thy purpose balk,
And thou find no defence against this hawk?"

VI

Then flies his bird, who works so well his wing,
Rabican cannot distance him in flight:
The falconer from his back to ground did spring,
And freed him from the bit which held him tight;
Who seemed an arrow parted from the string,
And terrible to foe, with kick and bite;
While with such haste behind the servant came,
He sped as moved by wind, or rather flame.

VII

Nor will the falconer's dog appear more slow;
But hunts Rogero's courser, as in chace
Of timid hare the pard is wont to go.
Not to stand fast the warrior deems disgrace,
And turns towards the swiftly-footed foe,

Whom he sees wield a riding-wand, place
Of other arms, to make his dog obey.
Rogero scorns his faulchion to display.

VIII
The servant made at him, and smote him sore;
The dog his left foot worried; while untied
From rein, the lightened horse three times and more
Lashed from the croup, nor missed his better side.
The hawk, oft wheeling, with her talons tore
The stripling, and his horse so terrified,
The courser, by the whizzing sound dismayed,
Little the guiding hand or spur obeyed.

IX
Constrained at length, his sword Rogero drew
To clear the rabble, who his course delay;
And in the animals' or villain's view
Did now its point, and now its edge display.
But with more hinderance and vexatious crew
Swarm here and there, and wholly block the way;
And that dishonour will ensue and loss,
Rogero sees, if him they longer cross.

X
He knew each little that he longer stayed,
Would bring the fay and followers on the trail;
Already drums were beat, and trumpets brayed,
And larum-bells rang loud in every vale.
An act too foul it seemed to use his blade
On dog, and knave unfenced with arms or mail:
A better and shorter way it were
The buckler, old Atlantes' work, to bare.

XI
He raised the crimson cloth in which he wore
The wondrous shield, enclosed for many a day;

Its beams, as proved a thousand times before,
Work as they wont, when on the sight they play;
Senseless the falconer tumbles on the moor;
Drop dog and hackney; drop the pinions gay,
Which poised in air the bird no longer keep:
Then glad Rogero leaves a prey to sleep.

XII
In the mean time, Alcina, who had heard
How he had forced the gate, and, in the press,
Slaughtered a mighty number of her guard,
Remained nigh dead, o'erwhelmed with her distress;
She tore her vesture, and her visage marred,
And cursed her want of wit and wariness.
Then made forthwith her meiny sound to arms,
And round herself arrayed her martial swarms.

XIII
Divided next, one squadron by the way
Rogero took, she sent; the bands were two:
She at the port embarked the next array,
And straight to sea dispatched the warlike crew.
With this good squadron went the desperate fay,
And darked by loosened sails the billows grew;
For so desire upon her bosom preyed,
Of troops she left her city unpurveyed.

XIV
Without a guard she left her palace there,
Which to Melissa, prompt her time to seize,
To loose her vassals that in misery were,
Afforded all convenience and full ease;
— To range, at leisure, through the palace fair,
And so examine all her witcheries;
To raze the seal, burn images, and loose
Or cancel hag-knot, rhomb, or magic noose.

XV

Thence, through the fields, fast hurrying from that dome,
The former lovers changed, a mighty train,
Some into rock or tree, to fountain some,
Or beast, she made assume their shapes again:
And these, when they anew are free to roam,
Follow Rogero's footsteps to the reign
Of Logistilla's sage; and from that bourn
To Scythia, Persia, Greece, and Ind return.

XVI

They to their several homes dispatched, repair,
Bound by a debt which never can be paid:
The English duke, above the rest her care,
Of these, was first in human form arrayed:
For much his kindred and the courteous prayer
Of good Rogero with Melissa weighed.
Beside his prayers, the ring Rogero gave;
That him she by its aid might better save.

XVII

Thus by Rogero's suit the enchantress won,
To his first shape transformed the youthful peer;
But good Melissa deemed that nought was done
Save she restored his armour, and that spear
Of gold, which whensoe'er at tilt he run,
At the first touch unseated cavalier;
Once Argalia's, next Astolpho's lance,
And source of mighty fame to both in France.

XVIII

The sage Melissa found this spear of gold,
Which now Alcina's magic palace graced,
And other armour of the warrior bold,
Of which he was in that ill dome uncased.
She climbed the courser of the wizard old,

And on the croup, at ease, Astolpho placed:
And thus, an hour before Rogero came,
Repaired to Logistilla, knight and dame.

XIX
Meantime, through rugged rocks, and shagged with thorn,
Rogero wends, to seek the sober fay;
From cliff to cliff, from path to path forlorn,
A rugged, lone, inhospitable way:
Till he, with labour huge oppressed and worn,
Issued at noon upon a beach, that lay
'Twixt sea and mountain, open to the south,
Deserted, barren, bare, and parched with drouth.

XX
The sunbeams on the neighbouring mountain beat
And glare, reflected from the glowing mass
So fiercely, sand and air both boil with heat,
In mode that might have more than melted glass.
The birds are silent in their dim retreat,
Nor any note is heard in wood or grass,
Save the bough perched Cicala's wearying cry,
Which deafens hill and dale, and sea and sky.

XXI
The heat and thirst and labour which he bore
By that drear sandy way beside the sea,
Along the unhabited and sunny shore,
Were to Rogero grievous company:
Bur for I may not still pursue this lore,
Nor should you busied with one matter be,
Rogero I abandon in this heat,
For Scotland; to pursue Rinaldo's beat.

XXII
By king, by daughter, and by all degrees,
To Sir Rinaldo was large welcome paid;

And next the warrior, at his better ease,
The occasion of his embassy displayed:
That he from thence and England, subsidies
Of men was seeking, for his monarch's aid,
In Charles's name; and added, in his care,
The justest reasons to support his prayer.

XXIII
The king made answer, that `without delay,
Taxed to the utmost of his powers and might,
His means at Charlemagne's disposal lay,
For the honour of the empire and the right.
And that, within few days, he in array
Such horsemen, as he had in arms, would dight;
And, save that he was now waxed old, would lead
The expedition he was prayed to speed.

XXIV
`Nor like consideration would appear
Worthy to stop him, but that he possessed
A son, and for such charge that cavalier,
Measured by wit and force, was worthiest.
Though not within the kingdom was the peer,
It was his hope (as he assured his guest)
He would, while yet preparing was the band,
Return, and find it mustered to his hand.'

XXV
So sent through all his realm, with expedition,
His treasures, to levy men and steeds;
And ships prepared, and warlike ammunition,
And money, stores and victual for their needs.
Meantime the good Rinaldo on his mission,
Leaving the courteous king, to England speeds;
He brought him on his way to Berwick's town,
And was observed to weep when he was gone.

XXVI

The wind sat in the poop; Rinaldo good
Embarked and bade farewell to all; the sheet
Still loosening to the breeze, the skipper stood,
Till where Thames' waters, waxing bitter, meet
Salt ocean: wafted thence by tide of flood,
Through a sure channel to fair London's seat,
Safely the mariners their course explore,
Making their way, with aid of sail and oar.

XXVII

The Emperor Charles, and he, King Otho grave,
Who was with Charles, by siege in Paris pressed,
A broad commission to Rinaldo brave,
With letters to the Prince of Wales addressed,
And countersigns had given, dispatched to crave
What foot and horse were by the land possessed.
The whole to be to Calais' port conveyed;
That it to France and Charles might furnish aid.

XXVIII

The prince I speak of, who on Otho's throne
Sate in his stead, the vacant helm to guide,
Such honor did to Aymon's valiant son,
He not with such his king had gratified.
Next, all to good Rinaldo's wish, was done:
Since for his martial bands on every side,
In Britain, or the isles which round her lay,
To assemble near the sea he fixed a day.

XXIX

But here, sir, it behoves me shift my ground,
Like him that makes the sprightly viol ring,
Who often changes chord and varies sound,
And now a graver strikes, now sharper string:
Thus I: — who did to good Rinaldo bound

My tale, Angelica remembering;
Late left, where saved from him by hasty flight,
She had encountered with an anchorite.

XXX
Awhile I will pursue her story: I
Told how the maid of him with earnest care,
Enquired, how she towards the shore might fly:
Who of the loathed Rinaldo has such fear,
She dreads, unless she pass the sea, to die,
As insecure in Europe, far or near,
But she was by the hermit kept in play,
Because he pleasure took with her to stay.

XXXI
His heart with love of that rare beauty glowed,
And to his frozen marrow pierced the heat;
Who, after, when he saw that she bestowed
Small care on him, and thought but of retreat,
His sluggish courser stung with many a goad;
But with no better speed he plied his feet.
Ill was his walk, and worse his trot; nor spur
Could that dull beast to quicker motion stir:

XXXII
And for the flying maid was far before,
And he would soon have ceased to track her steed,
To the dark cave recurred the hermit hoar,
And conjured up of fiends a grisly breed:
One he selected out of many more,
And first informed the demon of his need;
Then in the palfrey bade him play his part,
Who with the lady bore away his heart:

XXXIII
And as sagacious dog on mountain tried
Before, accustomed fox and hare to chase,

If he behold the quarry choose one side,
The other takes, and seems to slight the trace:
But at the turn arriving, is espied,
Already tearing what he crossed to face;
So her the hermit by a different road
Will meet, wherever she her palfrey goad.

XXXIV
What was the friar's design I well surmise;
And you shall know; but in another page.
Angelica now slow, now faster, flies,
Nought fearing this: while conjured by the sage,
The demon covered in the courser lies;
As fire sometimes will hide its smothered rage:
Then blazes with devouring flame and heat,
Unquenchable, and scarce allows retreat.

XXXV
After the flying maid had shaped her course
By the great sea which laves the Gascon shore,
Still keeping to the rippling waves her horse,
Where best the moistened sand the palfrey bore,
Him, plunged into the brine, the fiend perforce
Dragged, till he swam amid the watery roar.
Nor what to do the timid damsel knew,
Save that she closer to her saddle grew.

XXXVI
She cannot, howsoe'er the rein she ply,
Govern the horse, who swims the surge to meet:
Her raiment she collects and holds it high;
And, not to wet them, gathers up her feet.
Her tresses, which the breeze still wantonly
Assaults, dishevelled on her shoulders beat.
The louder winds are hushed, perchance in duty,
Intent, like ocean, on such sovereign beauty.

XXXVII

Landward in vain her eyes the damsel bright
Directs, which water face and breast with tears,
And ever sees, decreasing to her sight,
The beach she left, which less and less appears.
The courser, who was swimming to the right,
After a mighty sweep, the lady bears
To shore, where rock and cavern shag the brink,
As night upon the land begins to sink.

XXXVIII

When in that desert, which but to descry
Bred fear in the beholder, stood the maid
Alone, as Phoebus, plunged in ocean, sky
And nether earth had left obscured in shade;
She paused in guise, which in uncertainty
Might leave whoever had the form surveyed,
If she were real woman, or some mock
Resemblance, coloured in the living rock.

XXXIX

She, fixed and stupid in her wretchedness,
Stood on the shifting sand, with ruffled hair:
Her hands were joined, her lips were motionless,
Her languid eyes upturned, as in despair,
Accusing Him on high, that to distress
And whelm her, all the fates united were.
Astound she stood awhile; when grief found vent
Through eyes and tongue, in tears and in lament.

XL

"Fortune what more remains, that thou on me
Shouldst not now satiate thy revengeful thirst?
What more (she said) can I bestow on thee
Than, what thou seekest not, this life accurst?
Thou wast in haste to snatch me from the sea,

Where I had ended its sad days, immersed;
Because to torture me with further ill
Before I die, is yet thy cruel will.

XLI
"But what worse torment yet remains in store
Beyond, I am unable to descry:
By thee from my fair throne, which nevermore
I hope to repossess, compelled to fly;
I, what is worse, my honour lost deplore;
For if I sinned not in effect, yet I
Give matter by my wanderings to be stung
For wantonness of every carping tongue.

XLII
"What other good is left to woman, who
Has lost her honour, in this earthly ball?
What profits it that, whether false or true,
I am deemed beauteous, and am young withal?
No thanks to heaven for such a gift are due,
Whence on my head does every mischief fall.
For this my brother Argalia died;
To whom small help enchanted arms supplied:

XLIII
"For this the Tartar king, Sir Agrican,
Subdued my sire, who Galaphron was hight,
And of Catay in India was great khan;
'Tis hence I am reduced to such a plight,
That wandering evermore, I cannot scan
At morn, where I shall lay my head at night.
If thou hast ravished what thou couldst, wealth, friends,
And honour; say what more thy wrath intends.

XLIV
"If death by drowning in the foaming sea
Was not enough thy wrath to satiate,

Send, if thou wilt, some beast to swallow me,
So that he keep me not in pain! Thy hate
Cannot devise a torment, so it be
My death, but I shall thank thee for my fate!"
Thus, with loud sobs, the weeping lady cried,
When she beheld the hermit at her side.

XLV
From the extremest height the hermit hoar
Of that high rock above her, had surveyed
Angelica, arrived upon the shore,
Beneath the cliff, afflicted and dismayed.
He to that place had come six days before;
For him by path untrod had fiend conveyed:
And he approached her, feigning such a call
As e'er Hilarion might have had, or Paul.

XLVI
When him, yet unagnized, she saw appear,
The lady took some comfort, and laid by,
Emboldened by degrees, her former fear:
Though still her visage was of death-like dye.
"Misericord! father," when the friar was near
(She said), "for brought to evil pass am I."
And told, still broke by sobs, in doleful tone,
The story, to her hearer not unknown.

XLVII
To comfort her, some reasons full of grace,
Sage and devout the approaching hermit cites:
And, now his hand upon her moistened face,
In speaking, now upon her bosom lights:
As her, securer, next he would embrace:
Him, kindling into pretty scorn, she smites
With one hand on his breast, and backward throws,
Then flushed with honest red, all over glows.

XLVIII
A pocket at the ancient's side was dight,
Where he a cruise of virtuous liquor wore;
And at those puissant eyes, whence flashed the light
Of the most radiant torch Love ever bore,
Threw from the flask a little drop, of might
To make her sleep: upon the sandy shore
Already the recumbent damsel lay,
The greedy elder's unresisting prey.

XLIX
(Stanza XLIX untranslated by Rose)

L
(Lines 1-2 untranslated by Rose)
Hopeless, at length upon the beach he lies,
And by the maid, exhausted, falls asleep.
When to torment him new misfortunes rise:
Fortune does seldom any measure keep;
Unused to cut her cruel pastime short,
If she with mortal man is pleased to sport.

LI
It here behoves me, from the path I pressed,
To turn awhile, ere I this case relate:
In the great northern sea, towards the west,
Green Ireland past, an isle is situate.
Ebuda is its name, whose shores infest,
(Its people wasted through the Godhead's hate)
The hideous orc, and Proteus' other herd,
By him against that race in vengeance stirred.

LII
Old stories, speak they falsely or aright,
Tell how a puissant king this country swayed;
Who had a daughter fair, so passing bright
And lovely, 'twas no wonder if the maid,

When on the beach she stood in Proteus' sight,
Left him to burn amid the waves: surveyed,
One day alone, upon that shore in-isled,
Her he compressed, and quitted great with child.

LIII
This was sore torment to the sire, severe
And impious more than all mankind; nor he,
Such is the force of wrath, was moved to spare
The maid, for reason or for piety.
Nor, though he saw her pregnant, would forbear
To execute his sentence suddenly;
But bade together with the mother kill,
Ere born, his grandchild, who had done no ill.

LIV
Sea-Proteus to his flocks' wide charge preferred
By Neptune, of all ocean's rule possessed,
Inflamed with ire, his lady's torment heard,
And, against law and usage, to molest
The land (no sluggard in his anger) stirred
His monsters, orc and sea-calf, with the rest;
Who waste not only herds, but human haunts,
Farm-house and town, with their inhabitants:

LV
And girding them on every side, the rout
Will often siege to walled cities lay;
Where in long weariness and fearful doubt,
The townsmen keep their watch by night and day.
The fields they have abandoned all about,
And for a remedy, their last assay,
To the oracle, demanding counsel, fly,
Which to the suppliant's prayer made this reply:

LVI

`That it behoved them find a damsel, who
A form as beauteous as that other wore,
To be to Proteus offered up, in lieu
Of the fair lady, slain upon the shore:
He, if he deems her an atonement due,
Will keep the damsel, not disturb them more:
If not, another they must still present,
And so, till they the deity content.'

LVII

And this it was the cruel usage bred;
That of the damsels held most fair of face,
To Proteus every day should one be led.
Till one should in the Godhead's sight find grace.
The first and all those others slain, who fed,
All a devouring orc, that kept his place
Beside the port, what time into the main
The remnant of the herd retired again.

LVIII

Were the old tale of Proteus' false or true,
(For this, in sooth, I know not who can read)
With such a clause was kept by that foul crew
The savage, ancient statute, which decreed
That woman's flesh the ravening monster, who
For this came every day to land, should feed.
Though to be woman is a crying ill
In every place, 'tis here a greater still.

LIX

O wretched maids! whom 'mid that barbarous rout
Ill-fortune on that wretched shore has tost!
Who for the stranger damsel prowl about,
Of her to make an impious holocaust;
In that the more they slaughter from without,

They less the number of their own exhaust.
But since not always wind and waves convey
Like plunder, upon every strand they prey.

LX
With frigate and with galley wont to roam,
And other sort of barks they range the sea,
And, as a solace to their martyrdom,
From far, or from their isle's vicinity,
Bear women off; with open rapine some,
These bought by gold, and those by flattery:
And, plundered from the different lands they scower,
Crowd with their captives dungeon-cell and tower.

LXI
Keeping that region close aboard, to explore
The island's lonely bank, a gallery creeps;
Where, amid stubs upon the grassy shore,
Angelica, unhappy damsel, sleeps.
To wood and water there the sailor's moor,
And from the bark, for this, a party leaps;
And there that matchless flower of earthly charms
Discovers in the holy father's arms.

LXII
Oh! prize too dear, oh! too illustrious prey!
To glut so barbarous and so base a foe!
Oh! cruel Fortune! who believed thy sway
Was of such passing power in things below?
That thou shouldst make a hideous monster's prey
The beauty, for which Agrican did glow,
Brought with half Scythia's people from the gates
Of Caucasus, in Ind, to find their fates.

LXIII
The beauty, by Circassian Sacripant
Preferred before his honour and his crown,

The beauty which made Roland, Brava's vaunt,
Sully his wholesome judgment and renown,
The beauty which had moved the wide Levant,
And awed, and turned its kingdom upside down,
Now has not (thus deserted and unheard)
One to assist it even with a word.

LXIV
Oppressed with heavy sleep upon the shore,
The lovely virgin, ere awake, they chain:
With her, the enchanter friar the pirates bore
On board their ship, a sad, afflicted train.
This done, they hoisted up their sail once more,
And the bark made the fatal isle again,
Where, till the lot shall of their prey dispose,
Her prisoned in a castle they enclose.

LXV
But such her matchless beauty's power, the maid
Was able that fierce crew to mollify,
Who many days her cruel death delayed,
Preserved until their last necessity;
And while they damsels from without purveyed,
Spared such angelic beauty: finally,
The damsel to the monstrous orc they bring,
The people all behind her sorrowing.

LXVI
Who shall relate the anguish, the lament
And outcry which against the welkin knock?
I marvel that the sea-shore was not rent,
When she was placed upon the rugged block,
Where, chained and void of help, the punishment
Of loathsome death awaits her on the rock.
This will not I, so sorrow moves me, say,
Which makes me turn my rhymes another way;

LXVII

To find a verse of less lugubrious strain,
Till I my wearied spirit shall restore:
For not the squalid snake of mottled stain,
Nor wild and whelpless tiger, angered more,
Nor what of venomous, on burning plain,
Creeps 'twixt the Red and the Atlantic shore,
Could see the grisly sight, and choose but moan
The damsel bound upon the naked stone.

LXVIII

Oh! if this chance to her Orlando, who
Was gone to Paris-town to seek the maid,
Had been reported! or those other two,
Duped by a post, dispatched from Stygian shade,
They would have tracked her heavenly footsteps through
A thousand deaths, to bear the damsel aid.
But had the warriors of her peril known.
So far removed, for what would that have done?

LXIX

This while round Paris-walls the leaguer lay
Of famed Troyano's son's besieging band,
Reduced to such extremity one day,
That it nigh fell into the foeman's hand;
And, but that vows had virtue to allay
The wrath of Heaven, whose waters drenched the land,
That day had perished by the Moorish lance
The holy empire and great name of France.

LXX

To the just plaint of aged Charlemagne
The great Creator turned his eyes, and stayed
The conflagration with a sudden rain,
Which haply human art had not allayed.
Wise whosoever seeketh, not in vain,

His help, than whose there is no better aid!
Well the religious king, to whom 'twas given,
Knew that the saving succour was from Heaven.

LXXI
All night long counsel of his weary bed,
Vexed with a ceaseless care, Orlando sought;
Now here, now there, the restless fancy sped,
Now turned, now seized, but never held the thought:
As when, from sun or nightly planet shed,
Clear water has the quivering radiance caught,
The flashes through the spacious mansion fly,
With reaching leap, right, left, and low, and high.

LXXII
To memory now returned his lady gay,
She rather ne'er was banished from his breast;
And fanned the secret fire, which through the day
(Now kindled into flame) had seemed at rest;
That in his escort even from Catay
Or farthest Ind, had journeyed to the west;
There lost: Of whom he had discerned no token
Since Charles's power near Bordeaux-town was broken.

LXXIII
This in Orlando moved great grief, and he
Lay thinking on his folly past in vain:
"My heart," he said, "oh! how unworthily
I bore myself! and out, alas! what pain,
(When night and day I might have dwelt with thee,
Since this thou didst not in thy grace disdain.)
To have let them place thee in old Namus' hand!
Witless a wrong so crying to withstand.

LXXIV
"Might I not have excused myself? — The king
Had not perchance gainsaid my better right —

Of if he had gainsaid my reasoning,
Who would have taken thee in my despite?
Why not have armed, and rather let them wring
My heart out of my breast? But not the might
Of Charles or all his host, had they been tried,
Could have availed to tear thee from my side.

LXXV
"Oh! had he placed her but in strong repair,
Guarded in some good fort, or Paris-town!
— Since he would trust her to Duke Namus' care,
That he should lose her in this way, alone
Sorts with my wish. — Who would have kept the fair
Like me, that would for her to death have gone?
Have kept her better than my heart or sight:
Who should and could, yet did not what I might.

LXXVI
"Without me, my sweet life, beshrew me, where
Art thou bestowed, so beautiful and young!
As some lost lamb, what time the daylight fair
Shuts in, remains the wildering woods among,
And goes about lamenting here and there,
Hoping to warn the shepherd with her tongue;
Till the wolf hear from far the mournful strain,
And the sad shepherd weep for her in vain.

LXXVII
"My hope, where are thou, where? In doleful wise
Dost thou, perchance, yet rove thy lonely round?
Art thou, indeed, to ravening wolf a prize,
Without thy faithful Roland's succour found?
And is the flower, which, with the deities,
Me, in mid heaven had placed, which, not to wound,
(So reverent was my love) thy feelings chaste,
I kept untouched, alas! now plucked and waste?

LXXVIII
"If this fair flower be plucked, oh, misery! oh,
Despair! what more is left me but to die?
Almighty God, with every other woe
Rather than this, thy wretched suppliant try.
If this be true, these hands the fatal blow
Shall deal, and doom me to eternity."
Mixing his plaint with bitter tears and sighs,
So to himself the grieved Orlando cries.

LXXIX
Already every where, with due repose,
Creatures restored their weary spirits; laid
These upon stones and upon feathers those,
Or greensward, in the beech or myrtle's shade:
But scarcely did thine eyes, Orlando close,
So on thy mind tormenting fancies preyed.
Nor would the vexing thoughts which bred annoy,
Let thee in peace that fleeting sleep enjoy.

LXXX
To good Orlando it appeared as he,
Mid odorous flowers, upon a grassy bed,
Were gazing on that beauteous ivory,
Which Love's own hand had tinged with native red;
And those two stars of pure transparency,
With which he in Love's toils his fancy fed:
Of those bright eyes, and that bright face, I say,
Which from his breast had torn his heart away.

LXXXI
He with the fullest pleasure overflows,
That ever happy lover did content:
But, lo! this time a mighty tempest rose,
And wasted flowers, and trees uptore and rent.
Not with the rage with which this whirlwind blows,

Joust warring winds, north, south, and east, unpent.
It seemed, as if in search of covering shade,
He, vainly wandering, through a desert strayed.

LXXXII
Meanwhile the unhappy lover lost the dame
In that dim air, nor how he lost her, weets;
And, roving far and near, her beauteous name
Through every sounding wood and plain repeats.
And while, "Oh wretched me!" is his exclaim,
"Who has to poison changed my promised sweets?"
He of his sovereign lady who with tears
Demands his aid, the lamentation hears.

LXXXIII
Thither, whence comes the sound, he swiftly hies,
And toils, now here, now there, with labour sore:
Oh! what tormenting grief, to think his eyes
Cannot again the lovely rays explore!
— Lo! other voice from other quarter cries —
"Hope not on earth to enjoy the blessing more."
At that alarming cry he woke, and found
Himself in tears of bitter sorrow drowned.

LXXXIV
Not thinking that like images are vain,
When fear, or when desire disturbs our rest,
The thought of her, exposed to shame and pain,
In such a mode upon his fancy pressed,
He, thundering, leaped from bed, and with what chain
And plate behoved, his limbs all over dressed;
Took Brigliadoro from the stall he filled,
Nor any squire attendant's service willed.

LXXXV
And to pass every where, yet not expose
By this his dignity to stain or slight,

The old and honoured ensign he foregoes,
His ancient bearing, quartered red and white.
And in its place a sable ensign shows,
Perhaps as suited to his mournful plight,
That erst he from an Amostantes bore,
Whom he had slain in fight some time before.

LXXXVI
At midnight he departed silently,
Not to his uncle spake, not to his true
And faithful comrade Brandimart, whom he
So dearly cherished, even bade adieu;
But when, with golden tresses streaming-free,
The sun from rich Tithonus' inn withdrew,
And chased the shades, and cleared the humid air,
The king perceived Orlando was not there.

LXXXVII
To Charles, to his displeasure, were conveyed
News that his nephew had withdrawn at night,
When most he lacked his presence and his aid;
Nor could he curb his choler at the flight,
But that with foul reproach he overlaid,
And sorely threatened the departed knight,
By him so foul a fault should be repented,
Save he, returning home, his wrath prevented.

LXXXVIII
Nor would Orlando's faithful Brandimart,
Who loved him as himself, behind him stay;
Whether to bring him back he in his heart
Hoped, or of him ill brooked injurious say:
And scarce, in his impatience to depart,
Till fall of eve his sally would delay.
Lest she should hinder his design, of this
He nought imparted to his Flordelis:

LXXXIX
To him this was a lady passing dear,
And from whose side he unwont to stray;
Endowed with manners, grace, and beauteous cheer,
Wisdom and wit: if now he went away
And took no leave, it was because the peer
Hoped to revisit her that very day.
But that befel him after, as he strayed,
Which him beyond his own intent delayed.

XC
She when she has expected him in vain
Well nigh a month, and nought of him discerns,
Sallies without a guide or faithful train,
So with desire of him her bosom yearns:
And many a country seeks for him in vain;
To whom the story in due place returns.
No more I now shall tell you of these two,
More bent Anglantes' champion to pursue;

XCI
Who having old Almontes' blazonry
So changed, drew nigh the gate; and there the peer
Approached a captain of the guard, when he;
"I am the County," whispered in his ear,
And (the bridge quickly lowered, and passage free
At his commandment) by the way most near
Went straight towards the foe: but what befell
Him next, the canto which ensues shall tell.

CANTO 9

ARGUMENT
So far Orlando wends, he comes to where
He of old Proteus' hears the cruel use
But feels such pity for Olympia fair,

Wronged by Cymosco, who in prison mews
Her plighted spouse, that ere he makes repair
Further, he gives her hope to venge the abuse:
He does so, and departs; and with his spouse
Departs Bireno, to repeat his vows.

I

What cannot, when he has a heart possess'd
This false and cruel traitor Love? since he
Can banish from Orlando's faithful breast
Such tried allegiance and due loyalty?
Wise, full of all regards, and of the blest
And glorious church the champion wont to be,
Now, little for himself or uncle, driven
By a vain love, he cares, and less for heaven.

II

But I excuse him well, rejoiced to know
I have like partner in my vice: for still
To seek my good I too am faint and slow,
But sound and nimble in pursuit of ill.
The count departs, disguised in sable show,
Nor for so many friends, with froward will,
Deserted cares; and comes where on the plain
Are camped the hosts of Afric and of Spain;

III

Rather uncamped: for, in less troops or more,
Rains under shed and tree had driven the band.
Here ten, there twenty, seven or eight, or four,
Near or further off, Orlando scanned.
Each sleeps, oppressed with toil and wearied sore;
This stretched on earth, that propped upon his hand:
They sleep, and many might the count have slain,
Yet never bared his puissant Durindane.

IV

So generous is Orlando's heart, he base
Esteems it were to smite a sleeping foe.
Now this he seeks, and now that other place;
Yet cannot track his lady, high or low.
If he finds any one in waking case,
Sighing, to him he paints her form and show;
Then prays him that for courtesy, he where
The damsel is, will reach him to repair.

V

And when the day its shining light displayed,
He wholly searched the Moorish army through.
In that the gentle warrior was arrayed
In Arab weeds, he this might safely do;
And of his purpose came alike in aid
That other tongues beside the French he knew;
And in the African so well was read,
He seemed in Tripoly one born and bred:

VI

He sojourns there three days, the camp to see;
Still seeking nought beside: next up and down,
Within, without, both burgh and city he
Spies; nor surveys the realm of France alone;
But fair Auvergne, and even Gascony
Revisits, to its farthest little town.
Roves from Provence to Brittany's domain,
And from the Picards to the bounds of Spain.

VII

Between October and November's moon,
In that dull season when the leafy vest
Is stript from trembling plant, whose limbs are shown
Of all their mantling foliage dispossess'd
And in close flights the swarming birds are flown,

Orlando enters on his amorous quest:
This he pursues the livelong winter through,
Nor quits when gladsome spring returns anew.

VIII
As (such his wont) from land to land he goes,
A river's side he reaches on a day;
Which to the neighbouring sea in quiet flows.
Bretons and Normans parting on its way:
But, swoln with mountain rain and melted snows,
Then thundered, white with foam and flashing-spray:
And with impetuous stream had overtopt
Its brim, and burst the bridge, and passage stopt.

IX
The paladin this bank and the other eyed,
Along the river's channel, to explore,
Since neither fish nor fowl, if from his side
He could gain footing on the adverse shore;
When, with a damsel in the poop, he spied
A ready pinnace that towards him bore:
She steered, as if she would approach the strand;
But would not let her shallop make the land.

X
Steered not to land; as haply with suspicion
To take a lading, in her own despite.
To her the good Orlando made petition
To put him o'er the stream; and she: "No knight
Passes this ferry, but upon condition
He shall his faith and promise duly plight,
That he will do a battle, at my prayer,
Upon the justest quarrel and most fair.

XI
"So that if thou on that other shore to land
Dost by my aid, Sir cavalier, desire,

Promise me, ere the month which is at hand"
(The damsel so pursued her speech) "expire,
That thou wilt join the Hibernian monarch's hand,
Who forms a fair armada, in his ire,
To sack Ebuda's isle; of all compress'd
By ocean's circling waves, the cruellest.

XII
"Know, beyond Ireland, in the briny flood,
An island, amid many others, lies;
Ebuda is its name; whose people rude
(Such is their law), in search of plunder hies;
And all the women that it takes, for food
To a voracious animal supplies;
Which every day to shore for this does speed,
And finds new wife or maid whereon to feed:

XIII
"For of these merchant still and Corsair sell
A large supply, and most of those most fair.
Reckoning one slain a-day, you thus may well
Compute what wives and maids have perished there.
But if compassion in your bosom dwell,
Nor you to Love an utter rebel are,
Be you contented with this band to wend,
United for such profitable end."

XIV
To hear the whole Orlando scarce could bear,
Ere to be first in that emprize he swore,
As one who evil deed misliked to hear,
And with impatience like relation bore:
Hence first induced to think, and next to fear,
Angelica is captive on that shore:
Since he so long the missing maid pursues,
Nor of the damsel yet can gather news.

XV

Breaking his every scheme, this phantasy
The troubled cavalier did so confound,
That will all speed to that fell island he
Resolved to navigate; nor yet the round
Of a new sun was buried in the sea,
Ere he a vessel at St. Malo's found;
In which, embarking on his quest, the count
Put forth, and cleared that night St. Michael's Mount.

XVI

Breac and Landriglier past on the left hand,
Orlando's vessel skims the Breton shore;
Then shapes her course towards the chalky strand,
Whence England's isle the name of Albion bore:
But the south wind, which had her canvas fanned,
Shifts to north-west, and freshening, blows so sore,
The mariners are fain to strike all sail,
And wear and scud before the boisterous gale.

XVII

A distance traversed in four days, in one
Backwards the ceaseless wind the frigate bore;
The helmsman kept the sea, lest she should run
Aground, and break like glass upon the shore.
The wind upon the fifth day changed its tune,
So loud and furious through the other four;
And let, without more strife, the vessel gain
A port, where Antwerp's river met the main.

XVIII

As soon as harboured there in shattered plight,
The weary mariners their frigate moor,
Out of a city, seated on the right
Of that fair stream, descends upon the shore,
As his gray hairs may warrant him, a wight

Stricken in years; who, full of courteous lore,
Turns to the county, after greetings due,
Reputing him the leader of that crew.

XIX
And prays him, on a damsel's part, `that he
To her would think not irksome to repair;
Whom of unequalled affability
And sweetness, he would find, as well as fair;
Or otherwise would be content, that she
Should to his bark resort, to seek him there,
Nor prove less pliant than had been before
All the knights errant, who had sought that shore:

XX
For hitherto, by land or sea conveyed,
No cavalier had journeyed to that place
That had refused to parlay with the maid,
And give her counsel in a cruel case.'
Orlando, hearing this, no more delayed,
But issued from the bark with hurried pace,
And, in all kind and courteous usage bred,
His way directed where the ancient led.

XXI
With him did Roland to the city go,
And at the bottom of a palace-stair,
Conducted by that elder, full of woe
A lady found, if face may grief declare,
And sable cloth, with which (a mournful show)
Chamber, and hall, and gallery, furnished were;
Who, after honourable welcome paid,
Seated the paladin, and sadly said:

XXII
"The daughter of the Count of Holland," (cried
The Lady) "know in me, Sir cavalier.

Though not his only offspring (for beside
Myself two brothers were) to him so dear,
That, for whatever favour I applied,
I never met refusal from the peer.
I living glady in this happy sort,
A duke by chance was guested at our court;

XXIII
"The Duke of Zealand, meaning for Biscay;
With purpose there to war upon the Moor;
His youth and beauty, then in manhood's May,
And force of love, unfelt by me before,
Made me, with little strife, his easy prey:
Persuaded by his outward cheer yet more,
I thought, and think, and still shall think, the peer
Loved me, and loves me yet with heart sincere.

XXIV
"Those days, whenas the wind was contrary,
(Which fair for me, if foul for others blew)
To others forty seemed, an hour to me;
So upon speedy wings the moments flew.
This while, we oftentimes held colloquy,
When, to be given with solemn right and due,
I promised him, and he to me, his hand,
On his return, in wedlock's holy band.

XXV
"Bireno hardly from our court was gone,
For such the name my faithful lover bore,
When Friesland's king, whose realm is from our own
No further than this stream from Ocean's shore,
Designing to bestow me on his son,
Arbantes hight (the monarch had no more),
To Holland sent the worthiest of his land,
Me of the count, my father, to demand.

XXVI

"I without power to falsify that vow,
Which to my gentle lover I had plight;
Nor though I had the power, would Love allow
Me so to play the ingrate, if I might,
(The treaty, well on foot, to overthrow,
And nigh concluded) with afflicted sprite,
Cried to my father, I would rather shed
My very life-blood, than in Friesland wed.

XXVII

"My gracious father, he who took but pleasure
In what pleased me, nor would my will constrain;
Marking my grief, broke off the intended measure,
To give me comfort and relieve my pain.
At this proud Friesland's sovereign such displeasure
Conceived, and entertained such high disdain,
He entered Holland, and the war began,
In which my kin were slaughtered to a man.

XXVIII

"Besides, that both his puissance and his might
Are such, as in our age are matched of few,
Such is in evil deeds his cunning sleight,
He laughs to scorn what wit and force can do.
Strange arms he bears, unknown to any wight,
Save him, of the ancient nations or the new:
A hollow iron, two yards long, whose small
Channel he loads with powder and a ball

XXIX

"He, where 'tis closed behind, in the iron round,
Touches with fire a vent, discerned with pain;
In guise that skilful surgeon tries his ground,
Where need requires that he should breathe a vein.
Whence flies the bullet with such deafening sound,

That bolt and lightening from the hollow cane
Appear to dart, and like the passing thunder,
Burn what they smite, beat-down or rend asunder.

XXX
"Twice broken, he our armies overthrew
With this device, my gentle brethren slain;
The first the shot in our first battle slew,
Reaching his heart, through broken plate and chain;
The other in the other onset, who
Was flying from the fatal field in vain.
The ball his shoulder from a distance tore
Behind, and issued from his breast before.

XXXI
"My father next, defending on a day
The only fortress which he still possessed,
The others taken which about it lay,
Was sent alike to his eternal rest:
Who going and returning, to purvey
What lacked, as this or that occasion pressed,
Was aimed at from afar, in privy wise,
And by the traytour struck between the eyes.

XXXII
"And I remaining, sire and brethren dead,
The isle of Holland's only heir, the king
Of Friesland, who by the desire was led
Of better there his power establishing,
To me, and also to my people said,
I peace and quiet to my state might bring,
Would I (when I before would not accord)
Now take his son Arbantes for my lord.

XXXIII
"I, not so much for deadly hate I bear
To him and all his kindred, by whose spite

My sire and both my brothers slaughtered were,
My country sacked and waste, as that the knight
I would not wrong, to whom I fealty sware,
And had my solemn word already plight
That me to wedlock man should woo in vain,
Till he to Holland should return from Spain.

XXXIV
"For one ill-born, a hundred yet behind,
Will bear (replied) to hazard all content,
— Slain, burnt alive, to let them to the wind
Scatter my ashes, rather than consent. —
My people seek to move my stedfast mind,
By prayer and by protest, from this intent;
And threat to yield my city up and me,
Lest all be lost through my obduracy.

XXXV
"When in my fixt and firm resolve they read,
That prayer and protest are alike in vain;
My town and me, with Friesland's king agreed,
Surrendered, as they vowed, my vassal train.
Not doing by me any shameful deed,
Me he assured of life and of domain,
So I would soften my obdurate mood,
And be to wed with his Arbantes wooed.

XXXVI
"I who would have consented to forego
My life to scape from him, reflection made,
That, save I first avenged myself, all woe
Endured, would be by this regret outweighed.
— Long time I muse, and to my misery know,
'Tis only simulation which can aid.
Not simple willingness, I feign desire,
To win his grace, and have him for my sire.

XXXVII

" Mid many in my father's service, I
Select two brothers fitted for my view,
Of valiant heart and great ability
But more approved for truth, as followers, who
Bred in my father's court, from infancy
Had with myself grown up; the brothers two
So wholly bound to me, they would have thought
My safety with their lives was cheaply bought.

XXXVIII

"To them I tell my project, and the pair
Of brethren promise me their faithful aid:
To Flanders this, a pinnace to prepare,
I sent, and that with me in Holland stayed.
Now, while both foreigners and natives were,
Of Friesland's kingdom, to our nuptials prayed,
Bireno in Biscay (the tidings went)
For Holland had equipt an armament.

XXXIX

"Since on the issue of the earliest fray,
When in the rout one hapless brother fell,
I had dispatched a courier to Biscay,
Who the sad news should to Bireno tell:
While he toils sore his squadron to array,
Proud Friesland's arms our wretched remnant quell.
Bireno, who knew nought of this, had weighed,
And with his barks put forth to bring us aid.

XL

"These tidings told to Friesland's monarch, he
Confiding to his son the wedding's care,
To meet Bireno's squadron puts to sea,
And (so chance willed) burns, sinks, or routs them there,
Leading him off into captivity; —

But none to us as yet the tidings bear.
This while I to the amorous youth am wed,
Who, when the sun sought his, would seek my bed.

XLI
"Behind the curtains, I had hid the tried
And faithful follower, of whom I said,
Who moved not till the bridegroom he descried,
Yet waited not till he in bed was laid:
But raised a hatchet, and so well applied
Behind the stripling's head the ponderous blade,
Of speech and life it reft him; I, who note
The deed, leap lightly up and cut his throat.

XLII
"As falls the bullock upon shamble-sill,
Thus fell the ill-starred stripling, in despite
Of king Cymosco, worst among the ill;
So was the impious king of Friesland hight
Who did my brothers and my father kill,
And, in my state to found a better right;
In wedlock wished to join me with his son,
Haply to slay me when his end was won.

XLIII
"Ere new disturbance interrupt the deed,
Taking what costliest was and lightest weighed,
Me my companion by a chord, with speed,
Drops from a window, where with boat purveyed
In Flanders (as related) for my need,
His brother, watchful of our motions, stayed:
We dip the oar, we loose the sail, and driven
By both, escape, as was the will of Heaven.

XLIV
"The daring feat achieved, I cannot say
If Friesland's king more sorrowed for his son,

Or raged at me: he there arrived, the day
Ensuing, where the dreadful deed was done,
Proud he returned, both he and his array,
Of the duke taken, and the victory won:
And thought to feast and nuptials he was bound,
But in his home all grief and darkness found.

XLV
"His pity for his son, the hate he fed
Towards me, torment the father day and night;
But as lamenting will not raise the dead,
And vengeance is a vent for smothered spite;
That portion of his thoughts, which should have led
The king, to ease by sighs his troubled sprite,
Now willingly takes counsel with his hate,
To seize me, and his vengeance satiate.

XLVI
"All known or said to by my friends, or who
Were friends of those that, chosen from my train,
Had aided me the deadly deed to do,
Their goods and chattels burnt, were doomed or slain:
And he had killed Bireno, since he knew
No other trouble could inflict such pain;
But that he, saving him in malice, thought
He had a net wherewith I might be caught.

XLVII
"Yet him a cruel proposition made,
Granting a year his purpose to complete;
Condemned to privy death, till then delayed,
Save in that time, through force or through deceit,
He by his friends' and kindred's utmost aid,
Doing or plotting, me from my retreat
Conveyed into his prisons; so that he
Can only saved by my destruction be.

XLVIII

"What for his safety could be done, behold,
Short of my own destruction, had been tried.
Six towns I had in Flanders: these I sold,
And (great or small the produce set aside)
A part of it, to wily persons told,
That it to tempt his guards might be applied;
The rest of it dispensed to move and arm
Germans or English, to the miscreant's harm.

XLIX

"My agents, whether they their trust betrayed,
Or that they could in truth perform no more,
Me with vain words instead of help have paid,
And scorn me, having drained my scanty store:
And now the term is nigh expired, when aid,
Whether of open force or treasured ore,
No longer will arrive in time to save
My cherished spouse from torture and the grave.

L

"Through him, from me was my dominion rent;
Through him, my father and my brethren slain;
Through him, the little treasure left me, spent
(What served alone existence to sustain)
To rescue him, in cruel durance pent;
Nor other means to succour him remain;
Save I, to liberate him from prison, go
And yield myself to such a cruel foe.

LI

"If nothing more be left me then to try,
Nor other way for his escape appear,
Than his with this my wretched life to buy,
This life I gladly will lay down: one fear
Alone molests me; and it is that I

Can never my conditions make so clear,
As to assure me, that with new deceit,
Me, when his prey, the tyrant will not cheat.

LII
"I fear, when I shall be in captive plight,
And he has put all tortures upon me,
He may not loose Bireno, and the knight
Have not to thank me for his liberty:
Like perjured king, and full of foul despite,
Who with my murder will not satiate be;
But by Bireno neither less nor more
Will do, than he had done by me before.

LIII
"The occasion now that I confer with you,
And tell my case to all who seek the land,
Both lords and knights, is with the single view,
That taking counsel of so large a band,
Some one may indicate assurance due,
That when before the cruel king I stand,
No longer he Bireno shall detain;
Nor, after I am killed, the duke be slain.

LIV
"Warrior to went with me, I in my need,
When I shall be to Friesland given, have prayed;
But so he promise, that the exchange agreed
Shall be between us in such manner made,
That from his bonds Bireno shall be freed
When I am to the monarch's hands conveyed:
Thus I, when I am slain, shall die content,
Who to my spouse shall life by death have lent.

LV
"Not to this day have chanced upon a wight
Who on his faith will give me warranty,

That if the king refuse to loose the knight,
When I am offered, from captivity,
He will not suffer that in my despite
(So feared those weapons!) I shall taken be.
So feared those weapons, upon every hand!
Which, howsoever thick, no plates withstand.

LVI
"Now, if as strong Herculean port and bold
Appear to vouch, such worth to you belong;
And you believe to give me or withhold
Is in your power, should he intend me wrong;
Be with me, when committed to his hold,
Since I shall fear not, in your convoy strong,
When you are with me, that my lord, though I
Be after slain, shall by his order die."

LVII
Here her discourse, wherewith were interposed
Loud sobs, the lady ceased, and silent stood:
Orlando, when her lips the damsel closed,
Whose ready will ne'er halts in doing good,
Briefly to her replies, as indisposed
To idle speeches of his natural mood:
But plights his solemn word, that better aid
She should from him receive than that she prayed.

LVIII
'Tis not his scheme to place her in the hand
Of her foul foe, to have Bireno freed;
He will save both the lovers, if his brand
And wonted valour fail him not at need.
Embarked that very day, they put from land
With a clear sky and prosperous wind to speed.
The county hastes in his impatient heat,
Eager to reach that isle, the monster's seat.

LIX

Through the still deeps, on this or the other side,
The skipper veered his canvas to the wind:
This isle, and that of Zealand, they descried,
One seen before, and one shut in behind.
The third day, from the harboured vessel's side,
In Holland, Roland disembarks, not joined
By the complaining dame; whom to descend
He will not till she hear that tyrant's end.

LX

Armed at all points, the county passed ashore,
Borne on a horse 'twixt brown and black, the breed
Of Denmark, but in Flanders nurtured, more
Esteemed for weight and puissance than for speed:
For when the paladin embarked before,
In Brittany he left the gallant steed,
His Brigliador; so nimble and so fair,
That but Bayardo could with him compare.

LXI

Orlando fares to Dordrecht, where he views
A numerous squadron, which the gate maintain;
As well, because suspicion still ensues
On the foundation of a new domain;
As that before they had received the news,
That out of Zealand, backed with armed train,
Was coming with a fleet of many sail,
A cousin of the lord here pent in jail.

LXII

One, good Orlando to the monarch's ear
Bade bear a message, `that an errant knight
Oh him would prove himself, with sword and spear;
But would lay down this pact before the fight: —
That if the king unhorsed the cavalier,

Her who Arbantes slew, he, as his right,
Should have, that, at the cavalier's command,
Was ready for delivery to his hand;

LXIII
`And willed the king should on his side agree,
If him the knight in combat overbore,
Forthwith released from his captivity,
Bireno to full freedom to restore.'
To him the footman does his embassy;
But he, who knightly worth or courteous lore
Had never known, directs his whole intent
The count by treacherous fraud to circumvent.

LXIV
He hopes as well, if he the warrior slay,
To have the dame, whom, so aggrieved, he hates,
If in the knight's disposal, and the say
Of that strange knight, the footman well relates.
Hence thirty men dispatched by other way
Than to the portal led, where Roland waits;
Who with a long and privy circuit wind,
And come upon the paladin behind.

LXV
He all this while had made his guard delay
The knight with words, till horse and foot he spied
Arrived, where he this ambuscade did lay;
When from the gate he with as many hied:
As is the practised hunter's wonted way,
To circle wood and beasts on every side:
As nigh Volana, with his sweeping nets,
The wary fisher fish and pool besets.

LXVI
'Tis thus the king bars every path which lies
Free for the warrior's flight, with armed train:

He him alive, and in no other guise,
Would have, and lightly hopes his end to gain;
Nor for the earthly thunderbolt applies,
That had so many and so many slain:
Which here he deems would serve his purpose ill,
Where he desires to take and not to kill.

LXVII
As wary fowler, bent on greater prey,
Wisely preserves alive the game first caught,
That by the call-bird and his cheating play,
More may within the circling net be brought;
Such cunning art Cymosco would assay:
But Roland would not be so lightly bought;
Like them by the first toil that springs betrayed;
And quickly forced the circle which was made.

LXVIII
Where he perceives the assailants thickest stand,
He rests his lance, and sticks in his career
First one and afterwards another, and
Another, and another, who appear
Of paste; till six he of the circling band
Of foes impales upon a single spear;
A seventh left out, who by the push is slain,
Since the clogged weapon can no more contain.

LXIX
No otherwise, upon the further shore
Of fosse or of canal, the frogs we spy,
By cautious archer, practised in his lore,
Smote and transfixed the one the other nigh;
Upon the shaft, until it hold no more,
From barb to feathers full, allowed to lie.
The heavy lance Orlando from him flung,
And to close combat with his faulchion sprung.

LXX

The lance now broke, his sword the warrior drew,
That sword which never yet was drawn in vain,
And still with cut or thrust some soldier slew;
Now horse, now footman of the tyrant's train.
And, ever where he dealt a stroke, changed blue,
Yellow, green, white and black, to crimson stain.
Cymosco grieves, when most his need require,
Not to have now his hollow cane and fire;

LXXI

And with loud voice and menacing command
Bids these be brought, but ill his followers hear;
For those who have found safety of his band,
To issue from the city are in fear.
He, when he sees them fly on either hand,
Would fly as well from that dread cavalier;
Makes for the gate, and would the drawbridge lift,
But the pursuing county is too swift.

LXXII

The monarch turns his back, and leaves the knight
Lord of the drawbridge and of either gate.
Thanks to his swifter steed, the rest in flight
He passes: good Orlando will not wait
(Intent the felon, not his band, to smite)
Upon the vulgar herd to wreck his hate.
But his slow horse seems restive; while the king's,
More nimble, flies as if equipt with wings.

LXXIII

From street to street, before the count he made;
And vanished clean; but after little stay,
Came with new arms, with tube and fire purveyed;
Which, at his hest, this while his men convey.
And posted at a corner, he waylaid:

His foe, as hunter watches for his prey,
In forest, with armed dogs and spear, attending
The boar in fury from the hill descending,

LXXIV
Who rends the branch and overthrows the stone;
And wheresoe'er he turns his haughty front,
Appears (so loud the deafening crash and groan)
As if he were uprending wood and mount,
Intent to make him his bold deed atone,
Cymosco at the pass expects the count;
As soon as he appears, with ready light
Touches the hole, and fires upon the knight.

LXXV
Behind, the weapon flames in lightning's guise,
And vents the thunder from before; the ground
Shakes under foot and city wall; the skies
The fearful echo all about rebound.
The burning bolt with sudden fury flies,
Not sparing aught which in its course is found.
Hissing and whizzing through the skies it went;
But smote not, to the assassin's foul intent.

LXXVI
Whether it was his great desire to kill
That baron, or his hurry made him fail,
Or trembling heart, like leaf which flutters still,
Made hand and arm together flinch and quail;
Or that it was not the Creator's will
The church so soon her champion should bewail;
The glancing stroke his courser's belly tore,
Outstretched on earth, from thence to rise no more.

LXXVII
To earth fall horse and rider: this the knight
Scarce touched; the other thundering pressed the plain:

For the first rose so ready and so light,
He from the fall seemed breath and force to gain.
As African Anteus, in the fight,
Rose from the sand with prouder might and main;
So when Orlando touched the ground, to view
He rose with doubled force and vigour new.

LXXVIII
He who has seen the thunder, from on high,
Discharged by Jove with such a horrid sound,
Descend where nitre, coal, and sulphur lie,
Stored up for use in magazine profound,
Which scarce has reached — but touched it, ere the sky
Is in a flame, as well as burning ground,
Firm walls are split, and solid marbles riven,
And flying stones cast up as high as heaven;

LXXIX
Let him imagine, when from earth he sprung,
Such was the semblance of the cavalier;
Who moved in mode to frighten Mars among
The Gods, so fierce and horrid was his cheer.
At this dismay'd, the King of Friesland stung
His horse, and turned his rein, to fly the peer:
But fierce Orlando was upon his foe
Faster than arrow flies from bended bow:

LXXX
And, what before he could not, when possest
Of his good courser, now afoot will do.
His speed outgoes all thought in every breast,
Exceeds all credence, save in those who view.
The tyrant shortly joined, he on the crest
Smote at his head so well, he cleft it through;
And to the neck divided by the blow,
Sent it, to shake its last on earth below.

LXXXI
Lo! in the frighted city other sound
Was heard to rise, and other crash of brands,
From troop, who, thither in his guidance bound,
Followed Bireno's cousin from his lands:
Who, since the unguarded gates he open found,
Into the city's heart had poured his bands;
Where the bold paladin had struck such fear,
He without let might scour it far and near.

LXXXII
In rout the people fly, who cannot guess
Who these may be, or what the foes demand:
But, when this man and that by speech and dress
As Zealand-men distinguishes the band,
Carte blanche they proffer, and the chief address,
Bidding him range them under his command;
Against the Frieslanders to lend him aid,
Who have their duke in loathsome prison stayed.

LXXXIII
To Friesland's king that people hatred bore
With all his following: who their ancient lord
Had put to death, and who by them yet more,
As evil and rapacious, was abhorred.
Orlando interposed with kindly lore,
As friend of both, the parties to accord:
By whom, so joined, no Frieslander was left
But was of life or liberty bereft.

LXXXIV
They would not wait to seek the dungeon-key,
But breaking-down the gate, their entrance made;
Bireno to the count with courtesy
And grateful thanks the service done repaid.
Thence they, together with large company,

Went where Olympia in her vessel stayed:
For so was the expecting lady hight,
To whom that island's crown belonged of right.

LXXXV
She who had thither good Orlando brought,
Not hoping that he would have thriven so well;
— Enough for her, if by her misery bought,
Her spouse were rescued from the tyrant's cell! —
Her, full of love and loyal homage, sought
The people one and all: Twere long to tell
How she caressed Bireno, he the maid, —
What thanks both lovers to the county paid.

LXXXVI
The people, throned in her paternal reign,
Replace the injured dame, and fealty swear:
She on the duke, to whom in solid chain
Love with eternal knot had linked the fair,
The empire of herself and her domain
Conferred: He, called away by other care,
Left in the cousin's guardian care this while
His fortresses, and all the subject isle.

LXXXVII
Since he to visit Zealand's duchy planned,
His faithful consort in his company;
And thence, upon the king of Friesland's land,
Would try his fortune (as he said), for he
A pledge, he rated highly, had in hand,
Which seemed of fair success the warranty,
The daughter of the king: who here forsaken,
With many others had been prisoner taken.

LXXXVIII
To a younger brother, her, the duke pretends,
To be conjoined in wedlock, he conveyed.

The Roman senator thence parting wends
Upon the very day Bireno weighed;
But he to nothing else his hand extends
Of all the many, many prized made,
Save to that engine, found amid the plunder,
Which in all points I said resembled thunder.

LXXXIX
Not with intent, in his defence to bear
What he had taken, of the prize possest;
For he still held it an ungenerous care
To go with vantage on whatever quest:
But with design to cast the weapon where
It never more should living wight molest;
And, what was appertaining to it, all
Bore off as well, the powder and the ball.

XC
And thus, when of the tidesway he was clear,
And in the deepest sea his bark descried,
So that no longer distant signs appear
Of either shore on this or the other side,
He seized the tube, and said: "That cavalier
May never vail through thee his knightly pride,
Nor base be rated with a better foe,
Down with thee to the darkest deep below!

XCI
"O loathed, O cursed piece of enginery,
Cast in Tartarean bottom, by the hand
Of Beelzebub, whose foul malignity
The ruin of this world through thee has planned!
To hell, from whence thou came, I render thee."
So said, he cast away the weapon: fanned
Meanwhile, with flowing sheet, his frigate goes,
By wind, which for the cruel island blows.

XCII
Such was the paladin's desire to explore
If in the place his missing lady were;
Whom he prefers the united world before,
Nor can an hour of life without her bear.
He fears, if he set foot on Ireland's shore,
Some other chance may interrupt him there:
So that he after have in vain to say,
"Why hasted I no faster on my way?"

XCIII
Nor he in England nor in Ireland port
Will make, nor on the coast that's opposite.
But let him go, the naked archer's sport,
Sore smitten in the heart! — ere I indite
Yet more of him, to Holland I resort,
And you to hear me company invite.
For well I wot that you as well as me
'Twould grieve that bridal should without us be.

XCIV
Sumptuous and fair the bridal there is made;
But neither yet so sumptuous nor so fair
As it will be in Zealand, it is said:
But 'tis not my design you should repair
Thither; since by new accidents delayed
The feast will be, of which be it my care,
In other strain, the tidings to report;
If you to hear that other strain resort.

CANTO 10

ARGUMENT
Another love assails Bireno's breast,
Who leaves one night Olympia on the shore.
To Logistilla's holy realm addressed,

Rogero goes, nor heeds Alcina more:
Him, of that flying courser repossest,
The hippogryph on airy voyage bore:
Whence he the good Rinaldo's levy sees,
And next Angelica beholds and frees.

I
Of all the loves, of all fidelity
Yet proved, of all the constant hearts and true,
Of all the lovers, in felicity
Or sorrow faithful found, a famous crew,
To Olympia I would give the first degree
Rather than second: if this be not due,
I well may say that hers no tale is told
Of truer love, in present times or old.

II
And this she by so many proofs and clear,
Had made apparent to the Zealand lord,
No woman's faith more certain could appear
To man, though he her open heart explored:
And if fair truth such spirits should endear,
And they in mutual love deserve reward,
Bireno as himself, nay, he above
Himself, I say, should kind Olympia love.

III
Not only should he nevermore deceive
Her for another, were that woman she
Who so made Europe and wide Asia grieve,
Or fairer yet, if one more fair there be;
But rather that quit her the light should leave,
And what is sweet to taste, touch, hear, and see,
And life and fame, and all beside; if aught
More precious can in truth be styled, or thought.

IV
If her Bireno loved, as she had loved
Bireno, if her love he did repay
With faith like hers, and still with truth unmoved,
Veered not his shifting sail another way;
Or ingrate for such service — cruel proved
For such fair love and faith, I now will say;
And you with lips comprest and eye-brows bent,
Shall listen to the tale for wonderment;

V
And when you shall have heard the impiety,
Which of such passing goodness was the meed,
Woman take warning from this perfidy,
And let none make a lover's word her creed.
Mindless that God does all things hear and see,
The lover, eager his desires to speed,
Heaps promises and vows, aye prompt to swear,
Which afterwards all winds disperse in air.

VI
The promises and empty vows dispersed
In air, by winds all dissipated go,
After these lovers have the greedy thirst
Appeased, with which their fevered palates glow.
In this example which I offer, versed,
Their prayers and tears to credit be more slow.
Cheaply, dear ladies mine, is wisdom bought
By those who wit at other's cost are taught.

VII
Of those in the first flower of youth beware,
Whose visage is so soft and smooth to sight:
For past, as soon as bred, their fancies are;
Like a straw fire their every appetite.
So the keen hunter follows up the hare

In heat and cold, on shore, or mountain-height;
Nor, when 'tis taken, more esteems the prize;
And only hurries after that which flies.

VIII
Such is the practise of these striplings who,
What time you treat them with austerity,
Love and revere you, and such homage do,
As those who pay their service faithfully;
But vaunt no sooner victory, than you
From mistresses shall servants grieve to be;
And mourn to see the fickle love they owed,
From you diverted, and elsewhere bestowed.

IX
I not for this (for that were wrong) opine
That you should cease to love; for you, without
A lover, like uncultivated vine,
Would be, that has no prop to wind about.
But the first down I pray you to decline,
To fly the volatile, inconstant rout;
To make your choice the riper fruits among,
Nor yet to gather what too long has hung.

X
A daughter they have found (above was said)
Of the proud king who ruled the Friesland state;
That with Bireno's brother was to wed,
As far as rumour tells; but to relate
The truth, a longing in Bireno bred
The sight of food so passing delicate;
And he to talk his palate deemed would be,
For other's sake, a foolish courtesy.

XI
The gentle damsel had not past fourteen,
Was beautiful and fresh, and like a rose,

When this first opening from its bud is seen,
And with the vernal sun expands and grows.
To say Bireno loved the youthful queen
Were little; with less blaze lit tinder glows,
Or ripened corn, wherever envious hand
Of foe amid the grain has cast a brand,

XII
Than that which on Bireno's bosom fed,
And to his marrow burned; when, weeping sore
The fate of her unhappy father dead,
He saw her bathed in ceaseless tears deplore:
And, as cold water, on the cauldron shed,
Shops short the bubbling wave, which boiled before;
So was the raging rife Olympia blew
Within his breast, extinguished by a new.

XIII
Nor feels Bireno mere satiety;
He loathes her so, he ill endures her sight;
And, if his hope he long deferred, will die:
For other such his fickle appetite!
Yet till the day prefixed to satisfy
His fond desire, so feigns the wary knight,
Olympia less to love than to adore
He seems, and but her pleasure to explore.

XIV
And if the other he too much caress,
Who cannot but caress her, there are none
See evil in the deed, but rather guess
It is in pity, is in goodness done:
Since to raise up and comfort in distress
Whom Fortune's wheel beats down in changeful run,
Was never blamed; with glory oftener paid;
— So much the more, a young — a harmless maid.

XV

Almighty God! how fallible and vain
Is human judgment, dimmed by clouds obscure!
Bireno's actions, impious and profane,
By others are reputed just and pure.
Already stooping to their oars, the train
Have loosed his vessel from the port secure,
And with the duke and his companions steer
For Zealand through the deep, with meery cheer.

XVI

Already Holland and its headlands all
Are left astern, and now descried no more;
Since to shun Friesland they to larboard hawl.
And keep their course more nigh the Scottish shore:
When they are overtaken by a squall,
And drive three days the open sea before:
Upon the third, when now, near eventide,
A barren and unpeopled isle is spied.

XVII

As soon as they were harboured in a hight,
Olympia landed and the board was spread;
She there contented, with the faithless knight,
Supt, unsuspecting any cause for dread.
Thence, with Bireno, where a tent was pight
In pleasant place, repaired, and went to bed.
The others of their train returned abroad,
And rested in their ship, in haven moored.

XVIII

The fear and late sea sorrow, which had weighed
So long upon the dame and broke her rest,
The finding herself safe in greenwood shade
Removed from noise, and, for her tranquil breast
(Knowing her lover was beside her laid)

No further thoughts, no further cares molest,
Olympia lap in slumber so profound,
No sheltered bear or dormouse sleeps more sound.

XIX
The lover false, who, hatching treason lies,
Stole from his bed in silence, when he knew
She slept: his clothes he in a bundle ties,
Nor other raiment on his body threw.
Then issuing forth from the pavilion hies,
As if on new-born wings, towards his crew;
Who, roused, unmoor without a cry, as he
Commands, and loosen thence and put to sea.

XX
Behind the land was left; and there to pine
Olympia, who yet slept the woods among;
Till from her gilded wheels the frosty rhine
Aurora upon earth beneath had flung;
And the old woe, beside the tumbling brine,
Lamenting, halcyons mournful descant sung;
When she, 'twixt sleep and waking, made a strain
To reach her loved Bireno, but in vain.

XXI
She no one found: the dame her arm withdrew;
She tried again, yet no one found; she spread
Both arms, now here, now there, and sought anew;
Now either leg; but yet no better sped.
Fear banished sleep; she oped her eyes: in view
Was nothing: she no more her widowed bed
Would keep, but from the couch in fury sprung,
And headlong forth from the pavilion flung.

XXII
And seaward ran, her visage tearing sore,
Presaging, and now certain of her plight:

She beat her bosom, and her tresses tore,
And looked (the moon was shining) if she might
Discover any thing beside the shore;
Nor, save the shore, was any thing in sight.
She calls Bireno, and the caverns round,
Pitying her grief, Bireno's name rebound.

XXIII
On the far shore there rose a rock; below
Scooped by the breaker's beating frequently:
The cliff was hollowed underneath, in show
Of arch, and overhung the foaming sea.
Olympia (MIND such vigour did bestow)
Sprang up the frowning crest impetuously,
And, at a distance, stretched by favouring gale,
Thence saw her cruel lord's departing sail.

XXIV
Saw it, or seemed to see: for ill her eyes,
Things through the air, yet dim and hazy, view.
She falls, all-trembling, on the ground, and lies
With face than snow more cold and white in hue:
But when she has again found strength to rise,
Guiding her voice towards the bark which flew,
Calling with all her might, the unhappy dame
Calls often on her cruel consort's name.

XXV
Where unavailing was the feeble note,
She wept and clapt her hands in agony.
"Without its freight," she cried, "thy ship does float.
— Where, cruel, dost thou fly so swiftly? — Me
Receive as well: — small hinderance to thy boat,
Which bears my spirit, would my body be."
And she her raiment waving in her hand,
Signed to the frigate to return to land.

XXVI

But the loud wind which, sweeping ocean, bears
The faithless stripling's sail across the deep,
Bears off as well the shriek, and moan, and prayers
Of sad Olympia, sorrowing on the steep.
Thrice, cruel to herself, the dame prepares
From the high rock amid the waves to leap.
But from the water lifts at length her sight,
And there returns where she had passed the night.

XXVII

Stretched on the bed, upon her face she lay,
Bathing it with her tears. "Last night in thee
Together two found shelter," did she say;
"Alas! why two together are not we
At rising? False Bireno! cursed day
That I was born! What here remains to me
To do? What can be done? — Alone, betrayed —
Who will console me, who afford me aid?

XXVIII

"Nor man I see, nor see I work, which shows
That man inhabits in this isle; nor I
See ship, in which (a refuge from my woes),
Embarking, I from hence may hope to fly.
Here shall I starve; nor any one to close
My eyes, or give me sepulture, be by,
Save wolf perchance, who roves this wood, a tomb
Give me, alas! in his voracious womb.

XXIX

"I live in terror, and appear to see
Rough bear or lion issue even now,
Or tiger, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Or other beast with teeth and claws: but how
Can ever cruel beast inflict on me,

O cruel beast, a fouler death than thou?
Enough for them to slay me once! while I
Am made by thee a thousand deaths to die.

XXX
"But grant, e'en now, some skipper hither fare,
Who may for pity bear me hence away;
And that I so eschew wolf, lion, bear,
Torture, and dearth, and every horrid way
Of death; to Holland shall he take me, where
For thee is guarded fortilage and bay;
Or take me to the land where I was born,
If this thou hast from me by treachery torn?

XXXI
"Thou, with pretence, from me my state didst wrest
Of our connection and of amity;
And quickly of my land thy troops possest,
To assure the rule unto thyself. Shall I
Return to Flanders where I sold the rest,
Though little, upon which I lived, to buy
Thee needful succour and from prison bear?
Wretch, whither shall I go? — I know not where.

XXXII
"Can I to Friesland go, where I to reign
As queen was called, and this for thee forewent;
Where both my brethren and my sire were slain,
And every other good from me was rent? —
Thee would I not, thou ingrate, with my pain
Reproach, not therefore deal thee punishment:
As well as I, the story dost thou know;
Now, see the meed thou dost for this bestow!

XXXIII
"Oh! may I but escape the wild corsair,
Nor taken be, and after sold for slave!

Rather than this may lion, wolf, or bear,
Tiger, or other beast, if fiercer rave,
Me with his claws and rushes rend and tear,
And drag my bleeding body to his cave."
So saying she her golden hair offends,
And lock by lock the scattered tresses rends.

XXXIV
She to the shore's extremest verge anew,
Tossing her head, with hair dishevelled, run;
And seemed like maid beside herself, and who
Was by ten fiends possessed, instead of one;
Of like the frantic Hecuba, at view
Of murdered Polydore, her infant son;
Fixed on a stone she gazed upon the sea,
Nor less than real stone seemed stone to be.

XXXV
But let her grieve till my return. To show
Now of the Child I wish: his weary way
Rogero, in the noon's intensest glow,
Takes by the shore: the burning sunbeams play
Upon the hill and thence rebound; below
Boils the white sand; while heated with the ray,
Little is wanting in that journey dire,
But that the arms he wears are all on fire.

XXXVI
While to the warrior thirst and labour sore,
Still toiling through that heavy sand, as he
Pursued his path along the sunny shore,
Were irksome and displeasing company,
Beneath the shadow of a turret hoar,
Which rose beside the beach, amid the sea,
He found three ladies of Alcina's court,
As such distinguished by their dress and port.

XXXVII
Reclined on Alexandrian carpets rare
The ladies joyed the cool in great delight;
About them various wines in vessels were,
And every sort of comfit nicely dight;
Fast by, and sporting with the ripple there,
Lay, waiting on their needs, a pinnace light,
Until a breeze should fill her sail anew:
For then no breath upon the waters blew.

XXXVIII
They, who beheld along the shifting sand
Rogero wend, upon his way intent,
And saw thirst figured on his lips, and scanned
His troubled visage, all with sweat besprent,
Began to pray, `on what he had in hand
He would not show his heart so deeply bent,
But that he in the cool and grateful shade
Would rest his weary limbs, beside them laid.'

XXXIX
To hold the stirrup one approaching near,
Would aid him to alight: the other bore
A cup of chrystal to the cavalier,
With foaming wine, which raised his thirst the more;
But to the music of their speech no ear
He lent, who weened if he his way forbore
For anything, each lett would time supply
To Alcina to arrive, who now was nigh.

XL
Now so saltpetre fine and sulphur pure,
Touched with the fiery spark, blaze suddenly;
Not so loud ocean raves, when the obscure
Whirlwind descends and camps in middle sea,
As viewing thus the knight proceed secure

Upon his journey, and aware that he
Scorns them, who yet believe they beauteous are,
Kindled the third of those three damsels fair.

XLI
As loud as she could raise her voice, she said,
"Thou art not gentle, nor art thou a knight;
And hast from other arms and horse conveyed:
Which never could be thine by better right.
So be thy theft, if well I guess, appaid
By death, which this may worthily requite!
Foul thief, churl, haughty ingrate, may I thee
Burned, gibbeted, or cut in quarters see!"

XLII
Beside all these and more injurious cries,
Which the proud damsel at the warrior throws,
Though to her taunts Rogero nought replies,
Who weens small fame from such a contest flows;
She with her sisters to the frigate hies,
Which waits them, and aboard the tender goes;
And plying fast her oars, pursues the knight
Along the sandy beach, still kept in sight.

XLIII
On him with threat and curse she ever cried;
Whose tongue collected still fresh cause for blame.
Meanwhile, where to the lovelier fairy's side
The passage lay across a straight, he came;
And there an ancient ferryman espied
Put from the other shore with punctual aim,
As if forewarned and well prepared, the seer
Waited the coming of the cavalier.

XLIV
The ferryman put forth the Child to meet,
To bear him to a better shore rejoicing: he

Appeared as all benign and all discreet,
If of the heart the face is warranty.
Giving God thanks, Rogero took his seat
Aboard the bark, and passed the quiet sea,
Discoursing with that ancient pilot, fraught
With wisdom, and by long experience taught.

XLV

He praised Rogero much, that he had fled
In time from false Alcina, and before
To him the dame had given the chalice dread,
Her lover's final guerdon evermore.
Next that he had to Logistilla sped,
Where he should duly witness holy lore,
And beauty infinite and grace enjoy,
Which feed and nourish hearts they never cloy.

XLVI

"Her shall you, struck with wonderment, revere,"
(He said), "when first you shall behold the fay;
But better contemplate her lofty cheer,
And you no other treasure shall appay.
In this her love from other differs; fear
And hope in other on the bosom prey:
In hers Desire demands not aught beside,
And with the blessing seen is satisfied.

XLVII

"You shall in nobler studies be professed,
Tutored by her, than bath and costly fare,
Song, dance, and perfumes; as how fashioned best,
Your thoughts may tower more high than hawks in air;
And how some of the glory of the blest
You here may in the mortal body share."
So speaking, and yet distant from the shore,
To the safe bank approached the pilot hoar.

XLVIII
When he beholds forth-issuing from the strand,
A fleet of ships, which all towards him steer.
With these came wronged Alcina, with a band
Of many vassals, gathered far and near;
To risk the ruin of herself and land,
Or repossess the thing she held so dear.
Love, no light cause, incites the dame aggrieved,
Nor less the bitter injury received.

XLIX
Such choler she had never felt before
As that which now upon her bosom fed:
And hence she made her followers ply the oar
Till the white foam on either bank was shed
The deafening noise and din o'er sea and shore,
By echo every where repeated, spread,
"Now — now, Rogero, bare the magic shield,
Or in the strife be slain, or basely yield":

L
Thus Logistilla's pilot; and beside,
So saying, seized the pouch, wherein was dight
The buckler, and the covering torn aside,
Exposed to open view the shining light.
The enchanted splendor, flashing far and wide,
So sore offends the adversaries' sight,
They from their vessels drop amazed and blind,
Tumbling from prow before, and poop behind.

LI
One who stood sentry on the citadel
Descried the navy of the invading dame,
And backwards rang the castle larum-bell,
Whence speedy succours to the haven came.
The artillery rained like storm, whose fury fell

On all who would Rogero scathe and shame:
So that such aid was brought him in the strife,
As saved the warrior's liberty and life.

LII
Four ladies are arrived upon the strand,
Thither by Logistilla sped in haste:
Leagued with the valiant Anrondica stand
Fronesia sage, Dicilla good, and chaste
Sofrosina, who, as she has in had
More than the others, 'mid the foremost placed,
Conspicuous flames. Forth issues from the fort
A matchless host, and files towards the port.

LIII
Beneath the castle, safe from wind and swell,
Of many ships and stout, a squadron lay;
Which, in the harbour, at a sound from bell, —
A word, were fit for action, night or day;
And thus by land and sea was battle, fell
And furious, waged on part of either fay:
Whence was Alcina's realm turned upside down,
Of which she had usurped her sister's crown.

LIV
Oh! of how many battles the success
Is different from what was hoped before!
Not only failed the dame to repossess,
As thought, her lover flying from her shore,
But out of ships, even now so numberless,
That ample ocean scarce the navy bore,
From all her vessels, to the flames a prey,
But with one bark escaped the wretched fay.

LV
Alcina flies; and her sad troop around
Routed and taken, burnt or sunk, remains

To have lost Rogero, sorrow more profound
Wakes in her breast than all her other pains;
And she in bitter tears for ever drowned,
Of the Child's loss by night and day complains;
And bent to end her woes, with many a sigh,
Often laments her that she cannot die.

LVI
No fairy dies, or can, while overhead
The sun shall burn, or heaven preserve their stile,
Or Clotho had been moved to cut her thread,
Touched by such grief; or, as on funeral pile
Fair Dido, she beneath the steel had bled;
Or, haply, like the gorgeous Queen of Nile,
In mortal slumber would have closed her eye:
But fairies cannot at their pleasure die.

LVII
Return we, where eternal fame is due,
Leaving Alcina in her trouble sore:
I speak of valorous Rogero, who
Had disembarked upon the safer shore.
He turned his back upon the waters blue,
Giving God thanks for all with pious lore;
And on dry ground now landed, made repair
Towards the lofty castle planted there.

LVIII
Than this a stronger or more bright in show
Was never yet before of mortal sight,
Or after, viewed; with stones the ramparts glow
More rich than carbuncle or diamond bright.
We of like gems discourse not here below,
And he who would their nature read aright
Must thither speed: none such elsewhere, I ween,
Except perhaps in heaven above, are seen.

LIX

What gives to them superiority
O'er every other sort of gem, confessed,
Is, man in these his very soul may see;
His vices and his virtues see expressed.
Hence shall he after heed no flattery,
Nor yet by wrongful censure be depressed.
His form he in the lucid mirror eyes,
And by the knowledge of himself grows wise.

LX

Their rays, which imitate the sunshine, fill
All round about with such a flood of light,
That he who has them, Phoebus, may at will
Create himself a day, in thy despite.
Nor only marvellous the gems; the skill
Of the artificer and substance bright
So well contend for mastery, of the two,
'Tis hard to judge where preference is due.

LXI

On arches raised, whereon the firmament
Seemed to repose as props, so fair in show
Are lovely gardens, and of such extent,
As even would be hard to have below.
Clustering 'twixt lucid tower or battlement,
Green odoriferous shrubs are seen to grow,
Which through the summer and the winter shoot,
And teem with beauteous blossom and ripe fruit.

LXII

Never in any place such goodly tree
Is grown, except within these gardens fine;
Or rose, or violet of like quality,
Lilies, or amaranth, or jessamine.
Elsewhere it seems as if foredoomed to be

Born with one sun, to live and to decline,
Upon its widowed stalk the blossom dies,
Subject to all the changes of the skies.

LXIII
But here the verdure still is permanent,
Still permanent the eternal blossoms are;
Not that kind nature, in her government,
So nicely tempers here the genial air,
But that, unneeding any influence lent
By planet, Logistilla's zeal and care
Ever keep fast (what may appear a thing
Impossible) her own perpetual spring.

LXIV
That such a gentle lord had sought her rest,
Did much the prudent Logistilla please,
And she commanded he should be carest,
And all should seek to do him courtesies.
Sometime had Sir Astolpho been her guest,
Whom with a joyful heart Rogero sees.
There in few days resorted all the crew,
Changed by Melissa to their shapes anew.

LXV
When they a day or more their weariness
Had eased, Rogero sought the prudent fay;
With him the duke Astolpho, who no less
Desired to measure back his western way.
Melissa was for both embassadress,
And for the warlike pair, with humble say
To favour, warn and help them, prayed the dame;
So that they might return from whence they came.

LXVI
"I" (said the fay) "will think upon this need,
And in two days the pair will expedite."

Then thought how good Rogero she should speed.
And afterwards how aid the English knight.
She wills the first shall, on the griffin steed,
To the Aquitanian shores direct his flight;
But first will fashion for the flying-horse
A bit, to guide him and restrain his course.

LXVII
She shows him what to do, if he on high
Would make him soar, or down to earth would bring,
And what, would he in circles make him fly,
Or swiftly speed, or pause upon the wing.
And all that skilful horsemen use to try
Upon plain ground, beneath her tutoring,
Rogero learned in air, and gained dominion
Over the griffin-steed of soaring pinion.

LXVIII
When at all points Rogero was prepared,
He bade farewell to the protecting fay,
For ever to the loving knight endeared,
And issued from her realm upon his way.
I first of him, who on his journey fared
In happy hour, and afterwards shall say
Of the English knight, who spent more time and pain
Seeking the friendly court of Charlemagne.

LXIX
Rogero thence departs; but as before
Takes not the way he took in his despite,
When him above the sea the courser bore,
And seldom was the land beneath in sight.
But taught to make him beat his wings and soar,
Here, there, as liked him best, with docile flight,
Returning, he another path pursued;
As Magi erst, who Herod's snare eschewed.

LXX

Borne hither, good Rogero, leaving Spain,
Had sought, in level line, the Indian lands,
Where they are watered by the Eastern main;
Where the two fairies strove with hostile bands.
He now resolved to visit other reign
Than that where Aeolus his train commands;
And finish so the round he had begun,
Circling the world beneath him like the sun.

LXXI

Here the Catay, and there he Mangiane,
Passing the great Quinsay beheld; in air
Above Imavus turned, and Sericane
Left on the right; and thence did ever bear
From the north Scythians to the Hyrcanian main:
So reached Sarmatia's distant land; and, where
Europe and Asia's parted climes divide,
Russ, Prussian, he and Pomeranian spied.

LXXII

Although the Child by every wish was pressed
Quickly to seek his Bradamant, yet he
With taste of roving round the world possest,
Would not desist from it, till Hungary
He had seen; and Polacks, Germans, and the rest
Should in his wide extended circuit see,
Inhabiting that horrid, northern land;
And came at last to England's farthest strand.

LXXIII

Yet think not, sir, that in so long a flight,
The warrior is for ever on the wing.
Who lodges, housed in tavern every night,
As best as can, through his capacious ring.
So nights and days he passes: such delight

Prospects to him of land and ocean bring.
Arrived one morn nigh London-town, he stopt;
And over Thames the flying courser dropt.

LXXIV
Where he in meadows to the city nigh
Saw troops of men at arms, and footmen spread;
Who, to the drum and trumpet marching by,
Divided into goodly bands, were led
Before Rinaldo, flower of chivalry;
He that (if you remember it) was said
To have been sent by Charlemagne, and made
His envoy to these parts in search of aid.

LXXV
Rogero came exactly as the show
Of that fair host was made without the town,
And of a knight the occasion sought to know;
But from the griffin-horse first lighted down:
And he who courteous was, informed him how
Of kingdoms holding of the British crown,
English, Scotch, Irish, and the Islands nigh,
Those many banners were, upreared on high:

LXXVI
And added, having ended this display
Of arms, the troops would file towards the strand,
Where vessels anchored in the harbour lay,
Waiting to bear them to another land.
"The French beseiged, rejoice in this array,
And hope (he said) deliverance through the band.
But that I may of all inform you well,
I of each troop shall separately tell.

LXXVII
"Lo! where yon mighty banner planted stands,
Which pards and flower-de-luces does unfold,

That our great captain to the wind expands,
Under whose ensign are the rest enrolled:
The warrior's name, renowned throughout these lands,
Is Leonetto, flower of all the bold;
Lancaster's duke, and nephew to the king,
Valiant in war, and wise in counselling.

LXXVIII
"That next the royal gonfalon, which stirred
By fluttering wind, is borne towards the mount,
Which on green field, three pinions of a bird
Bears agent, speaks Sir Richard, Warwick's count.
The Duke of Gloucester's blazon is the third,
Two antlers of a stag, and demi-front;
The Duke of Clarence shows a torch, and he
Is Duke of York who bears that verdant tree.

LXXIX
"Upon the Duke of Norfolk's gonfalon
You see a lance into three pieces broke;
The thunder on the Earl of Kent's; upon
Pembroke's a griffin; underneath a yoke;
In Essex's, conjoined, two snakes are shown:
By yonder lifted balance is bespoke
The Duke of Suffolk; and Northumbria's Earl
A garland does on azure field unfurl.

LXXX
"Arundel's Earl is yonder cavalier,
Whose banner bears a foundering bark! In sight
The next, is Berkeley's noble Marquis; near
Are March and Richmond's Earls: the first on white
Shows a cleft mount; a palm the second peer;
A pine amid the waves the latter knight.
The next of Dorset and Southampton's town,
Are earls; this bears a car, and that a crown.

LXXXI

"The valiant Raymond, Earl of Devon, bears
The hawk, which spreads her wings above her nest;
While or and sable he of Worcester wears:
Derby's a dog, a bear is Oxford's crest.
There, as his badge, a cross of chrystal rears
Bath's wealthy prelate, camped among the rest.
The broken seat on dusky field, next scan,
Of Somerset's good duke, Sir Ariman.

LXXXII

"Forty-two thousand muster in array,
The men at arms and mounted archers there.
By a hundred I misreckon not, or they,
The fighting footmen, twice as many are.
Those ensigns yellow, brown, and green, survey,
And that striped blue and black. The foot repair
Each to his separate flag where these are spread;
By Godfrey, Henry, Hermant, Edward, led.

LXXXIII

"The first is the Duke of Buckingham; and he,
The next, is Henry, Earl of Salisbury;
Old Hermant Aberga'nny hold in fee,
That Edward is the Earl of Shrewsbury.
In those who yonder lodge, the English see
Camped eastward; and now westward turn your eye,
Where you shall thirty thousand Scots, a crew
Led by their monarch's son, Zerbino, view.

LXXXIV

"The lion 'twixt two unicorns behold
Upon the standard of the Scottish king!
Which has a sword of silver in its hold.
There camps his son: of all his following
Is none so beauteous: nature broke the mould

In which she cast him, after fashioning
Her work: Is none in whom such chivalry
And valour shines. The Duke of Rothsay he!

LXXXV
"Behold the Earl of Huntley's flag display
Upon an azure field a gilded bar:
In that a leopard in the toils survey,
The bearing of the noble Duke of Mar.
With many birds, and many colours gay,
See Alcabrun's, a valiant man in war;
Who neither duke, nor count, nor marquis hight,
Is in his savage country first of right.

LXXXVI
"The Duke of Strathforth shows the bird, who strains
His daring eyes to keep the sun in view;
The Earl Lurcanio, that in Angus reigns,
A bull, whose flanks are torn by deerhounds two.
See there the Duke of Albany, who stains
His ensign's field with colours white and blue.
The Earl of Buchan next his banner bears,
In which a dragon vert a vulture tears.

LXXXVII
"Herman, the lord of Forbes, conducts that band,
And stripes his gonfalon with black and white;
With Errol's earl upon his better hand,
Who on a field of green displays a light.
Now see the Irish, next the level land,
Into two squadrons ordered for the fight.
Kildare's redoubted earl commands the first;
Lord Desmond leads the next, in mountains nursed.

LXXXVIII
"A burning pine by Kildare is displayed;
By Desmond on white field a crimson bend.

Nor only England, Scotland, Ireland, aid
King Charlemagne; but to assist him wend
The Swede and Norse, and succours are conveyed
From Thule, and the farthest Iceland's end.
All lands that round them lie, in fine, increase
His host, by nature enemies to peace.

LXXXIX
"Issued from cavern and from forest brown,
They sixteen thousand are, or little less;
Visage, legs, arms, and bosom overgrown
With hair, like beasts. Lo! yonder, where they press
About a standard white, the level down
Of lances seems a bristling wilderness.
Such Moray's flag, the savage squadron's head,
Who means with Moorish blood to paint it red."

XC
What time Rogero sees the fair array,
Whose bands to succour ravaged France prepare,
And notes and talks of ensigns they display,
And names of British lords, to him repair
One and another, crowding to survey
His courser, single of its kind, or rare:
All thither hasten, wondering and astound,
And compassing the warrior, form a round.

XCI
So that to raise more wonder in the train.
And to make better sport, as him they eyed,
Rogero shook the flying courser's rein,
And lightly with the rowels touched his side:
He towards heaven, uprising, soared amain,
And left behind each gazer stupefied.
Having from end to end the English force
So viewed, he next for Ireland shaped his course;

XCII
And saw fabulous Hibernia, where
The goodly, sainted elder made the cave,
In which men cleansed from all offences are;
Such mercy there, it seems, is found to save.
Thence o'er that sea he spurred, through yielding air,
Whose briny waves the lesser Britain lave;
And, looking down, Angelica descried
In passing, to the rock with fetters tied;

XCIII
Bound to the naked rock upon the strand,
In the isle of tears; for the isle of tears was hight,
That which was peopled by the inhuman band,
So passing fierce and full of foul despite;
Who (as I told above) on every hand
Cruized with their scattered fleet by day or night;
And every beauteous woman bore away,
Destined to be a monster's evil prey:

XCIV
There but that morning bound in cruel wise;
Where (to devour a living damsel sped)
The orc, that measureless sea-monster, hies,
Which on abominable food is fed.
How on the beach the maid became the prize
Of the rapacious crew, above was said,
Who found her sleeping near the enchanter hoar,
Who her had thither brought by magic lore.

XCV
The cruel and inhospitable crew
To the voracious beast the dame expose
Upon the sea-beat shore, as bare to view
As nature did at first her work compose.
Not even a veil she had, to shade the hue

Of the white lily and vermillion rose,
Which mingled in her lovely members meet,
Proof to December-snow and July-heat.

XCVI
Her would Rogero have some statue deemed
Of alabaster made, or marble rare,
Which to the rugged rock so fastened seemed
By the industrious sculptor's cunning care,
But that he saw distinct a tear which streamed
Amid fresh-opening rose and lily fair,
Stand on her budding paps beneath in dew,
And that her golden hair dishevelled flew.

XCVII
And as he fastened his on her fair eyes,
His Bradamant he called to mind again.
Pity and love within his bosom rise
At once, and ill he can from tears refrain:
And in soft tone he to the damsel cries,
(When he has checked his flying courser's rein)
"O lady, worthy but that chain to wear,
With which Love's faithful servants fettered are,

XCVIII
"And most unworthy this or other ill,
What wretch has had the cruelty to wound
And gall those snowy hands with livid stain,
Thus painfully with griding fetters bound?"
At this she cannot choose but show like grain,
Of crimson spreading on an ivory ground;
Knowing those secret beauties are espied,
Which, howsoever lovely, shame would hide;

XCIX
And gladly with her hands her face would hood,
Were they not fastened to the rugged stone:

But with her tears (for this at least she could)
Bedewed it, and essayed to hold it down.
Sobbing some while the lovely damsel stood;
Then loosed her tongue and spake in feeble tone;
But ended not; arrested in mid-word,
By a loud noise which in the sea was heard.

C

Lo! and behold! the unmeasured-beast appears,
Half surging and half hidden, in such sort
As sped by roaring wind long carack steers
From north or south, towards her destined port.
So the sea monster to his food repairs:
And now the interval between is short.
Half dead the lady is through fear endured,
Ill by that other's comfort reassured.

CI

Rogero overhand, not in the rest
Carries his lance, and beats, with downright blow,
The monstrous orc. What this resembled best,
But a huge, writhing mass, I do not know;
Which wore no form of animal exprest,
Save in the head, with eyes and teeth of sow.
His forehead, 'twixt the eyes, Rogero smites,
But as on steel or rock the weapon lights.

CII

When he perceives the first of no avail,
The knight returns to deal a better blow;
The orc, who sees the shifting shadow sail
Of those huge pinions on the sea below,
In furious heat, deserts his sure regale
On shore, to follow that deceitful show:
And rolls and reels behind it, as it fleets.
Rogero drops, and oft the stroke repeats.

CIII
As eagle, that amid her downward flight,
Surveys amid the grass a snake unrolled,
Or where she smoothes upon a sunny height,
Her ruffled plumage, and her scales of gold,
Assails it not where prompt with poisonous bite
To hiss and creep; but with securer hold
Gripes it behind, and either pinion clangs,
Lest it should turn and wound her with its fangs;

CIV
So the fell orc Rogero does not smite
With lance or faulchion where the tushes grow,
But aims that 'twixt the ears his blow may light;
Now on the spine, or now on tail below.
And still in time descends or soars upright,
And shifts his course, to cheat the veering foe:
But as if beating on a jasper block,
Can never cleave the hard and rugged rock.

CV
With suchlike warfare is the mastiff vext
By the bold fly in August's time of dust,
Or in the month before or in the next,
This full of yellow spikes and that of must;
For ever by the circling plague perplext,
Whose sting into his eyes or snout is thrust:
And oft the dog's dry teeth are heard to fall;
But reaching once the foe, he pays for all.

CVI
With his huge tail the troubled waves so sore
The monster beats, that they ascend heaven-high;
And the knight knows not if he swim, or soar
Upon his feathered courser in mid sky;
And oft were fain to find himself ashore:

For, if long time the spray so thickly fly,
He fears it so will bathe his hippogryph,
That he shall vainly covet gourd or skiff.

CVII
He then new counsel took, and 'twas the best,
With other arms the monster to pursue;
And lifting from his shield the covering vest,
To dazzle with the light his blasted view.
Landward towards the rock-chained maid he pressed,
And on her little finger, lest a new
Mischance should follow, slipt the ring, which brought
The enchantment of the magic shield to nought.

CVIII
I say the ring, which Bradamant, to free
Rogero, from Brunello's hand had rent,
And which, to snatch him from Alcina, she
Had next to India by Melissa sent.
Melissa (as before was said by me),
In aid of many used the instrument;
And to Rogero this again had born;
By whom 'twas ever on his finger worn.

CIX
He gave it now Angelica; for he
Feared lest the buckler's light should be impaired,
And willed as well those beauteous eyes should be
Defended, which had him already snared.
Pressing beneath his paunch full half the sea,
Now to the shore the monstrous whale repaired:
Firm stood Rogero, and the veil undone,
Appeared to give the sky another sun.

CX
He in the monster's eyes the radiance throws,
Which works as it was wont in other time.

As trout or grayling to the bottom goes
In stream, which mountaineer disturbs with lime;
So the enchanted buckler overthrows
The orc, reversed among the foam and slime.
Rogero here and there the beast astound
Still beats, but cannot find the way to wound.

CXI
This while the lady begs him not to bray
Longer the monster's rugged scale in vain.
"For heaven's sake turn and loose me" (did she say,
Still weeping) "ere the orc awake again.
Bear me with thee, and drown me in mid-way.
Let me not this foul monster's food remain."
By her just plaint Rogero moved, forebore,
Untied the maid, and raised her from the shore.

CXII
Upon the beach the courser plants his feet,
And goaded by the rowel, towers in air,
And gallops with Rogero in mid seat,
While on the croup behind him sate the fair;
Who of his banquet so the monster cheat;
For him too delicate and dainty fare.
Rogero turns and with thick kisses plies
The lady's snowy breast and sparkling eyes.

CXIII
He kept no more the way, as he before
Proposed, for compassing the whole of Spain:
But stopt his courser on the neighbouring shore
Where lesser Britain runs into the main.
Upon the bank there rose an oakwood hoar,
Where Philomel for ever seemed to plain;
I' the middle was a meadow with a fountain,
And, at each end, a solitary mountain.

CXIV
'Twas here the wishful knight first checked the rein,
And dropping in the meadow, made his steed
Furl, yet not shut so close, his wings again,
As he had spread them wide for better speed.
Down lights Rogero, and forbears with pain
From other leap; but this his arms impede:
His arms impede; a bar to his desire,
And he must doff them would he slake the fire.

CXV
Now here, now there, confused by different throng,
Rogero did his shining arms undo:
Never the task appeared to him so long;
For where he loosed one knot, he fastened two.
But, sir, too long continued is this song,
And haply may as well have wearied you;
So that I shall delay to other time,
When it may better please, my tedious rhyme.

CANTO 11

ARGUMENT
Assisted by the magic ring she wears,
Angelica evanishes from view.
Next in a damsel, whom a giant bears
Beneath his arm, his bride Rogero true
Beholds. Orlando to the shore repairs,
Where the fell orc so many damsels slew;
Olympia frees, and spoils the beast of life:
Her afterwards Oberto takes to wife.

I
Although a feeble rein, in mid career,
Will oft suffice to stop courageous horse;

'Tis seldom Reason's bit will serve to steer
Desire, or turn him from his furious course,
When pleasure is in reach: like headstrong bear,
Whom from the honeyed meal 'tis ill to force,
If once he scent the tempting mess, or sup
A drop, which hangs upon the luscious cup.

II
What reason then Rogero shall withhold
From taking with Angelica delight, —
That gentle maid, there naked in his hold,
In the lone forest, and secure from sight?
Of Bradamant he thinks not, who controlled
His bosom erst: and foolish were the knight,
If thinking of that damsel as before,
By this he had not set an equal store;

III
Warmed by whose youthful beauties, the severe
Xenocrates would not have been more chaste.
The impatient Child had dropt both shield and spear,
And hurrying now his other arms uncased;
When, casting down her eyes in shame and fear,
The virtuous ring upon her finger placed,
Angelica descried, and which of yore
From her Brunello in Albracca bore.

IV
This is the ring she carried into France,
When thither first the damsel took her way;
With her the brother, bearer of the lance,
After, the paladin, Astolpho's prey.
With this she Malagigi's spells and trance
Made vain by Merlin's stair; and on a day
Orlando freed, with many knights and good,
From Dragontina's cruel servitude:

V

With this passed viewless from the turret-cell,
Where her that bad old man had mewed; but why
Recount its different wonders, if as well
You know the virtues of the ring as I?
From her this even in her citadel,
His monarch Agramant to satisfy,
Brunello took: since where she had been crost
By Fortune, till her native realm was lost.

VI

Now that she this upon her hand surveys,
She is so full of pleasure and surprise,
She doubts it is a dream, and, in amaze,
Hardly believes her very hand and eyes.
Then softly to her mouth the hoop conveys,
And, quicker than the flash which cleaves the skies,
From bold Rogero's sight her beauty shrowds,
As disappears the sun, concealed in clouds.

VII

Yet still Rogero gazed like wight distraught,
And hurried here and there with fruitless speed:
But when he had recalled the ring to thought,
Foiled and astounded, cursed his little heed.
And now the vanished lady, whom he sought,
Of that ungrateful and discourteous deed
Accusing stood, wherewith she had repaid,
(Unfitting recompense) his generous aid.

VIII

"Ungrateful damsel! and is this the pay
You render for the service done?" (said he)
"Why rather would you steal my ring away
Than have it as a welcome gift from me?
Not only this, (but use me as you may)

I, and my shield and courser, yours shall be;
So you no more conceal your beauteous cheer.
Cruel, though answering not, I know you hear."

IX
So saying, like one blind, with bootless care,
Feeling his way about the fount he strayed.
How often he embraced the empty air,
Hoping in this to have embraced the maid!
Meanwhile, now far removed, the flying fair
Had halted not, till to a cave conveyed.
Formed in a mountain was that harbour rude;
Spacious, and for her need supplied with food.

X
'Twas here an aged herdsman, one who tended
A numerous troop of mares, had made his won:
These, seeking pasture, through the valley wended,
Where the green grass was fed by freshening run:
While stalls on either side the cave, defended
His charge from the oppressive noon-tide sun;
Angelica, within, that livelong day,
Unseen of prying eyes, prolonged her stay;

XI
And about evening, when refreshed with rest
And food, she deemed her course she might renew;
In certain rustic weeds her body dressed:
How different from those robes of red, or blue,
Green, yellow, purple, her accustomed vest,
So various in its fashion, shape, and hue!
Yet her not so that habit misbecame,
But that she looked the fair and noble dame.

XII
Then Phillis' and Neaera's praise forbear,
And ye who sing of Amaryllis cease,

Or flying Galataea, not so fair,
Tityrus and Melibaeus, with your peace!
'Twas here the beauteous lady took a mare,
Which liked her best, of all that herd's increase.
Then, and then first conceived the thought, again
To seek in the Levant her antient reign.

XIII
This while Rogero, after he had passed
Long space in hope the maid might re-appear,
Awakened from his foolish dream at last,
And found she was not nigh, and did not hear.
Then to remount his griffin-courser cast,
In earth and air accustomed to career.
But, having slipt his bit, the winged horse
Had towered and soared in air a freer course.

XIV
To his first ill addition grave and sore
Was to have lost the bird of rapid wing,
Which he no better than the mockery bore
Put on him by the maid; but deeper sting
Than this or that, implants, and pains him more,
The thought of having lost the precious ring;
Not for its power so much, esteemed above
Its worth, as given him by his lady love.

XV
Afflicted beyond measure, he, with shield
Cast on his shoulder, and new-cased in mail,
Left the sea-side, and through a grassy field
Pursued his way, towards a spacious vale:
Where he beheld a path, by wood concealed,
The widest and most beaten in the dale.
Nor far had wound the closest shades within,
Ere on his right he heard a mighty din.

XVI

He heard a din, and fearful clashing sound
Of arms, and hurrying on with eager pace
'Twixt tree and tree, two furious champions found,
Waging fierce fight in close and straightened place:
Who to each other (warring on what ground
I know not) neither showed regard nor grace.
The one a giant was of haughty cheer,
And one a bold and gallant cavalier.

XVII

Covered with shield and sword, one, leaping, sped
Now here now there, and thus himself defended,
Lest a two-handed mace upon his head
Should fall, with which the giant still offended: —
On the field lay his horse, already dead.
Rogero paused, and to the strife attended:
And straight his wishes leant towards the knight,
Whom he would fain see conqueror in the fight:

XVIII

Yet not for this would lend the champion aid,
But to behold the cruel strife stood nigh.
Lo! a two-handed stroke the giant made
Upon the lesser warrior's casque, and by
The mighty blow the knight was overlaid:
The other, when astound he saw him lie,
To deal the foe his death, his helm untied,
So that the warrior's face Rogero spied.

XIX

Of his sweet lady, of his passing fair,
And dearest Bradamant Rogero spies
The lovely visage of its helmet bare;
Towards whom, to deal her death, the giant hies:
So that, advancing with his sword in air,

To sudden battle him the Child defies,
But he, who will not wait for new alarm,
Takes the half-lifeless lady in his arm,

XX
And on his shoulder flings and bears away;
As sometimes wolf a little lamb will bear,
Or eagle in her crooked claws convey
Pigeon, or such-like bird, through liquid air.
Rogero runs with all the speed he may,
Who sees how needed is his succour there.
But with such strides the giant scours the plain,
Him with his eyes the knight pursues with pain.

XXI
This flying and that following, the two
Kept a close path which widened still, and they
Piercing that forest, issued forth to view
On a wide meadow, which without it lay.
— No more of this. Orlando I pursue,
That bore Cymosco's thunder-bolt away;
And this had in the deepest bottom drowned,
That never more the mischief might be found.

XXII
But with small boot: for the impious enemy
Of human nature, taught the bolt to frame,
After the shaft, which darting from the sky
Pierces the cloud and comes to ground in flame,
Who, when he tempted Eve to eat and die
With the apple, hardly wrought more scathe and shame,
Some deal before, or in our grandsires' day,
Guided a necromancer where it lay.

XXIII
More than a hundred fathom buried so,
Where hidden it had lain a mighty space,

The infernal tool by magic from below
Was fished and born amid the German race;
Who, by one proof and the other, taught to know
Its powers, and he who plots for our disgrace,
The demon, working on their weaker wit,
As last upon its fatal purpose hit.

XXIV
To Italy and France, on every hand
The cruel art among all people past:
And these the bronze in hollow mould expand,
First in the furnace melted by the blast:
Others the iron bore, and small or grand,
Fashion the various tube they pierce or cast.
And bombard, gun, according to its frame,
Or single cannon this, or double, name.

XXV
This saker, culverine, or falcon hight,
I hear (all names the inventor has bestowed);
Which splits or shivers steel and stone outright,
And, where the bullet passes, makes a road.
— Down to the sword, restore thy weapons bright,
Sad soldier, to the forge, a useless load;
And gun or carbine on thy shoulder lay,
Who without these, I wot, shalt touch no pay.

XXVI
How, foul and pestilent discovery,
Didst thou find place within the human heart?
Through thee is martial glory lost, through thee
The trade of arms became a worthless art:
And at such ebb are worth and chivalry,
That the base often plays the better part.
Through thee no more shall gallantry, no more
Shall valour prove their prowess as of yore.

XXVII
Through thee, alas! are dead, or have to die,
So many noble lords and cavaliers
Before this war shall end, which, Italy
Afflicting most, has drowned the world in tears,
That, if I said the word, I err not, I,
Saying he sure the cruellest appears
And worst, of nature's impious and malign,
Who did this hateful engine first design:

XXVIII
And I shall think, in order to pursue
The sin for ever, God has doomed to hell
That cursed soul, amid the unhappy crew,
Beside the accursed Judas there to dwell.
But follow we the good Orlando, who
So burns to seek Ebuda's island fell,
Whose foul inhabitants a monster sate
With flesh of women, fair and delicate.

XXIX
But no less slow than eager was the knight:
The winds appear, which still his course delay;
Who, whether blowing on the left or right,
Or poop, so faintly in his canvas play,
His bark makes little speed; and, spent outright,
The breeze which wafts her sometimes dies away,
Or blows so foul, that he is fain to steer
Another course, or to the leeward veer.

XXX
It was the will of Heaven that he, before
The King of Ireland, should not reach the land,
The he with greater ease upon that shore
Might act what shortly you shall understand.
"Make for the isle. Now" (said he) "may'st thou moor,"

(Thus issuing to the pilot his command),
"And give me for my need the skiff; for I
Will to the rock without more company.

XXXI
"The biggest cable that thou hast aboard,
And biggest anchor to my hands consign;
Thou shalt perceive why thus my boat is stored,
If I but meet that monster of the brine."
He bade them lower the pinnace overboard,
With all things that befitted his design:
His arms he left behind, except his blade,
And singly for the rocky island made.

XXXII
Home to his breast the count pulls either oar,
With the island at his back, to which he wends,
In guise that, crawling up the sandy shore,
The crooked crab from sea or marsh ascends.
It was the hour Aurora gay before
The rising sun her yellow hair extends
(His orb as yet half-seen, half-hid from sight)
Not without stirring jealous Tithon's spite.

XXXIII
Approaching to the naked rock as near
As vigorous hand might serve to cast a stone,
He knew not if he heard, or did not hear
A cry, so faint and feeble was the moan.
When, turning to the left, the cavalier,
His level sight along the water thrown,
Naked as born, bound to a stump, espied
A dame whose feet were wetted by the tide.

XXXIV
Because she distant is, and evermore
Holds down her face, he ill can her discern:

Both sculls he pulls amain, and nears the shore,
With keen desire more certain news to learn:
But now the winding beach is heard to roar,
And wood and cave the mighty noise return;
The billows swell, and, lo! the beast! who pressed,
And nigh concealed the sea beneath his breast.

XXXV

As cloud from humid vale is seen to rise,
Pregnant with rain and storm, which seems withal
To extinguished day, and charged with deeper dyes
Than night, to spread throughout this earthly ball,
So swims the beast, who so much occupies
Of sea, he may be said to keep it all.
Waves roar: collected in himself, the peer
Looks proudly on, unchanged in heart and cheer.

XXXVI

He, as one well resolved in his intent,
Moved quickly to perform the feat he planned;
And, for he would the damsel's harm prevent,
And would with that assail the beast at hand,
Between her and the orc the boat he sent,
Leaving within the sheath his idle brand,
Anchor and cable next he takes in hold,
And waits the foe with constant heart and bold.

XXXVII

As soon as him the monster has descried,
And skiff at little interval, his throat
The fish, to swallow him, expands so wide,
That horse and horseman through his jaws might float.
Here Roland with the anchor, and beside
(Unless I am mistaken) with the boat
Plunged, and engulphed the parted teeth betwixt,
His anchor in the tongue and palate fixt;

XXXVIII
So that the monster could no longer drop
Or raise his horrid jaws, which this extends.
'Tis thus who digs the mine is wont to prop
The ground, and where he works the roof suspends,
Lest sudden ruin whelm him from atop,
While he incautiously his task intends.
Roland (so far apart was either hook)
But by a leap could reach the highest crook.

XXXIX
The prop so placed, Orlando now secure
That the fell beast his mouth no more can close,
Unsheathes his sword, and, in that cave obscure,
Deals here and there, now thrusts, now trenchant blows.
As well as citadel, whose walls immure
The assailants, can defend her from her foes,
The monster, harassed by the war within,
Defends himself against the Paladin.

XL
Now floats the monstrous beast, o'ercome with pain,
Whose scaly flanks upon the waves expand;
And now descends into the deepest main,
Scowers at the bottom, and stirs up the sand.
The rising flood ill able to sustain,
The cavalier swims forth, and makes for land.
He leaves the anchor fastened in his tongue,
And grasps the rope which from the anchor hung.

XLI
So swimming till the island is attained,
With this towards the rock Orlando speeds:
He hawls the anchor home (a footing gained),
Pricked by whose double fluke, the monster bleeds.
The labouring orc to follow is constrained,

Dragged by that force which every force exceeds;
Which at a single sally more achieves
Than at ten turns the circling windlass heaves.

XLII
As a wild bull, about whose horn is wound
The unexpected noose, leaps here and there,
When he has felt the cord, and turns him round,
And rolls and rises, yet slips not the snare;
So from his pleasant seat and ancient bound,
Dragged by that arm and rope he cannot tear,
With thousands of strange wheels and thousand slides,
The monster follows where the cable guides.

XLIII
This the red sea with reason would be hight
To-day, such streams of blood have changed its hue;
And where the monster lashed it in his spite,
The eye its bottom through the waves might view.
And now he splashed the sky, and dimmed the light
Of the clear sun, so high the water flew.
The noise re-echoing round, the distant shore
And wood and hill rebound the deafening roar.

XLIV
Forth from his grotto aged Proteus hies,
And mounts above the surface at the sound;
And having seen Orlando dive, and rise
From the orc, and drag the monstrous fish to ground,
His scattered flock forgot, o'er ocean flies;
While so the din increases, that, astound,
Neptune bids yoke his dolphins, and that day
For distant Aethiopia posts away.

XLV
With Melicerta on her shoulders, weeping
Ino, and Nereids with dishevelled hair,

The Glauci, Tritons, and their fellows, leaping
They know not whither, speed, some here, some there.
Orlando draws to land, the billows sweeping,
That horrid fish, but might his labour spare:
For, with the torment worn, and travel sore,
The brute, exhausted, died, ere dragged ashore.

XLVI
Of the islanders had trooped no petty throng,
To witness that strange fight, who by a vain
And miserable superstition stung,
Esteemed such holy deed a work profane;
And said that this would be another wrong
To Proteus, and provoke his ire again;
Make him his herds pour forth upon the strand,
And with the whole old warfare vex the land;

XLVII
And that it better were to sue for peace,
First from the injured god, lest worse ensue;
And Proteus from his cruel hate would cease,
If they into the sea the offender threw.
As torch to torch gives fire, and lights increase,
Until the flame is spread the country through,
Even so from heart to heart the fury spread,
Which in the waves would doom Orlando dead.

XLVIII
These, armed with sling or bow, upon the shore,
And these supplied with spear or sword descend;
And on each side, behind him and before,
Distant and near, as best they can, offend.
At such a brutal insult wonders sore
The peer, who sees that mischief they intend,
In vengeance for the cruel monster slain,
Whence he had glory hoped, and praise to gain.

XLIX

But as the usage is of surly bear,
By sturdy Russ or Lithuanian led,
Little to heed the dogs in crowded fair,
Nor even at their yelps to turn his head,
The clamour of the churls assembled there
Orlando witnessed with as little dread;
Who knew that he the rout which threatened death,
Had power to scatter at a single breath:

L

And speedily he made them yield him place,
When turned on them, he grasped his trenchant blade.
Misjudging of his worth, the foolish race
Deemed that he would have short resistance made;
Since him they saw no covering buckler brace,
Uncuirassed, nor in other arms arrayed;
But knew not that, from head to foot, a skin
More hard than diamond cased the Paladin.

LI

What by Orlando others cannot do,
The knight by others can; at half a score
Of blows in all he thirty killed; by few
He passed that measure, if the strokes were more:
And had already turned him to undo
The naked lady, having cleared the shore,
When other larum sounds, and other cries
From a new quarter of the island rise.

LII

While so the Paladin had kept in play
The barbarous islanders, upon that hand,
The men of Ireland, without let or fray,
Had poured from many quarters on the strand:
And now, without remorse or pity, slay

The inhabitants, through all the wasted land;
And, was it justice moved, or cruel rage,
Slaughter without regard to sex or age.

LIII
Little or no defender the island-crew
Attempt; in part as taken unaware,
In part that in the little place are few,
And that those few without a purpose are.
'Mid sack and fire, the wasted country through,
The islanders are slain, and everwhere
The walls are upon earth in ruin spread,
Nor in the land is left a living head.

LIV
As if the mighty tumult which he hears,
And shriek and ruin had concerned him nought,
The naked rock the bold Orlando nears,
Where she was placed, to feed the monster brought.
He looks, and known to him the dame appears,
And more appears, when nigher her he sought:
Olympia she appears, and is indeed
Olympia, whose faith reaped so ill a meed.

LV
Wretched Olympia; whom, beside the scorn
Which Love put on her, Fortune too pursued,
Who sent the corsairs fell, which her had born
That very day to the island of Ebude.
She Roland recollects on his return
Landward; but, for the damsel naked stood,
Not only nought she to the warrior said,
But dared not raise her eyes, and dropt her head.

LVI
Orlando asks what evil destiny
Her to that cruel island had conveyed

From where she in as much felicity
Was with her consort left as could be said:
"I know not (cried the weeping dame) if I
Have thanks to render thee for death delayed,
Or should lament me that, through means of thee,
This day did not my woes concluded see.

LVII
"I have to thank thee that from death, too dread
And monstrous, thy good arm deliverance gave;
Which would have been too monstrous, had I fed
The beast, and in his belly found a grave:
But cannot thank thee that I am not dead,
Since death alone can me from misery save,
Well shall I thank thee for that wished relief,
Which can deliver me from every grief."

LVIII
Next she related, with loud sobs and sighs,
How her false spouse betrayed her as she lay
Asleep, and how of pirates made the prize,
They bore her from the desert isle away.
And, as she spake, she turned her in the guise
Of Dian, framed by artists, who pourtray
Her carved or painted, as in liquid font
She threw the water in Actaeon's front.

LIX
For, as she can, her waist she hides, and breast,
More liberal of flowing flank and reins.
Roland desires his ship, to find a vest
To cover her, delivered from her chains:
While he is all intent upon this quest,
Oberto comes; Oberto, he that reigns
O'er Ireland's people, who had understood
How lifeless lay the monster of the flood;

LX

And, swimming, how, amid the watery roar,
A knight a weighty anchor in his throat
Had fix'd, and so had dragged him to the shore,
As men against the current track a boat.
This while Oberto comes; who, if his lore,
Who told the tale, were true, desires to note;
While his invading army, far and wide,
Ebuda burn and waste on every side.

LXI

Oberto, though the Paladin to sight
Was dripping, and with water foul and gore;
With gore, that from the orc, emerged to light,
Whom he had entered bodily, he bore,
He for the country knew the stranger knight
As he perused his face; so much the more,
That he had thought when told the tidings, none
Save Roland could such mighty fear have done;

LXII

Knew him, because a page of honour he
Had been in France, and for the crown, his right
Upon his father's death, had crossed the sea
The year before. So often he the knight
Had seen, and had with him held colloquy,
Their times of meeting had been infinite.
He doffed his casque, with festive welcome pressed
Towards the count, and clasped him to the breast.

LXIII

Orlando is no less rejoined to see
The king, than is the king that champion true.
After with friendly cheer and equal glee
Had once or twice embraced the noble two,
To Oberto Roland told the treachery

Which had been done the youthful dame, and who
Had done it, — false Bireno — that among
All men should least have sought to do her wrong.

LXIV
To him he told the many proofs and clear
By which the dame's affection had been tried;
And how she for Bireno kin and geer
Had lost, and would in fine for him have died.
And how he this could warrant, and appear
To vouch for much, as witness on her side.
While thus to him her griefs Orlando showed,
The lady's shining eyes with tears o'erflowed.

LXV
Her face was such as sometimes in the spring
We see a doubtful sky, when on the plain
A shower descends, and the sun, opening
His cloudy veil, looks out amid the rain.
And as the nightingale then loves to sing
From branch of verdant stem her dulcet strain,
So in her beauteous tears his pinions bright
Love bathes, rejoicing in the chrystal light.

LXVI
The stripling heats his golden arrow's head
At her bright eyes, then slacks the weapon's glow
In streams, which falls between white flowers and red;
And, the shaft tempered, strongly draws his bow,
And roves at him, o'er whom no shield is spread,
Nor iron rind, nor double mail below;
Who, gazing on her tresses, eyes, and brow,
Feels that his heart is pierced, he knows not how.

LXVII
Olympia's beauties are of those most rare,
Nor is the forehead's beauteous curve alone

Excellent, and her eyes and cheeks and hair,
Mouth, nose, and throat, and shoulders; but, so down
Descending from the lady's bosom fair,
Parts which are wont to be concealed by gown,
Are such, as haply should be placed before
Whate'er this ample world contains in store.

LXVIII
In whiteness they surpassed unsullied snow,
Smooth ivory to the touch: above were seen
Two rounding paps, like new-pressed milk in show,
Fresh-taken from its crate of rushes green;
The space betwixt was like the valley low,
Which oftentimes we see small hills between,
Sweet in its season, and now such as when
Winter with snows has newly filled the glen.

LXIX
The swelling hips and haunches' symmetry,
The waist more clear than mirror's polished grain,
And members seem of Phidias' turnery,
Or work of better hand and nicer pain.
As well to you of other parts should I
Relate, which she to hide desired in vain.
To sum the beauteous whole, from head to feet,
In her all loveliness is found complete.

LXX
And had she in the Idaean glen unveiled
In ancient days before the Phrygian swain,
By how much heavenly Venus had prevailed
I know not, though her rivals strove in vain.
Nor haply had the youth for Sparta sailed,
To violate the hospitable reign;
But said: "With Menelaus let Helen rest!
No other prize I seek, of this possest";

LXXI
Or in Crotona dwelt, where the divine
Zeuxis in days of old his work projected,
To be the ornament of Juno's shrine,
And hence so many naked dames collected;
And in one form perfection to combine,
Some separate charm from this or that selected,
He from no other model need have wrought.
Since joined in her were all the charms he sought.

LXXII
I do not think Bireno ever viewed
Naked that beauteous form; for sure it were
He never could have been so stern of mood,
As to have left her on that desert lair.
That Ireland's king was fired I well conclude,
Nor hid the flame that he within him bare.
He strives to comfort her, and hope instill,
That future good shall end her present ill.

LXXIII
And her to Holland promises to bear,
And vows till she is to her state restored,
And just and memorable vengeance there
Achieved upon her perjured, traitor lord,
He never will unceasing war forbear,
Waged with all means that Ireland can afford;
And this with all his speed. He, up and down,
Meantime bids seek for female vest and gown.

LXXIV
Now will it need to send in search of vest
Beyond the savage island's narrow bound,
Since thither every day in such came dressed,
Some dame, to feed the beast, from countries round.
Nor long his followers there pursued the quest,

Ere many they of various fashions found.
So was Olympia clothed; while sad of mood
Was he, not so to clothe her as he wou'd.

LXXV
But never silk so choice or gold so fine
Did the industrious Florentine prepare,
Nor whosoever broiders gay design,
Though on his task be spent time, toil, and care,
Nor Lemnos' god, nor Pallas' art divine,
Form raiment worthy of those limbs so fair,
That King Oberto cannot choose but he
Recalls them at each turn to memory.

LXXVI
To see that love so kindled by the dame,
On many grounds Orlando was content;
Who not alone rejoiced that such a shame
Put upon her, Bireno should repent;
But, that in the design on which he came,
He should be freed from grave impediment.
Not for Olympia thither had he made,
But, were his lady there, to lend her aid.

LXXVII
To him, that there she was not, soon was clear,
But clear it was not if she had been there,
Or no; since of those islesmen, far and near,
One was not left the tidings to declare.
The following day they from the haven steer,
And all united in one squadron fare.
The Paladin with them to Ireland hies,
From whence to France the warrior's passage lies.

LXXVIII
Scarcely a day in Ireland's realm he spends:
And for no prayers his purposed end forbore:

Love, that in quest of his liege-lady sends
The knight upon this track, permits no more.
Departing, he Olympia recommends
To the Irish monarch, who to serve her swore:
Although this needed not; since he was bent
More than behoved, her wishes to content:

LXXIX
So levied in few days his warlike band,
And (league with England's kind and Scotland's made)
In Holland and in Friesland left no land
To the false duke, so rapid was the raid.
And to rebel against that lord's command
His Zealand stirred; nor he the war delayed,
Until by him Bireno's blood was spilt:
A punishment that ill atoned his guilt.

LXXX
Oberto takes to wife Olympia fair,
And her of countess makes a puissant queen.
But be the Paladin again our care,
Who furrows , night and day, the billows green,
And strikes his sails in the same harbour, where
They to the wind erewhile unfurled had been
All armed, he on his Brigliadoro leaps,
And leaves behind him winds and briny deeps.

LXXXI
The remnant of the winter, he with shield
And spear achieved things worthy to be shown,
I ween; but these were then so well concealed,
It is no fault of mine they are not blown;
For good Orlando was in fighting field,
Prompter to do, than make his prowess known.
Nor e'er was bruited action of the knight,
Save when some faithful witness was in sight.

LXXXII
That winter's remnant he so passed that feat
Of his was known not to the public ear;
But when within that animal discreet
Which Phryxus bore, the sun illumed the sphere,
And Zephyrus returning glad and sweet,
Brought back with him again the blooming year,
The wondrous deeds Orlando did in stower,
Appeared with the new grass and dainty flower.

LXXXIII
From plain to hill, from champaign flat to shore,
Oppressed with grief and pain the County fares,
When a long cry, entering a forest hoar,
— A load lamenting smites upon his ears.
He grasps his brand and spurs his courser sore,
And swiftly pricks toward the sound he hears.
But I shall at another season say
What chanced, and may be heard in future lay.

CANTO 12

ARGUMENT
Orlando, full of rage, pursues a knight
Who bears by force his lady-love away,
And comes where old Atlantes, by his sleight
Had raised a dome, Rogero there to stay.
Here too Rogero comes; where getting sight
Of his lost love, the County strives in fray
With fierce Ferrau, and, after slaughter fell
Amid the paynim host, finds Isabel.

I
Ceres, when from the Idaean dame in haste
Returning to the lonely valley, where

Enceladus the Aetnaean mountain placed
On his bolt-smitten flanks, is doomed to bear,
Her girl she found not, on that pathless waste,
By her late quitted, having rent her hair,
And marked cheeks, eyes, and breast, with livid signs,
At the end of her lament tore up two pines,

II
And lit at Vulcan's fire the double brand,
And gave them virtue never to be spent;
And, afterwards, with one in either hand,
Drawn by two dragons, in her chariot went,
Searching the forest, hill, and level land,
Field, valley, running stream, or water pent,
The land and sea; and having searched the shell
Of earth above, descended into hell.

III
Had Roland of Eleusis' deity
The sovereign power possessed no less than will,
He for Angelica had land and sea
Ransacked, and wood and field, and pool and rill,
Heaven, and Oblivion's bottom: but since he
Had not, his pressing purpose to fulfil,
Her dragon and her car, the unwearied knight
Pursued the missing maid as best he might.

IV
Through France he sought her, and will seek her through
The realms of Italy and of Almayn,
And thence through the Castiles, both old and new,
So passing into Libya out of Spain.
While bold Orlando has this plan in view,
He hears, or thinks he hears, a voice complain:
He forward spurs, and sees on mighty steed
A warrior trot before him on the mead;

V

Who in his arms a captive damsel bears,
Sore grieving, and across the pommel laid;
She weeps and struggles, and the semblance wears
Of cruel woe, and ever calls for aid
Upon Anglantes' prince; and now appears
To him, as he surveys the youthful maid,
She, for whom, night and day, with ceaseless pain,
Inside and out, he France had searched in vain.

VI

I say not is, but that she to the sight
Seems the Angelica he loves so dear.
He who is lady-love and goddess' flight
Beholds, borne off in such afflicted cheer,
Impelled by fury foul, and angry spite,
Calls back with horrid voice the cavalier;
Calls back the cavalier, and threats in vain,
And Brigliadoro drives with flowing rein.

VII

That felon stops not, nor to him replies,
On his great gain intent, his glorious prey;
And with such swiftness through the greenwood hies,
Wind would not overtake him on his way.
The one pursues while him the other flies,
And with lament resounds the thicket gray.
They issue in a spacious mead, on which
Appears a lofty mansion, rare and rich.

VIII

Of various marbles, wrought with subtle care,
Is the proud palace. He who fast in hold
Bears off upon his arm the damsel fair,
Sore pricking, enters at a gate of gold.
Nor Brigliador is far behind the pair,

Backed by Orlando, angry knight and bold.
Entering, around Orlando turns his eyes,
Yet neither cavalier nor damsel spies.

IX
He suddenly dismounts, and thundering fares
Through the inmost palace, seeking still his foe,
And here and there in restless rage repairs,
Till he has seen each bower, each galleried row;
With the same purpose he ascends the stairs,
Having first vainly searched each room below.
Nor spends less labour, on his task intent,
Above, than he beneath had vainly spent.

X
Here beds are seen adorned with silk and gold;
Nor of partition aught is spied or wall:
For these, and floor beneath, throughout that hold,
Are hid by curtains and by carpets all.
Now here, now there, returns Orlando bold,
Nor yet can glad his eyes, in bower or hall,
With the appearance of the royal maid,
Or the foul thief by whom she was conveyed.

XI
This while, as here and there in fruitless pain
He moves, oppressed with thought and trouble sore,
Gradasso, Brandimart, and him of Spain,
Ferrau, he finds, with Sacripant and more;
Who ever toiling, like himself, in vain
Above, that building, and beneath explore,
And as they wander, curse with one accord
The malice of the castle's viewless lord.

XII
All in pursuit of the offender speed,
And upon him some charge of robbery lay:

One knight complains that he has stolen his steed,
One that he has purloined his lady gay.
Other accuses him of other deed:
And thus within the enchanted cage they stay,
Nor can depart; while in the palace pent,
Many have weeks and months together spent.

XIII
Roland, when he round that strange dome had paced
Four times or six, still vainly seeking, said
Within himself, at last, "I here might waste
My time and trouble, still in vain delayed,
While haply her the robber whom I chased
Has far away, through other gate conveyed."
So thinking, from the house he issued out
Into the mead which girt the dome about.

XIV
While Roland wanders round the sylvan Hall,
Still holding close his visage to the ground,
To see if recent print or trace withal
Can, right or left, upon the turf be found,
He from a neighbouring window hears a call,
And looks, and thinks he hears that voice's sound,
And thinks he sees the visage by which he
Was so estranged from what he wont to be.

XV
He thinks he hears Angelica, and she
"Help, help!" entreating cries, and weeping sore,
"More than for life and soul, alas! of thee
Protection for my honour I implore.
Then shall it in my Roland's presence be
Ravished by this foul robber? Oh! before
Me to such miserable fate you leave,
Let me from your own hand my death receive!"

XVI

These words repeated once, and yet again,
Made Roland through each chamber, far and near,
Return with passion, and with utmost pain;
But tempered with high hope. Sometimes the peer
Stopt in his search and heard a voice complain,
Which seemed to be Angelica's: if here
The restless warrior stand, it sounds from there,
And calls for help he knows not whence nor where,

XVII

Returning to Rogero, left, I said,
When through a gloomy path, upon his steed,
Following the giant and the dame who fled,
He from the wood had issued on the mead;
I say that he arrived where Roland dread
Arrived before him, if I rightly read.
The giant through the golden portal passed,
Rogero close behind, who followed fast.

XVIII

As soon as he his foot has lifted o'er
The threshold, he through court and gallery spies;
Nor sees the giant or the lady more,
And vainly glances here and there his eyes.
He up and down returns with labour sore,
Yet not for that his longing satisfies;
Nor can imagine where the felon thief
Has hid himself and dame in space so brief.

XIX

After four times or five he so had wound
Above, below, through bower and gallery fair,
He yet returned, and, having nothing found,
Searched even to the space beneath the stair.
At length, in hope they in the woodlands round

Might be, he sallied; but the voice, which there
Roland recalled, did him no less recall,
And made as well return within the Hall.

XX
One voice, one shape, which to Anglantes' peer
Seemed his Angelica, beseeching aid.
Seemed to Rogero Dordogne's lady dear.
Who him a truant to himself had made:
If with Gradasso, or with other near
He spake, of those who through the palace strayed.
To all of them the vision, seen apart,
Seemed that which each had singly most at heart.

XXI
This was a new and unwonted spell,
Which the renowned Atlantes had composed,
That in this toil, this pleasing pain, might dwell
So long Rogero, by these walls enclosed,
From him should pass away the influence fell,
— Influence which him to early death exposed.
Though vain his magic tower of steel, and vain
Alcina's art, Atlantes plots again.

XXII
Not only he, but others who stood high
For valour, and in France had greatest fame,
That by their hands Rogero might not die,
Brought here by old Atlantes' magic came:
While these in the enchanted mansion lie,
That food be wanting not to knight or dame,
He has supplied the dome throughout so well,
That all the inmates there in plenty dwell.

XXIII
But to Angelica return we, who
Now of that ring so wondrous repossessed,

(Which, in her mouth, concealed the maid from view,
Preserved from spell when it the finger pressed,)
Was in the mountain-cavern guided to
Whatever needed, viands, mare, and vest,
And had conceived the project to pursue
Her way to her fair Indian realm anew.

XXIV
King Sacripant, or Roland, willingly
The damsel would have taken for her guide;
Not that, propitious to their wishes, she
(Averse from both) inclined to either side;
But, since her eastern journey was to be
Through town and city, scattered far and wide,
She needed company, and ill had found
More trusty guides than these for such a round.

XXV
Now this, now that she sought with fruitless care,
Before she lit on either warrior's trace,
By city or by farm, now here, now there,
In forest now, and now in other place.
Fortune, at length, where caged with Roland are
Ferrau and Sacripant, directs her chase;
Rogero, with Gradasso fierce, and more,
Noosed with strange witcheries by Atlantes hoar.

XXVI
She enters, hidden from the enchanter's eyes,
And by the ring concealed, examines all;
And Roland there, and Sacripant espies,
Intent to seek her vainly through the Hall;
And with her image cheating both, descries
Atlantes old. The damsel doubts withal
Which of the two to take, and long revolves
This in her doubtful thought, nor well resolves.

XXVII

She knows not which with her will best accord,
The Count Orlando or Circassia's knight.
As of most powers, her would Rogero ward
In passage perilous, with better might.
But should she make the peer her guide, her lord,
She knew not if her champion she could slight,
If him she would depress with altered cheer,
Or into France send back the cavalier:

XXVIII

But Sacripant at pleasure could depose,
Though him she had uplifted to the sky.
Hence him alone she for her escort chose,
And feigned to trust in his fidelity.
The ring she from her mouth withdraws, and shows
Her face, unveiled to the Circassian's eye:
She thought to him alone; but fierce Ferrau
And Roland came upon the maid, and saw.

XXIX

Ferrau and Roland came upon the maid;
For one and the other champion equally
Within the palace and without it strayed
In quest of her, who was their deity.
And now, no longer by the enchantment stayed,
Each ran alike towards the dame, for she
Had placed the ring upon her hand anew,
Which old Atlantes' every scheme o'erthrew.

XXX

Helm on the head and corselet on the breast
Of both the knights, of whom I sing, was tied;
By night or day, since they into this rest
Had entered, never doffed and laid aside:
For such to wear were easy as a vest,

To these, so wont the burden to abide.
As well was armed, except with iron masque,
Ferrau, who wore not, nor would wear, a casque.

XXXI
Till he had that erst wrested by the peer,
Orlando, from the brother of Troyane;
For so had sworn the Spanish cavalier,
What time he Argalia's helm in vain
Sought in the brook; yet though the count was near,
Has not stretched forth his hand the prize to gain.
For so it was, that neither of the pair
Could recognise the other knight while there.

XXXII
Upon the enchanted dome lay such a spell,
That they from one another were concealed;
They doffed not, night nor day, the corselet's shell,
Not sword, nor even put aside the shield.
Saddled, with bridle hanging at the sell,
Their steeds were feeding, ready for the field,
Within a chamber, near the palace door,
With straw and barley heaped in plenteous store.

XXXIII
Nor might nor mean in old Atlantes lies
To stop the knights from mounting, who repair
To their good steeds, to chase the bright black eyes,
The fair vermillion cheeks and golden hair
Of the sweet damsel, who before them flies,
And goads to better speed her panting mare;
Ill pleased the three assembled to discern,
Though haply she had taken each in turn.

XXXIV
And when these from the magic palace she
Had ticed so far, that she no more supposed

The warriors to the wicked fallacy
Of the malign enchanter were exposed,
The ring, which more than once from misery
Had rescued her, she 'twixt her lips enclosed,
Hence from their sight she vanished in a thought,
And left them wondering there, like men distraught.

XXXV

Although she first the scheme had entertained
Roland or Sacripant to have released,
To guide her thither, where her father reigned,
King Galaphron, who ruled i' the farthest East,
The aid of both she suddenly disdained,
And in an instant from her project ceased;
And deemed, without more debt to count or king,
In place of either knight sufficed the ring.

XXXVI

In haste, they through the forest, here and there,
So scorned of her, still gaze with stupid face;
Like questing hound which loses sight of hare
Or fox, of whom he late pursued the trace,
Into close thicket, ditch, or narrow lair,
Escaping from the keen pursuer's chase.
Meantime their ways the wanton Indian queen
Observes, and at their wonder laughs unseen.

XXXVII

In the mid wood, where they the maid did lose,
Was but a single pathway, left or right;
Which they believed the damsel could not choose
But follow, when she vanished from their sight.
Ferrau halts not, and Roland fast pursues,
Nor Sacripant less plies the rowels bright.
Angelica, this while, retrains her steed,
And follows the three warriors with less speed.

XXXVIII
When pricking thus they came to where the way
Was in the forest lost, with wood o'ergrown,
And had begun the herbage to survey
For print of recent footsteps, up and down,
The fierce Ferrau, who might have borne away
From all that ever proudest were, the crown,
With evil countenance, to the other two
Turned him about, and shouted "Whence are you?"

XXXIX
"Turn back or take another road, save here,
In truth, you covet to be slain by me.
Nor when I chase or woo my lady dear,
Let any think I bear with company."
And — "What more could he say, sir cavalier,"
(Orlando cried to Sacripant) "if we
Were known for the two basest whores that pull
And reel from spindle-staff the matted wool?"

XL
Then turning to Ferrau,, "But that thine head,
Thou brutish sot, as I behold, is bare,
If thy late words were ill or wisely said,
Thou should'st perceive, before we further fare."
To him Ferrau: "For that which breeds no dread
In me, why should'st thou take such sovereign care?
What I have said unhelmed will I prove true,
Here, single as I am, on both of you."

XLI
"Oh!" (to Circassia's king cried Roland dread)
"Thy morion for this man let me entreat,
Till I have driven such folly from his head;
For never with like madness did I meet."
— "Who then would be most fool?" the monarch said;

"But if indeed you deem the suit discreet,
Lend him thine own; nor shall I be less fit
Haply than thee to school his lack of wit."

XLII
— "Fools, both of you!" (the fierce Ferrau replied)
"As if, did I to wear a helm delight,
You would not be without your casques of pride,
Already reft by me in your despite;
But know thus much, that I by vow am tied
To wear no helm, and thus my promise quite;
Roaming without, till that fine casque I win
Worn by Orlando, Charles's paladin."

XLIII
— "Then" (smiling, to the Spaniard said the count)
"With naked head, thou thinkest to repeat
On Roland what he did in Aspramont,
By Agolant's bold son: but shouldst thou meet
The warrior whom thou seekest, front to front,
I warrant thou wouldst quake from head to feet;
Nor only wouldst forego the casque, but give
The knight thine other arms to let thee live."

XLIV
— "So oft have I had Roland on the hip,
And oft," (exclaimed the boaster) "heretofore;
From him it had been easy task to strip
What other arms, beside his helm, he wore;
And if I still have let the occasion slip,
— We sometimes think of things unwished before:
Such wish I had not; I have now; and hope
To compass easily my present scope."

XLV
The good Orlando could no more forbear,
And cried, "Foul miscreant, liar, marched with me,

Say, caitiff, in what country, when and where
Boast you to have obtained such victory?
That paladin am I, o'er whom you dare
To vaunt, and whom you distant deemed: now see
If you can take my helm, or I have might
To take your other arms in your despite.

XLVI
"Nor I o'er you the smallest vantage wou'd."
He ended, and his temples disarrayed,
And to a beech hung up the helmet good,
And nigh as quickly bared his trenchant blade.
Ferrau stands close, and in such attitude,
(His courage not for what had chanced dismayed)
Covered with lifted shield and naked sword,
As might best shelter to his head afford.

XLVII
'Twas thus those warriors two, with faulchions bare,
Turning their ready steeds, began to wheel;
And where the armour thinnest was, and where
The meeting plates were joined, probed steel with steel;
Nor was there in the world another pair
More fitted to be matched in fierce appeal:
Equal their daring, equal was their might,
And safe alike from wound was either knight.

XLVIII
By you, fair sir, already, I presume,
That fierce Ferrau was charmed is understood,
Save where the child, enclosed within the womb
Of the full mother, takes its early food;
And hence he ever, till the squalid tomb
Covered his manly face, wore harness good
(Such was his wont) the doubtful part to guard,
Of seven good plates of metal, tempered hard.

XLIX

Alike a charmed life Orlando bore,
Safe every where, except a single part:
Unfenced beneath his feet, which evermore
By him were guarded with all care and art.
The rest than diamond dug from mountain hoar
More hard, unless report from truth depart;
And armed to battle either champion went,
Less for necessity than ornament.

L

Waxing more fierce and fell the combat rages,
Of fear and horror full, between the twain:
The fierce Ferrau such dreadful battle wages,
That stroke or thrust is never dealt in vain:
Each mighty blow from Roland disengages
And loosens, breaks, or shatters, plate and chain.
Angelica alone, secure from view,
Regards such fearful sight, and marks the two.

LI

For, during this, the king of Circassy,
Who deemed Angelica not far before,
When Ferrau and Orlando desperately
Closing in fight were seen, his horse did gore
Along the way by which he deemed that she
Had disappeared; and so that battle sore
Was witnessed 'twixt the struggling foes, by none,
Beside the daughter of king Galaphron.

LII

After the damsel had sometime descried
This dread and direful combat, standing nigh;
And it appearing that on either side
With equal peril both the warriors vie,
She, fond of novelty, the helm untied

Designs to take; desirous to espy
What they would do when they perceived the wrong;
But, without thought to keep her plunder long.

LIII
To give it to Orlando was she bent,
But first she would upon the warrior play:
The helmet she took down with this intent
And in her bosom hid, and marked the fray:
Next thence, without a word to either went,
And from the scene of strife was far away
Ere either of the two had marked the feat;
So were they blinded by their angry heat.

LIV
But Ferrau, who first chanced the loss to see,
From Roland disengaged himself, and cried,
"How like unwary men and fools are we
Treated by him, who late with us did ride!
What meed, which worthiest of the strife might be,
If this be stolen, the victor shall abide?"
Roland draws back, looks upward, and with ire,
Missing the noble casque, is all on fire:

LV
And in opinion with Ferrau agreed,
That he the knight, who was with them before,
Had born away the prize: hence turned his steed.
And with the spur admonished Brigliador.
Ferrau, who from the field beheld him speed.
Followed him, and when Roland and the Moor
Arrived where tracks upon the herbage green
Of the Circassian and the maid were seen,

LVI
Towards a vale upon the left the count
Went off, pursuing the Circassian's tread;

The Spaniard kept the path more nigh the mount,
By which the fair Angelica had fled.
Angelica, this while, has reached a fount,
Of pleasant site, and shaded overhead;
By whose inviting shades no traveller hasted,
Nor ever left the chrystal wave untasted.

LVII
Angelica, the sylvan spring beside,
Reposes, unsuspicious of surprise;
And thinking her the sacred ring will hide,
Fears not that evil accident can rise.
On her arrival at the fountain's side,
She to a branch above the helmet ties;
Then seeks the fittest sapling for her need,
Where, fastened to its trunk, her mare may feed.

LVIII
The Spanish cavalier the stream beside
Arrived, who had pursued her traces there:
Angelica no sooner him espied,
Than she evanished clean, and spurred her mare:
The helm this while had dropt, but lay too wide
To be recovered of the flying fair.
As soon as sweet Angelica he saw,
Towards her full of rapture sprang Ferrau.

LIX
She disappeared, I say, as forms avaunt
At sleep's departure: toiling long and sore
He seeks the damsel there, 'twixt plant and plant,
Now can his wretched eyes behold her more.
Blaspheming his Mahound and Termagant,
And cursing every master of his lore,
Ferrau returned towards the sylvan fount,
Where lay on earth the helmet of the count.

LX

This he soon recognised, for here he read
Letters upon the margin, written fair,
Which how Orlando won the helmet said;
And from what champion took, and when and where.
With it the paynim armed his neck and head,
Who would not for his grief the prize forbear;
His grief for loss of her, conveyed from sight,
As disappear the phantoms of the night.

LXI

When in this goodly casque he was arrayed,
He deemed nought wanting to his full content,
But the discovery of the royal maid,
Who like a flash of lightning came and went:
For her he searches every greenwood shade,
And when all hope of finding her is spent,
He for the vain pursuit no longer tarries,
But to the Spanish camp returns near Paris;

LXII

Tempering the grief which glowed within his breast,
For such sore disappointment, with the thought
That he was with Orlando's morion blest,
As sworn. By good Anglante's count, when taught
That the false Saracen the prize possest,
Long time the Spanish knight was vainly sought;
Nor Roland took the helmet from his head,
Till he between two bridges laid him dead.

LXIII

Angelica thus, viewless and alone,
Speeds on her journey, but with troubled front;
Grieved for the helmet, in her haste foregone
On her departure from the grassy fount.
"Choosing to do what I should least have done,"

(She said) "I took his helmet from the count.
This for his first desert I well bestow;
A worthy recompense for all I owe!

LXIV
"With good intentions, as God knows, I wrought;
Though these an ill and different end produce;
I took the helmet only with the thought
To bring that deadly battle to a truce;
And not that this foul Spaniard what he sought
Should gain, or I to his intent conduce."
So she, lamenting, took herself to task
For having robbed Orlando of his casque.

LXV
By what appeared to her the meetest way,
Moody and ill-content she eastward pressed;
Ofttimes concealed, sometimes in face of day,
As seemed most opportune and pleased her best.
After much country seen, a forest gray
She reached, where, sorely wounded in mid breast,
Between two dead companions on the ground,
The royal maid a bleeding stripling found.

LXVI
But of Angelica I now no more
Shall speak, who first have many things to say;
Nor shall to the Circassian or the Moor
Give for long space a rhyme; thence called away
By good Anglante's prince, who wills, before
I of those others tell, I should display
The labours and the troubles he sustained,
Pursuing the great good he never gained.

LXVII
At the first city, whither he was brought
(Because to go concealed he had good care),

He a new helmet donned; but took no thought
What was the head-piece he designed to bear.
So safe is he in fairy spell, it nought
Imports, if hard or soft its temper were.
Orlando, covered thus, pursues the quest,
Nor him day, night, or rain, or sun arrest.

LXVIII
It was the hour that our of Ocean's bed
Dan Phoebus drew his dripping steeds, and high
And low, still scattering yellow flowers and red,
Aurora stained the heavens with various dye,
And Stars had cast their veils about their head,
Departing from their revels in the sky;
When passing on a day fair Paris near,
Orlando made his mighty worth appear.

LXIX
Two squadrons he encountered; one an old
Saracen, Manilardo clept, obeyed;
King of Noritia, whilom fierce and bold.
But fitter now to counsel than to aid.
The next beneath the standard was enrolled
Or Tremisena's monarch, who was said
'Mid Africans to be a perfect knight;
Alzirdo he by those who knew him, hight:

LXX
These, with the other Saracen array,
Cantoned throughout the winter months had lain,
Some near the city, some more far away,
All lodged nigh town or hamlet on the plain.
For since King Agramant had many a day
Spent in attacking Paris' walls in vain,
He (for no other means remained to try)
Would lastly with a siege the city ply;

LXXI

And to do this had people infinite:
Since he, beside the host that with him came,
And that of Spain which followed to the fight
The Spanish King Marsilius' oriflame,
Many of France did in his pay unite:
For all from Paris he to Arles's stream,
With part of Gascony, some straggling tower
Excepted, had reduced beneath his power.

LXXII

The quivering brook, as warmer breezes blew,
Beginning now from ice its waves to free,
And the fresh-springing grass and foliage new,
To cloathe again the field and greenwood tree,
All those King Agramant assembled, who
Had followed him in his prosperity;
To muster in review the armed swarm,
And give to his affairs a better form:

LXXIII

Hence did the King of Tremisen' repair,
With him who had Noritia in command,
To be in time at that full muster, where
Each squadron, good or bad, was to be scanned
Orlando thus by chance encountered there,
As I have told you, this united hand;
Who, as his usage was, went seeking her,
By whom he had been made Love's prisoner.

LXXIV

Alzirdo, as the approaching count he eyes,
Who in this world for valour has no peer,
With such a haughty front, and in such guise,
The God of war would less in arms appear,
The features known before astounded spies,

The fierce, disdainful glance and furious cheer;
And him esteems a knight of prowess high,
Which, fondly, he too sore desires to try.

LXXV
Arrogant, young, and of redoubted force,
Alzirdo was, and prized for dauntless mind;
Who bent to joust pricked forth his foaming horse,
Happier had he remained in line behind!
Met by Anglante's prince in middle course,
Who pierced his heart as they encountering joined.
Frighted, the lightened courser scoured the plain,
Without a rider to direct the rein.

LXXVI
Rises a sudden and a horrid cry,
And air on every side repeats the scream;
As his scared band the falling youth descry,
And issuing from his wound so wide a stream:
Disordered, they the count in fury ply,
And, raised to cut or thrust, their weapons gleam.
Against that flower of knights, their feathered reeds,
A thicker squadron yet in tempest speeds.

LXXVII
With sound like that, with which from hill repair,
Or from the champaign's flat the hurrying swine,
(If the Wolf, issue from his grot, or Bear,
Descending to the mountains' lower line,
Some bristly youngling take away and tear,
Who with loud squeal and grunt is heard to pine)
Came driving at the count the barbarous rout;
"Upon him!" and "upon him!" still their shout.

LXXVIII
At once spears, shafts, and swords, his corslet bore
By thousands, and as many pierce his shield.

This threatens on one side, and that before,
And those the ponderous mace behind him wield.
But he esteems the craven rout no more.
He, who did never yet to terror yield,
Than hungry Wolf in twilight makes account
To what the number of the flock may mount.

LXXIX
He held unsheathed that thundering sword in hand,
Which with so many foes has heaped the plain,
That he who thinks to count the slaughtered band,
Has undertaken, hard emprize and vain.
The road ran red, ensanguined by his brand,
And scarce capacious of the many slain.
For neither targe nor head-piece good defends,
Where fatal Durindana's blade descends.

LXXX
Nor safety cotton vest, nor cloths supply,
In thousand folds about the temples spread:
Nor only groan and lamentation fly
Through air, but shoulder, arm, and severed head,
Death roams the field in strange variety
Of horrid forms, and all inspiring dread;
And says, "For hundreds of my scythes may stand
His Durindana in Orlando's hand."

LXXXI
His ceaseless strokes scarce one the other wait:
Speedily all his foemen are in flight.
And when before they came at furious rate,
They hoped to swallow quick the single knight.
None is there who, in that unhappy straight,
Stops for his comrade, flying from the fight.
Here one man speeds afoot, one gallops there;
None stays to question if the road be fair.

LXXXII

His mirror Valour bore about, and here
Each blemish of the soul was seen confest:
None looked therein, except an aged peer,
Whose blood was chilled, but courage unreprest.
That death were better deems this cavalier
Than life in flight, and in disgrace possest:
I mean Noritia's king, who lays his lance
In rest against the paladin of France;

LXXXIII

He broke it on the border of the shield
Of the intrepid count, with stedfast hand,
Who, by the stroke unshaken, nothing reeled:
And smote the king, in passing, with his brand.
Him Fortune saved; for as Orlando wheeled
The blade, it turned, descending, in his hand.
Although an-edge he guides not still the sword,
Stunned from his saddle reels the paynim lord.

LXXXIV

Astounded from his saddle reels the king,
Nor him Orlando turns about to see.
He cuts, and cleaves, and slays his following;
Who all believe him at their backs to be.
As through the spacious air, with troubled wing,
The starlings from the daring merlin flee;
So, of that broken squadron, scattered round,
Some fly, some dip, and some fall flat to ground.

LXXXV

He ceased not his ensanguined blade to sway
Till living wight remained not in his view.
Orlando doubted to resume his way,
Although the country all about he knew.
Does he the right or left-hand road assay,

His thoughts still rove from what his steps pursue,
And he to seek the damsel is in dread
Through other path than that by which she fled.

LXXXVI
Through wood and field his courser did he goad,
Often inquiring for the royal dame:
Beside himself, he strayed beside his road,
And to the foot of rising mountain came,
Whence (it was night-time) through a fissure glowed
The distant flicker of a quivering flame.
Orlando to the rock approached, to spy
If there Angelica concealed might lie.

LXXXVII
As where low junipers o'er shade her lair,
Or in the stubble of the open lay,
What time the hunters seek the fearful hare
Through traversed woods, and through uncertain way,
— Lest peradventure she be hidden there,
They every bramble, every bush assay;
Even so, where hope the toiling warrior leads,
Searching his lady-love, Orlando speeds.

LXXXVIII
Pricking in haste towards that ray, the count
Arrived where in the wood the light was shed,
Forth-streaming from a crevice in the mount,
Within whose womb a spacious grotto spread;
And there, like wall or bank, discerned in front,
Of thorns and underwood a bristly bed,
To hide the grotto's inmates, and defend
From scathe or scorn, which others might intend.

LXXXIX
By day it had been hidden evermore;
But the clear flame betrayed the haunt by night.

Its use he guessed; but would the place explore,
And better certify himself by sight.
When he without had tied his Brigliador,
In silence to the grotto stole the knight;
Threading the shrubs; nor calling for a guide,
Entered the passage in the mountain's side.

XC
By a long flight of steps was the descent
Into the cave; where, in the rocky tomb,
Buried were living folk. Of wide extent,
The grot was chiselled into vaulted room;
Nor was, although its entrance little lent,
All daylight wanting to disperse the gloom:
For much was furnished by a window dight,
Within a natural fissure on the right.

XCI
In the mid cave, beside a fire was seen
A gentle maid of pleasing look and guise;
Who seemed to Roland little past fifteen,
As far as at first sight he might surmise.
With that so fair she made the rugged scene
Seem in the warrior's sight a paradise.
Although this while her eyes with tears o'erflow,
Clear tokens of a heart oppressed with woe.

XCII
An aged dame was with her, and the pair
Wrangled, as oftentimes is women's way;
But when the County was descending there,
Concluded the dispute and wordy fray.
Orlando hastens to salute them fair
(As still is due to womankind) and they
To welcome him rise lightly form their seat,
And with benign return the warrior greet.

XCIII
'Tis true, that when that sudden voice they hear,
Somedeal confused in look they seem to be,
At the same time beholding thus appear
So fierce a wight, and harnessed cap-a-pee.
"What wight" (demands Anglantes' cavalier)
So barbarous is, and void of courtesy,
That he keeps buried, in this rude repair,
A face so gentle and so passing fair?"

XCIV
With pain the virgin to the count replies,
As he inquires of her unhappy doom,
In sweet and broken accents, which by sighs
Impelled, through rows of pearl and coral come:
And between rose and lily, from her eyes
Tears fall so fast, she needs must swallow some.
In other canto, sir, be pleased to attend
The rest, for here 'tis time my strain should end.

CANTO 13

ARGUMENT
The Count Orlando of the damsel bland
Who loves Zerbino, hears the piteous woes.
Next puts to death the felons with his hand
Who pent her there. Duke Aymon's daughter goes,
Seeking Rogero, where so large a band
The old Atlantes' magic walls enclose.
Her he impounds, deceived by fictions new.
Agramant ranks his army for review.

I
Those ancient cavaliers right happy were,
Born in an age, when, in the gloomy wood,

In valley, and in cave, wherein the bear,
Serpent, or lion, hid their savage brood,
They could find that, which now in palace rare
Is hardly found by judges proved and good;
Women, to wit, who in their freshest days
Of beauty worthily deserve the praise.

II
Above I told you how a gentle maid
Orlando had discovered under ground,
And asked, by whom she thither was conveyed?
Pursuing now my tale, I tell, how drowned
In grief (her speech by many a sob delayed),
The damsel fair, in sweet and softest sound,
Summing them with what brevity she might,
Her ills recounted to Anglantes' knight.

III
"Though I am sure," she said, "O cavalier,
To suffer punishment for what I say;
Because I know, to him who pens me here,
This woman quickly will the fact display;
I would not but thou shouldst the story hear.
— And let my wretched life the forfeit pay!
For what can wait me better than that he,
My gaoler, should one day my death decree?

IV
"Lo! I am Isabel, who once was styled
The daughter of Gallicia's hapless king:
I said aright who was; but now the child
(No longer his) of care and suffering:
The fault of Love, by whom I was beguiled;
For against him alone this charge I bring.
Who sweetly, at the first, our wish applauds,
And weaves in secret but deceit and frauds.

V

"Whilom I lived, content in Fortune's smile,
Rich, blameless, fair, and young; to sad reverse
Condemned, I now am wretched, poor, and vile,
And in worse case, if any yet be worse.
But it is fitting, I to thee this while
From their first root my troubles should rehearse.
And it will soothe me, though of thee I borrow
No help, that thou compassionate my sorrow.

VI

"My father in his city of Bayonne,
(To-day will be twelve months) a tourney dight;
Hence, led by spreading rumour to our town,
To joust, from different lands came many a knight;
Mid these (was it his manifest renown,
Or was it love which so deceived my sight)
Praise in my eyes alone Zerbino won,
Who was the mighty king of Scotland's son.

VII

"When him I after in the field espied,
Performing wondrous feats of chivalry,
I was surprised by Love, ere I descried
That freedom in my Love, so rash a guide,
I lay this unction to my phantasy,
That no unseemly place my heart possest,
Fixed on the worthiest in the world and best.

VIII

"In beauty and in valour's boast above
Those other lords the Scottish prince stood high.
He showed me, and, I think, be bore me love,
And left no less an ardent flame than I.
Nor lacked there one who did between us move,

To speak our common wishes frequently,
So could we still in heart and mind unite,
Although disjoined from one another's sight.

IX
"Hence, when concluded was the festal show,
And to his home Zerbino was returned,
If thou know'st what is love, thou well may'st know
How night and day I for the warrior yearned;
And was assured, no less on him did prey
The flame, that in his constant bosom burned.
He, save a way to have me with him, nought
For solace of his restless passion sought.

X
"For different faith forbade him (on my side
I was a saracen, a Christian he)
To ask me of my father as a bride,
By stealth he purposed to elope with me.
Amid green fields, our wealthy town beside,
I had a garden, seated by the sea,
Upon the pleasant shore; from whence the eye
Might ocean and the hills about descry.

XI
"A fitting place to effect what different creed
And law forbade us, he esteemed this site,
And showed the order taken for the deed,
Which was to make our future life's delight;
And how, near Santa Martha, for our need,
A bark was with arm'd men in ambush dight,
Under Sir Odoric of Biscay's command;
A leader he, approved by sea and land!

XII
"Unable in his person this to do,
For by his father he was forced to wend

In succour of the king of France, in lieu
This Odoric for the purpose he would send;
Chosen, of all his faithful friends and true,
As his most faithful and his truest friend:
And such had been, if benefits could bind
And goodly deeds the friendship of mankind.

XIII
"At the time fixed to bear me thence away,
This chief would anchor on the destined ground.
— And thus it was arrived the wished for day,
Then I of them was in my garden found.
Sir Odoric, at night, with fair array
Of valiant men, by land and sea renowned,
In the near river from his bark descends,
And thence in silence to my garden wends.

XIV
"To the pitched bark with me his party sped,
Before the city knew what was at hand;
Some of the house, disarmed and naked, fled,
And some were slain; while of the helpless band,
With me, another part was captive led.
So was I severed from my native land,
Hoping in brief Zerbino to possess,
I cannot tell thee with what happiness.

XV
"Scarcely was Mongia by our galley doubled,
Ere a squall took us on the larboard side,
Which round about the clear horizon troubled,
And stirred and tost heaven-high the foaming tide.
Smote with a north-west wind, next, ocean bubbled,
Which on her other beam the vessel plied:
This evermore increases, with such force,
Starboard or larboard, boots not which our course.

XVI

"It steads not to strike sail, nor lash the mast,
Lowered on the gang-board, nor our castles fell;
The bark, in our despite, is hurried fast
Towards the pointed rocks about Rochelle:
Save He, above, assist us at the last,
The cruel storm will us ashore impel;
Driven thither by ill wind with mightier speed
Than ever bow-string gave to whistling reed.

XVII

"Our peril well does the Biscayan note,
And tries what often has an evil end;
Lowers down the galley's skiff, and, when afloat,
Descends into it, and makes me descend:
Two follow, and a troop would throng the boat,
Did not the first prevent them, and defend
The entrance with their naked faulchions; we
Sever the rope forthwith, and put to sea.

XVIII

"Driven landward, on the shore we safely light
Who in the skiff embarked; while of our band
The rest in the split vessel sink outright;
Our goods sea-swallowed all. Upon the strand
To Eternal Love, To Goodness Infinite,
I offer up my thanks, with outstretched hand,
That I was doomed not 'mid the watery roar
To perish, nor behold Zerbino more.

XIX

"Though I had left on shipboard matters rare,
And precious in their nature, gem and vest,
So I might hope Zerbino's lot to share,
I was content the sea should have the rest.
No dwelling on the beach appears, nor there

Is any pathway seen, by footsteps pressed;
Only a hill, whose woody top is beat
By ceaseless winds, the waters bathe its feet.

XX
"Here the fell tyrant Love, aye prompt to range,
And faithless to his every promise still,
Who watches ever how he may derange
And mar our every reasonable will,
Converts, with woeful and disastrous change,
My comfort to despair, my good to ill:
For he, in whom Zerbino put his trust,
Cooled in his loyal faith, and burned with lust.

XXI
"Whether he his desire had nursed at sea,
And had not dared exhibit it before;
Or that it sprung from opportunity,
Suggested by that solitary shore;
Without more pause, in that lone desert, he
Would sate his greedy passion; but forbore
Till he of one could rid him, of the twain,
Who in the boat with us had scaped the main.

XXII
"A man of Scotland he, Almonio hight,
Who to Zerbino seemed great faith to bear;
And as a perfect warrior by the knight,
Praised, when to Odoric given, his trust to share:
To him (the Spaniard said) it were a slight
If I unto Rochelle afoot should fare;
And prayed, that he before would thither speed,
And forward thence some hackney, for my need.

XXIII
"Almonio, who in this suspects no ill,
Forthwith, before our party, wends his way

To the town, hidden by the wooded hill,
And which not more than six miles distant lay.
To the other finally his wicked will
Sir Odoric took courage to display;
As well because he could not rid him thence,
As that in him he had great confidence.

XXIV
"He that remained with us, of whom I said
Before, Corebo was of Bilbao hight,
Who with him under the same roof was bred
From infancy, and the ungrateful wight
Deemed that the thought he harboured in his head,
He could impart in safety to the knight,
Who would prefer, neglected of his trust,
The pleasure of his friend to what was just.

XXV
"Not without high disdain Corebo heard
(Who kind and courteous was) the Biscayneer,
And termed him traitor; and by deed and word
Withstood the purpose of his foul compeer.
This mighty wrath in either warrior stirred;
In sign whereof their naked brands they rear.
At sight of their drawn swords, in panic, I
Turn shortly through the gloomy wood to fly.

XXVI
"Sir Odoric in war well taught and bred,
Gained in few blows such vantage in the fray,
He left Corebo on the field for dead,
And, following in my steps, pursued my way.
Love lent to him (unless I am misled)
Pinions, that he might overtake his prey;
And many a prayer and glozing flattery taught,
Wherewith I to compliance might be wrought.

XXVII

"But all in vain, for I was fixed and bent,
Rather than sate his ill desire, to die.
When menace had by him been vainly spent,
And every prayer and every flattery,
He would by open force his will content;
Nor boots it aught that I entreaties try; —
Of his lord's faith in him the wretch remind,
And how myself I to his hands resigned.

XXVIII

"When I perceived that fruitless was my prayer,
And that I could not hope for other aid;
For he assailed me like a famished bear,
With hands and feet I fierce resistance made,
As he more brutal waxed, and plucked his hair,
And with my teeth and nails his visage flayed:
This while I vent such lamentable cries,
The clamour echoes to the starry skies.

XXIX

"Were they by chance conducted, or my shriek,
Which might have well been heard a league around,
(Or, was it they were wont the shore to seek,
When any vessel split or ran aground)
I saw a crowd appear upon the peak,
Which, to the sea descending, towards us wound.
Them the Biscayan say, and at the sight
Abandoned his design, and turned to flight.

XXX

"This rabble, sir, against that treacherous man
Comes to my aid; but in such guise, that I
The homely saw, of falling from the pan
Into the fire beneath, but verify.
'Tis true so lost I was not, nor that clan

Accursed with minds of such iniquity,
That they to violate my person sought;
Though nothing good or virtuous on them wrought:

XXXI
"But that they knew, for me preserved a maid,
As yet I am, they higher price might crave.
Eight months are past, the ninth arrived, since, stayed
By them, alive I languish in this grave.
All hope is lost of my Zerbino's aid:
For from their speech I gather, as a slave,
I am bartered to a merchant for his gold;
By whom I to the sultan shall be sold."

XXXII
The gentle damsel so her tale pursues,
While sobs and sighs oft interposing break
Her soft angelic voice, which might infuse
Compassion into asp, or venomed snake.
What time she so her piteous grief renews,
Or haply does her bitter anguish slake,
Some twenty men the gloomy cavern fill;
This armed with hunting-spear, and that with bill.

XXXIII
With squinting look and dark, and but one eye,
The leader of the troop, of brutish cheer
Was he, the foremost of the company;
By a blow blinded, which from nose to ear
Had cleft his jaw: when he did so descry
Seated beside the maid, that cavalier,
He turned about and said: "Lo! in the net
Another bird for whom it was not set!"

XXXIV
Then to the County cried: "I never knew
A man more opportune my wants to stead;

I know not whether any one to you
Perchance may have announced my pressing need
Of such fair arms, — or you conjectured true, —
As well as of that goodly sable weed.
You verily arrived in season are
My needs (pursued the losel) to repair."

XXXV
With bitter smile, upstarting on his feet,
Orlando to the ruffian made reply:
"Thou at a price at which no chapman treat,
Unmarked in merchant's books, these arms shalt buy."
With that he snatched a brand, which, full of heat
And smoke, was smouldering in the chimney nigh,
Threw it, and smote by chance the knave half blind,
Where with the nose the meeting brows confined.

XXXVI
The brand discharged by him, hit either brow,
But most severely on the left did smite;
For that ill feature perished by the blow,
Which was the thief's sole minister of light.
Nor is the stroke content to blind the foe;
Unsated, save it register his sprite
Among those damned souls, whom Charon keeps,
With their companions, plunged in boiling deeps.

XXXVII
A spacious table in mid cavern stood,
Two palms in thickness, in its figure square;
Propt on one huge, ill fashioned food and rude,
Which held the thief and all who harboured there.
Even with such freedom as his dart of wood
We mark the nimble Spaniard launch through air,
The heavy table Roland seized and threw,
Where, crowded close together, stood the crew.

XXXVIII
One had his belly crushed, and one his breast;
Another head or arm, or leg and thigh.
Whence some were slain outright, and maimed the rest,
While he who was least injured sought to fly.
'Tis so sometimes, with heavy stone oppressed,
A knot of slimy snakes is seen to lie,
With battered heads and loins where, winter done,
They lick their scales, rejoicing in the sun.

XXXIX
I could not say what mischiefs these offend;
One dies, and one departs without its tail;
Another crippled cannot move an-end,
And wriggling wreathes its length without avail:
While this, whom more propitious saints befriend,
Safe through the grass drags off its slimy trail.
Dire was the stroke; yet should no wonder breed,
Since good Orlando's arm achieved the deed.

XL
Those whom the board had little maimed or nought,
(Turpin says there were seven) in craven wise,
Their safety in their feet, yet vainly, sought;
For to the cavern's door Orlando hies.
And having them without resistance caught,
Fast with a rope their hands behind them ties;
A rope, which in the cavern on the ground,
Convenient for his purpose he had found.

XLI
He after drags them bound without the cave,
Where an old service-tree its shadow throws.
Orlando lops the branches with his glaive,
And hangs the thieves, a banquet for the crows:
Nor chain and crook for such a deed did crave:

For ready hooks the tree itself bestows,
To purge the world; where by the chin up-hung,
These, on the branches, bold Orlando strung.

XLII
The ancient woman, the assassin's friend,
Escapes when she perceives that all are dead,
And, threading that green labyrinth without end,
Laments, and plucks the hair from off her head,
By fear impelled, through paths which sore offend
Her feet, till she, beside a river's bed,
Encounters with a warrior: but to say
Who was the stranger champion I delay;

XLIII
And turn to her, who to the count applied,
Praying he would not leave her there alone,
And vowed to follow whither he would guide.
Orlando her consoles in courteous tone:
And thence, when, with a wreath of roses tied
About her brows, and robed in purple gown,
On wonted journey white Aurora starts,
The paladin with Isabel departs.

XLIV
Without encountering aught that might appear
Worthy of note, they wended many a day;
And finally the twain a cavalier,
As prisoner led, encountered by the way.
Who shall be told; but, tale to you as dear
Now calls me from the beaten path away;
— Of Aymon's daughter, — whom I left above,
Languid and lost in all the pains of love.

XLV
The beauteous lady who desires in vain,
Rogero should not his return delay,

Lies in Marseilles, from whence the paynim train
She harasses, nigh each returning day;
(What time they robbing aye, by hill and plain,
Scower fruitful Languedoc and Provence gay)
And the true duty executes aright
Of a sage leader and a valiant knight.

XLVI
The time long past, she, lying in that place,
Had hoped that her Rogero would appear,
She, not beholding him in all that space,
Of many evil chances lived in fear.
One day, mid others that her woeful case
The lady wept alone, to her drew near
The dame, who with that healing ring made sound
The bosom rankling with Alcina's wound.

XLVII
When her she saw, without her love returned,
(Such time elapsed, her mission incomplete),
Sore trembling, faint, and pale, her heart so yearned,
She scarce had strength to stand upon her feet.
But the enchantress kind, when she discerned
Her fear, advanced with smiles the maid to meet;
And to console her such glad visage wore
As messenger who joyful tidings bore.

XLVIII
"Fear not for thy Rogero: he is well
And safe (she cried), and ever worships thee,
As wonted; but thy foe, that wizard fell,
Him yet again deprives of liberty.
And it behoves thee now to climb the sell,
Would'st thou posses him, and to follow me;
For if thou wendest with me, I will lead
Whither, by thee Rogero shall be freed."

XLIX

And next pursued, relating to her all
The frauds and magic of Atlantes hoar,
That wearing her fair face, who seemed the thrall
Of an ill giant, him had through the door
Of gold, enticed into the enchanted hall,
And after disappeared, the youth before;
And told how dames and cavaliers he cheats
Who thither make resort, with like deceits.

L

Seeing the sage, all think they see a squire,
Companion, lady-love, or absent friend;
Whatever is each several wight's desire:
Since to our scope our wishes never tend.
Hence searching every where, themselves they tire
With labour sore, and frustrate of their end;
And cannot, (so Desire and Hope deceive),
Without the missing good, that palace leave.

LI

"As soon as thou (pursued the dame) art near
The place where he has built the magic seat,
Resembling thy Rogero in his cheer
And every look, Atlantes thee shall meet,
And make himself by his ill art appear
As suffering from some stronger arm defeat;
That thou may'st aid him in the peril feigned,
And thus among those others be detained.

LII

"To the end thou may'st escape his ambush, where
So many and so many, thus betrayed,
Have fallen; though he Rogero seem, beware
To lend him faith, who will demand thine aid:
Nor, when the sage presents himself, forbear

To take his worthless life with lifted blade.
Nor think to slay Rogero with the blow,
But him who works thee still such cruel woe.

LIII
"Hard will it seem to slay, full well I know,
The wight, in whom Rogero you descry:
But, for truth is not in the lying show,
Trust not to sight where magic blears the eye.
Fix, ere with me you to the forest go,
To change not when the traitorous foe is nigh:
For never shall with you Rogero wive,
If weakly you the wizard leave alive."

LIV
The valorous maid with the intent to slay
The false enchanter, on her plan decides,
Snatches her arms, and follows on her way
Melissa sage, in whom she so confides,
And thus, by fruitful field or forest gray,
Her by forced journeys that enchantress guides;
And studies to beguile their weary course
Ever, as best she may, with sweet discourse:

LV
And as the fairest topic of all those
Which might be grateful to the damsel's ear,
Her future offspring and Rogero's chose
(A race of demigods) in prince and peer.
For as Melissa all the secrets knows
Of the eternal gods who rule our sphere,
The good enchantress can discover all
Which should in many ages hence befall.

LVI
"Oh! my best guide." exclaimed the damsel bold
To the weird-woman that to aid her came,

"As thou hast many years before foretold
Men who shall glorify my race and name,
So now I pray thee, lady, to unfold
The praise and virtues of some noble dame,
If from my lineage any such shall rise."
To whom Melissa courteously replies:

LVII
"Chaste dames of thee descended I survey,
Mothers of those who wear imperial crown,
And mighty kings; the column and the stay
Of glorious realms and houses of renown.
And as thy sons will shine in arms, so they
Will no less fame deserve in female gown,
With piety and sovereign prudence graced,
And noble hearts, incomparably chaste.

LVIII
"And if at length, I should relate to thee
The praise of all who from thy root ascend,
Too long my tale would hold, nor do I see
Whom I could pass, where all to fame pretend.
But from a thousand I some two or three
Will choose, because my tale may have an end.
Why was not in the cave thy wish made known,
Where I their shadows might as well have shown?

LIX
"To hear of one of thy famed race prepare,
Whom liberal studies and good works engage;
Of whom, I know not well, if she more fair
May be entitled, or more chaste and sage;
The noble-minded Isabel, who, where
It stands on Mincius' bank, in other age
Shall gild the town, of Ocnus' mother hight,
With her own glorious rays by day and night;

LX
"Where, with her worthiest consort she will strain,
In honoured and in splendid rivalry,
Which best shall prize the virtues' goodly train,
And widest ope the gates to courtesy.
If he by Taro, and in Naples' reign,
('Tis said), from Gauls delivered Italy,
'Twill be replied. Penelope the chaste,
As such, was not beneath Ulysses placed.

LXI
"Great things and many thus I sum in few
Of this brave dame, and others leave behind:
Which when I from the vulgar herd withdrew,
Sage Merlin from the hollow stone divined.
For I should leave old Typhis out of view,
If on such sea I launched before the wind:
And with this finish my prophetic strain,
— All blessings on her head the skies will rain.

LXII
"With her shall be her sister Beatrice,
Whose fortunes well shall with her name accord;
Who, while she lives, not only shall not miss
What good the heavens to those below afford,
But make, with her, partaker of her bliss,
First among wealthy dukes, her cherished lord;
Who shall, when she from hence receives her call,
Into the lowest depth of misery fall.

LXIII
"Viscontis' serpents will be held in dread,
And Moro and Sforza, while this dame shall be,
From Hyperborean snows to billows red;
From Ind to hills, which to a double sea
Afford a passage; and, the lady dead,

To the sore mischief of all Italy,
Will with the Insubri into slavery fall;
And men shall sovereign wisdom fortune call.

LXIV
"Other the same illustrious name will bear,
And who will flourish many years before.
Pannonia's garland one of these shall wear.
Another matron on the Ausonian shore,
When she shall be released from earthly care,
Men will among the blessed saints adore;
With incense will approach the dame divine,
And hang with votive images her shrine.

LXV
"The others I shall pass in silence by,
For 'twere too much (as said before) to sound
Their fame: though each might well deserve, that high
Heroic trump should in her praise be wound.
Hence the Biancas and Lucretias I
And Constances and more reserve; who found,
Or else repair, upon Italian land,
Illustrious houses with supporting hand.

LXVI
"Thy race, which shall all else in this excel,
In the rare fortune of its women thrives;
Nor of its daughters' honour more I tell
Than of the lofty virtue of its wives:
And that thou may'st take note of this as well,
Which Merlin said of thy descendents' lives,
(Haply that I the story might narrate)
This I no little covet to relate.

LXVII
"Of good Richarda first shall be my strain,
Mirror of chastity and fortitude,

Who, young, remains a widow, in disdain
Of fortune: (that which oft awaits the good)
Exiles, and cheated of their father's reign,
She shall behold the children of her blood
Wandering into the clutches of their foe;
Yet find at last a quittance for her woe.

LXVIII

"Nor sprung from the ancient root of Aragon,
I of the gorgeous queen will silent be;
Than whom more prudent or more chaste is none,
Renowned in Greek or Latin history;
Nor who so fortunate a course will run,
After that, by divine election, she
Shall with the goodly race of princes swell,
Alphonso, Hyppolite, and Isabel.

LXIX

"The prudent Eleanour is this: a spray
Which will be grafted on thy happy tree.
What of the fruitful stepchild shall I say,
Who in succession next to her I see,
Lucretia Borgia? who, from day to day,
Shall wax in beauty, virtue, chastity,
And fortune, that like youthful plant will shoot,
Which into yielding soil has struck its root.

LXX

"As tin by silver, brass by gold, as Corn-
Poppy beside the deeply-crimsoning rose,
Willow by laurel evergreen, as shorn
Of light, stained glass by gem that richly glows,
— So by this dame I honour yet unborn,
Each hitherto distinguished matron shows;
For beauty and for prudence claiming place,
And all praise-worthy excellence and grace.

LXXI

"And above every other noble praise,
Which shall distinguished her alive or dead,
Is that by her shall be, through kingly ways,
Her Hercules and other children led;
Who thus the seeds of worth in early days,
To bloom in council and in camp, will shed.
For long wine's savour lingers in the wood
Of the new vessel, whether bad or good.

LXXII

"Nor the step-daughter of this noble dame,
Will I, Renata, hight of France, forget,
Of Louis born, twelfth monarch of his name,
And Bretagne's pride; all virtues ever yet
Bestowed on woman, since the ruddy flame
Has warmed, or water had the power to wet,
Or overhead the circling heavens have rolled,
United in Renata I behold.

LXXIII

" 'Twere long to tell of Alda de Sansogna,
Or of Celano's countess in this string,
Or Blanche Maria, stiled of Catalonia;
Or her, the daughter of Sicilia's king,
Or of the beauteous Lippa de Bologna,
Or more, with whose renown the world shall ring,
To speak whose separate praise with fitting lore,
Were to attempt a sea without a shore."

LXXIV

When of the larger portion of her seed
The king enchantress at full ease had told,
And oft and oft rehearsed, amid the rede,
What arts Rogero to the wizard's hold
Had drawn, Melissa halted near the mead

Where stood the mansion of Atlantes old,
Nor would approach the magic dome more nigh,
Lest her the false magician should espy.

LXXV
And yet again advised the martial maid,
(Counsel she had a thousand times bestowed)
Then left, Nor Bradamant through greenwood shade
More than two miles in narrow path had rode,
Before, by two fierce giants overlaid,
She saw a knight, who like Rogero showed,
So closely pressed, and labouring sore for breath,
That he appeared well nigh reduced to death.

LXXVI
When she beheld him in such perilous strait,
Who of Rogero all the tokens wore,
She quickly lost the faith she nourished late,
Quickly her every fair design forbore.
She weens Melissa bears Rogero hate,
For some new injury unheard before:
And with unheard of hate and wrong, her foe
Would by her hand destroy who loves him so.

LXXVII
She cried, "And is not this Rogero, who
Aye present to my heart, is now to sight?
If 'tis not him whom I agnize and view.
Whom e'er shall I agnize or view aright?
Why should I other's judgment deem more true
Than the belief that's warranted by sight?
Even without eyes, and by my heart alone,
If he were near or distant, would be shown."

LXXVIII
While so the damsel thinks, a voice she hears,
Which, like Rogero's, seems for aid to cry;

At the same time, the worsted knight appears
To slack the bridle and the rowels ply:
While at full speed the goaded courser clears
His ground, pursued by either enemy.
Nor paused the dame, in following them who sought
His life, till to the enchanted palace brought.

LXXIX
Of which no sooner has she past the door,
Than she is cheated by the common show.
Each crooked way or straight her feet explore
Within it and without, above, below;
Nor rests she night or day, so strong the lore
Of the enchanter, who has ordered so,
She (though they still encounter and confer)
Knows not Rogero, nor Rogero her.

LXXX
But leave we Bradamant, nor grieve, O ye
Who hear, that she is prisoned by the spell,
Since her in fitting time I shall set free,
And good Rogero, from the dome as well,
As taste is quickened by variety,
So it appears that, in the things I tell,
The wider here and there my story ranges,
It will be found less tedious for its changes.

LXXXI
Meseems that I have many threads to clear
In the great web I labour evermore;
And therefore be ye not displeased to hear
How, all dislodged, the squadrons of the Moor,
Threatening the golden lines loud, appear
In arms, the royal Agramant before:
Who bids for a review his army post,
Willing to know the numbers of his host.

LXXXII
For besides horse and foot, in the campaign
Sore thinned, whose numbers were to be supplied,
Had many captains, and those good, of Spain,
Of Libya, and of Aethiopia, died;
And thus the nations, and the various train,
Wandered without a ruler or a guide.
To give to each its head and order due,
The ample camp is mustered in review.

LXXXIII
To fill the squadrons ravaged by the sword,
In those fierce battles and those conflicts dread,
This to his Spain, to his Africa that lord,
Sent to recruit, where well their files they fed;
And next distributed the paynim horde
Under their proper captains, ranged and led.
I, with your leave, till other strain, delay
The order of the muster to display.

CANTO 14

ARGUMENT
Two squadrons lack of those which muster under
King Agramant, by single Roland slain;
Hence furious Mandricardo, full of wonder
And envy, seeks the count by hill and plain:
Next joys himself with Doralice; such plunder,
Aided by heaven, his valiant arms obtain.
Rinaldo comes, with the angel-guide before,
To Paris, now assaulted by the Moor.

I
In many a fierce assault and conflict dread,
'Twixt Spain and Afric and their Gallic foe,

Countless had been the slain, whose bodies fed
The ravening eagle, wolf, and greedy crow;
But though the Franks had worse in warfare sped,
Forced all the champaigne country to forego,
This had the paynims purchased at the cost
Of more good princes and bold barons lost.

II
So bloody was the price of victory,
Small ground was left them triumphs to prepare;
And if, unconquered Duke Alphonso, we
May modern things with ancient deeds compare,
The battle, whose illustrious palm may be
Well worthily assigned to you to wear,
At whose remembrance sad Ravenna trembles,
And aye shall weep her loss, this field resembles.

III
When the Calesians and the Picards yielding,
And troops of Normandy and Aquitaine,
You, with your valiant arms their squadrons shielding,
Stormed the almost victorious flags of Spain;
And those bold youths their trenchant weapons wielding,
Through parted squadrons, followed in your train;
Who on that day deserved you should accord,
For honoured gifts, the gilded spur and sword.

IV
You, with such glorious hearts, who were not slow
To follow, nor far off, the gorgeous oak
Seized, and shook down the golden acorns so,
And so the red and yellow truncheon broke,
That we to you our festive laurels owe,
And the fair lily, rescued from its stroke;
Another wreath may round your temples bloom,
In that Fabricius you preserved to Rome.

V

Rome's mighty column, by your valiant hand
Taken and kept entire, more praise has shed
On you, than if the predatory band
Had routed by your single valour bled,
Of all who flocked to fat Ravenna's land,
Or masterless, without a banner fled,
Of Arragon, Castile, or of Navarre;
When vain was lance or cannon's thundering car.

VI

This dear-bought victory brought more relief
Than joy, by its event too much outweighed,
The loss of that French captain and our chief,
Whom dead we on the fatal field surveyed;
And swallowed in one storm, for further grief,
So many glorious princes, who, arrayed
For safeguard of their own, or neighbouring lands,
Had poured through, frozen Alps their friendly bands.

VII

Our present safety, and life held in fear,
We see assured us by this victory,
That saved us from the wintry tempest drear,
Which would have whelmed us from Jove's angry sky.
But ill can we rejoice, while yet the tear
Is standing in full many a widow's eye,
Who weeping and attired in sable, vents,
Throughout all grieving France, her loud laments.

VIII

'Tis meet King Lewis should find new supplies
Of chiefs by whom his troops may be arrayed,
Who for the lilies' honour shall chastise
The hands which so rapaciously have preyed;
Who brethren, black and white, in shameful wise,

Have outraged, sister, mother, wife, and maid,
And cast on earth Christ's sacrament divine,
With the intent to thieve his silver shrine.

IX
Hadst thou not made resistance to thy foe,
Better, Ravenna, had it been for thee,
And thou been warned by Brescia's fate, than so
Thine should Faenza warn and Rimini.
O Lewis, bid good old Trivulzio go
With thine, and to thy bands example be,
And tell what ills such license still has bred,
Heaping our ample Italy with dead.

X
As the illustrious King of France has need
Of captains to supply his leaders lost,
So the two kings who Spain and Afric lead,
To give new order to the double host,
Resolve their bands should muster on the mead,
From winter lodgings moved and various post;
That they may furnish, as their wants demand,
A guide and government to every band.

XI
Marsilius first, and after Agramant,
Passing it troop by troop their army scan.
The Catalonians, who their captain vaunt
In Doriphoebus, muster in the van;
And next, without their monarch Fulvirant,
Erst killed by good Rinaldo, comes the clan
Of bold Navarre; whose guideless band to steer
The King of Spain appoints Sir Isolier.

XII
With Balugantes Leon's race comes on,
The Algarbi governed by Grandonio wheel.

The brother of Marsilius, Falsiron,
Brings up with him the power of Less Castile.
They follow Madarasso's gonfalon,
Who have left Malaga and fair Seville,
'Twixt fruitful Cordova and Cadiz-bay,
Where through green banks the Betis winds its way.

XIII
Stordilane, Tessira, and Baricond,
After each other, next their forces stirred;
This in Grenada, that in Lisbon crowned;
Majorca was obedient to the third.
Larbino had Lisbon ruled, whose golden round
Was at his death on Tessira conferred;
His kinsman he: Gallicia came in guide
Or Serpentine, who Mericold supplied.

XIV
They of Toledo and of Calatrave,
Who erst with Sinnagon's broad banner spread,
Marched, and the multitude who drink and lave
Their limbs in chrystal Guadiana's bed,
Came thither, under Matalista brave;
Beneath Bianzardin, their common head,
Astorga, Salamanca, Placenza,
With Avila, Zamorra, and Palenza.

XV
The household-troops which guard Marsilius' state,
And Saragossa's men, Ferrau commands;
And in this force, well-sheathed in mail and plate,
Bold Malgarine and Balinverno stands;
Morgant and Malzarise, whom common fate
Had both condemned to dwell in foreign lands,
Who, when dethroned, had to Marsilius' court
(There hospitably harboured) made resort.

XVI

Follicon, Kind Marsilius' bastard, hies
With valiant Doricont; amid this horde,
Bavartes, Analard, and Argalise,
And Archidantes, the Saguntine lord.
Here, Malagur, in ready cunning wise,
And Ammirant and Langhiran the sword
Unsheath, and march; of whom I shall endite,
When it is time, their prowess to recite.

XVII

When so had filed the warlike host of Spain
In fair review before King Agramant,
Appeared King Oran with his martial train,
Who might almost a giant's stature vaunt;
Next they who weep their Martasino, slain
By the avenging sword of Bradamant,
King of the Garamantes, and lament
That woman triumphs in their monarch spent.

XVIII

Marmonda's men next past the royal Moor,
Who left Argosto dead on Gascon meads;
And this unguided band, like that before,
As well as the fourth troop, a captain needs.
Although King Agramant has little store
Of chiefs, he feigns a choice, and thinks; next speeds
Buraldo, Ormida, and Arganio tried,
Where needing, the unordered troops to guide.

XIX

He give Arganio charge of Libicane,
Who wept the sable Dudrinasso dead.
Brunello guides the men of Tingitane,
With cloudy countenance and drooping head;
Who since he in the wooded mountain-chain

(Nigh where Atlantes dwelt), to her he led,
Fair Bradamant, had lost the virtuous ring,
Had lived in the displeasure of his king;

XX
And but that Ferrau's brother Isolier,
Who fastened to a stem had found him there,
Made to King Agramant the truth appear,
He from the gallows-tree had swung in air:
Already fastened was the noose, and near
The caitiff's fate, when at the many's prayer
The king bade loose him; but reprieving, swore,
For his first fault to hang, offending more.

XXI
Thus, not without a cause, Brunello pined,
And showed a mournful face, and hung his head.
Next Farurantes; to whose care consigned,
Maurina's valiant horse and footmen tread.
The new-made king Libanio comes behind,
By whom are Constatina's people led:
Since Agramant the crown and staff of gold,
Once Pinador's, had given to him to hold.

XXII
Hesperia's people come with Soridan,
With Dorilon the men of Setta ride;
The Nasamonians troop with Pulian,
And Agricaltes is Ammonia's guide.
Malabupherso rules o'er Fezzan's clan,
And Finaduro leads the band supplied
By the Canary Islands and Morocco:
Balastro fills the place of king Tardocco.

XXIII
Next Mulga and Arzilla's legions two.
The first beneath their ancient captains wend;

The second troop without a leader, who
Are given to Corineus, the sovereign's friend.
So (late Tanphirion's) Almonsilla's crew,
To a new monarch in Caichus bend.
Goetulia is bestowed on Rhimedont,
And Cosca comes in charge of Balinfront.

XXIV
Ruled by Clarindo, Bolga's people go,
Who fills the valiant Mirabaldo's post:
Him Baliverso, whom I'd have you know
For the worst ribald in that ample host,
Succeeded next. I think not, 'mid that show,
The bannered camp a firmer troop could boast
Than that which followed in Sobrino's care;
Nor Saracen than him more wise and ware.

XXV
Gualciotto dead, Bellamarina's crew,
(His vassals) serve, the sovereign of Algiers,
King Rodomont, of Sarza; that anew
Brought up a band of foot and cavaliers:
Whom, when the cloudy sun his rays withdrew
Beneath the Centaur and the Goat, his spears
There to recruit, was sent to the Afric shore
By Agramant, returned three days before.

XXVI
There was no Saracen of bolder strain,
Of all the chiefs who Moorish squadrons led;
And Paris-town (nor is the terror vain)
More of the puissant warrior stands in dread
Than of King Agramant and all the train,
Which he, or the renowned Marsilius head;
And amid all that mighty muster, more
Than others, hatred to our faith he bore.

XXVII

Prusion is the Alvaracchia's king: below
King Dardinello's flag Zumara's power
Is ranged. I wot not, I, if owl or crow,
Or other bird ill-omened, which from tower
Or tree croaks future evil, did foreshow
To one or to the other, that the hour
Was fixed in heaven, when on the following day
Either should perish in this deadly fray.

XXVIII

Noritia's men and Tremisene's alone
Were wanting to complete the paynim host;
But in the martial muster sign was none,
Nor tale, nor tiding of the squadrons lost;
To wondering Agramant alike unknown,
What kept the slothful warriors from their post,
When of King Tremisene's a squire was brought
Before him, who at large the mischief taught;

XXIX

— Who taught how Manilardo was laid low,
Alzirdo, and many others, on the plain.
— "Sir," said the bearer of the news, "the foe
Who slew our troop, would all thy camp have slain,
If thine assembled host had been more slow
Than me, who, as it was, escaped with pain.
This man slays horse and foot, as in the cote,
The wolf makes easy waste of sheep and goat."

XXX

Where the bold Africans their standards plant,
A warrior had arrived some days before;
Nor was there in the west, or whole Levant,
A knight, with heart or prowess gifted more.
To him much grace was done by Agramant,

As successor of Agrican, who wore
The crown of Tartary, a warrior wight;
The son the famous Mandricardo hight.

XXXI
Renowned he was for many a glorious quest
Atchieved, and through the world his fame was blown.
But him had glorified above the rest
Worth in the Syrian fairy's castle shown:
Where mail, which cased the Trojan Hector's breast
A thousand years before, he made his own.
And finished that adventure, strange and fell;
A story which breeds terror but to tell.

XXXII
When the squire told his news amid that show
Of troops, was present Agrican's bold son,
Who raised his daring face, resolved to go
And find the warrior who the deed had done;
But the design he hatched, forebore to show;
As making small account of any one,
Or fearing lest, should he reveal his thought,
The quest by other champion might be sought.

XXXIII
He of the squire demanded what the vest
And bearings, which the valiant stranger wore;
Who answered that he went without a crest,
And sable shield and sable surcoat bore.
— And, sir, 'twas true; for so was Roland drest;
The old device renounced he had before:
For as he mourned within, so he without,
The symbols of his grief would bear about.

XXXIV
Marsilius had to Mandricardo sped,
As gift, a courser of a chestnut stain,

Whose legs and mane were sable; he was bred
Between a Friesland mare and nag of Spain.
King Mandricardo, armed from foot to head,
Leapt on the steed and galloped o'er the plain,
And swore upon the camp to turn his back
Till he should find the champion clad in black.

XXXV
The king encounters many of the crew
Whom good Orlando's arm had put to flight;
And some a son, and some a brother rue,
Who in the rout had perished in their sight;
And in the coward's cheek of pallid hue
Is yet pourtrayed the sad and craven sprite:
— Yet, through the fear endured, they far and nigh,
Pallid, and silent, and insensate fly.

XXXVI
Nor he long was had rode, ere he descried
A passing-cruel spectacle and sore;
But which the wonderous feats well testified,
That were recounted Agramant before.
Now on this hand, now that, the dead he eyed,
Measured their wounds, and turned their bodies o'er;
Moved by strange envy of the knight whose hand
Had strown the champaign with the slaughtered band.

XXXVII
As wolf or mastiff-dog, who comes the last
Where the remains of slaughtered bullock lie,
And finds but horn and bones, where rich repast
Had fed the ravening hound and vulture night,
Glares vainly on the scull, unsmacked; so passed
The barbarous Tartar king those bodies by;
And grudged, lamenting, like the hungry beast,
To have come too late for such a sumptuous feast.

XXXVIII

That day, and half the next, in search he strayed
Of him who wore the sable vest and shield.
When lo! he saw a mead, o'ertopt with shade,
Where a deep river wound about the field,
With narrow space between the turns it made,
Where'er from side to side the water wheeled.
Even such a spot as this with circling waves
Below Otricoli the Tyber laves.

XXXIX

Where this deep stream was fordable, he scanned
A crowd of cavaliers that armour bore:
And these the paynim questioned who had manned,
With such a troop, and to what end, the shore?
To him replied the captain of the band,
Moved by his lordly air, and arms he wore,
Glittering with gold and jewels, — costly gear,
Which showed him an illustrious cavalier.

XL

"In charge" (he said) "we of the daughter go
Of him our king, who fills Granada's throne,
Espoused by Rodomont of Sarza, though
To fame the tidings are as yet unknown.
And we, departing when the sun is low,
And the cicala hushed, which now alone
Is heard, shall bring her where her father keeps
I' the Spanish camp; meanwhile the lady sleeps."

XLI

He who for scorn had daffed the world aside,
Designs to see at once, how able were
Those horsemen to defend the royal bride,
Committed by their sovereign to their care.
"The maid, by what I hear, is fair" (he cried).

"Fain would I now be certified, how fair:
Then me to her, or her to me convey,
For I must quickly wend another way."

XLII
"Thou needs art raving mad," replied in few
The chief, — nor more. But with his lance in rest,
The Tartar monarch at the speaker flew,
And with the levelled spear transfixed his breast.
For the point pierced the yielding corslet through,
And lifeless he, perforce, the champaign prest.
The son of Agrican his lance regained,
Who weaponless without the spear remained.

XLIII
Now sword nor club the warlike Tartar bore,
Since, when the Trojan Hector's plate and chain
He gained, because the faulchion lacked, he swore
(To this obliged), nor swore the king in vain,
That save he won the blade Orlando wore,
He would no other grasp, — that Durindane.
Held in high value by Almontes bold,
Which Roland bears, and Hector bore of old.

XLIV
Great is the Tartar monarch's daring, those
At such a disadvantage to assay,
He pricks, with levelled lance, among his foes,
Shouting, in fury, — "Who shall bar my way?" —
Round and about him suddenly they close;
These draw the faulchion, and those others lay
The spear in rest: a multitude he slew,
Before his lance was broke upon the crew.

XLV
When this he saw was broke, the truncheon sound
And yet entire, he took, both hands between,

And with so many bodies strewed the ground,
That direr havoc never yet was seen:
And as with that jaw bone, by hazard found,
The Hebrew Samson slew the Philistine,
Crushed helm and shield; and often side by side,
Slain by the truncheon, horse and rider died.

XLVI
In running to their death the wretches vie,
Nor cease because their comrades perish near:
Yet bitterer in such a mode to die,
Than death itself, does to the troop appear.
They grudge to forfeit precious life, and lie
Crushed by the fragment of a broken spear;
And think foul scorn beneath the pounding stake
Strangely to die the death of frog or snake.

XLVII
But after they at their expense had read
That it was ill to die in any way,
And near two thirds were now already dead,
The rest began to fly in disarray.
As if with what was his the vanquished fled,
The cruel paynim, cheated of his prey,
Ill bore that any, from the murderous strife
Of that scared rabble, should escape with life.

XLVIII
As in the well-dried fen or stubble-land,
Short time the stalk endures, or stridulous reed,
Against the flames, which careful rustic's hand
Scatters when Boreas blows the fires to feed;
What time they take, and by the north-wind fanned.
Crackle and snap, and through the furrow speed;
No otherwise, with little profit, those
King Mandricardo's kindled wrath oppose.

XLIX

When afterwards he marks the entrance free,
Left ill-secured, and without sentinel.
He, following prints (which had been recently
Marked on the mead), proceeds, amid the swell
Of loud laments, Granada's dame to see,
If she as beauteous were as what they tell.
He wound his way 'mid corpses, where the wave,
Winding from side to side, a passage gave:

L

And in the middle of the mead surveyed
Doralice (such the gentle lady's name),
Who, at the root of an old ash tree laid,
Bemoaned her: fast her lamentations came.
And tears, like plenteous vein of water, strayed
Into the beauteous bosom of the dame;
Who, (so it from her lovely face appeared,)
For others mourned, while for herself she feared.

LI

Her fear increased when she approaching spied
Him foul with blood, and marked his felon cheer;
And piercing shrieks the very sky divide
Raised by herself and followers, in their fear.
For over and above the troop who guide
The fair infanta, squire and cavalier,
Came ancient men and matrons in her train,
And maids, the fairest of Granada's reign.

LII

When that fair face by him of Tartary
Is seen, which has no paragon in Spain,
Where amid tears (in laughter what were she?)
Is twisted Love's inextricable chain.
He knows not if in heaven or earth he be;

Nor from his victory reaps other gain,
Than yielding up himself a thrall to her,
(He knows not why) who was his prisoner.

LIII
Yet not so far his courtesy he strained,
That he would lose his labour's fruit, although
The royal damsel showed, who sorely plained,
Such grief as women in despair can show.
He, who the hope within him entertained
To turn to sovereign joy her present woe,
Would wholly bear her off; whom having placed
On a white jennet, he his way retraced.

LIV
He dames, maids, ancient men, and others, who
Had from Granada with the damsel fared,
Kindly dismissed, their journey to pursue;
Saying, "My care suffices; I of guard,
Of guide, of handmaid will the office do,
To serve her in her every need prepared.
Farewell!" and thus unable to withstand
The wrong, with tears and sighs withdrew the band,

LV
Saying, "How woe-begone will be her sire,
When he the miserable case shall hear!
What grief will be the bridegroom's! what his ire!
How dread the vengeance of that cavalier!
When so the lady's needs such help require.
Alas! and why is not the champion near,
To save the illustrious blood of Stordilane,
Ere the thief bears her farther hence, from stain?"

LVI
The Tartar, joying in the prize possest,
Which he by chance and valour won and wore;

To find the warrior of the sable vest
Seemed not to have the haste he had before,
And stopp'd and loitered, where he whilom prest;
And cast about and studied evermore
To find some fitting shelter; with desire,
In quiet to exhale such amorous fire.

LVII
Doralice he consoled this while, whose eyes
And cheek were wetted with the frequent tear,
And many matters feigned and flattering lies;
— How, known by fame, he long had held her dear,
And how his country and glad realm, whose size
Shamed others, praised for grandeur far and near,
He quitted, not for sight of France or Spain;
But to behold that cheek of lovely grain.

LVIII
"If a man merits love by loving, I
Yours by my love deserve; if it is won
By birth, — who boasts a genealogy
Like me, the puissant Agricano's son?
By riches, — who with me in wealth can vie.
That in dominion yield to God alone?
By courage, — I to-day (I ween) have proved
That I for courage merit to be loved."

LIX
These words, and many others on his part,
Love frames and dictates to the Tartar knight,
Which sweetly tend to cheer the afflicted heart
Of the unhappy maid, disturbed with fright.
By these fear first was laid, and next the smart
Sheathed of that woe, which had nigh pierced her sprite;
And with more patience thence the maid began
To hear, and her new lover's reasons scan.

LX

Next much more affable, with courteous lore
Seasoning her answers to his suit, replies;
Nor looking at the king, sometimes forbore
To fix upon his face her pitying eyes.
The paynim thence, whom Love had smote before,
Not hopeful now, but certain, of his prize,
Deemed that the lovely damsel would not still,
As late, be found rebellious to his will.

LXI

Riding in her glad company a-field,
Which so rejoiced his soul, so satisfied;
And being near the time, when to their bield,
Warned by the chilly night, all creatures hied,
Seeing the sun now low and half concealed,
The warrior 'gan in greater hurry ride;
Until he heard reed-pipe and whistle sound,
And next saw farm and cabin smoking round.

LXII

Pastoral lodgings were the dwellings near,
Less formed for show, than for conveniency;
And the young damsel and the cavalier
The herdsman welcomed with such courtesy,
That both were pleasured by his kindly cheer.
For not alone dwells Hospitality
In court and city; but ofttimes we find
In loft and cottage men of gentle kind.

LXIII

What afterwards was done at close of day
Between the damsel and the Tartar lord,
I will not take upon myself to say;
So leave to each, at pleasure, to award.
But as they rose the following morn more gay,

It would appear they were of fair accord:
And on the swain who them such honour showed,
Her thanks at parting Doralice bestowed.

LXIV
Thence from one place to the other wandering, they
Find themselves by a river, as they go.
Which to the sea in silence winds its way,
And ill could be pronounced to stand or flow,
So clear and limpid, that the cheerful day,
With nought to intercept it, pierced below.
Upon its bank, beneath a cooling shade,
They found two warriors and a damsel laid.

LXV
Now lofty Fancy, which one course to run
Permits not, calls me hence in sudden wise;
And thither I return, where paynims stun
Fair France with hosile din and angry cries,
About the tent, wherein Troyano's son
They holy empire in his wrath defies,
And boastful Rodomont, with vengeful doom,
Gives Paris to the flames, and levels Rome.

LXVI
Tidings had reached the Moorish sovereign's ear
That the English had already passed the sea;
And he bade Garbo's aged king appear,
Marsilius, and his heads of chivalry:
Who all advised the monarch to prepare
For the assault of Paris. They may be
Assured they in the storm will never thrive,
Unless 'tis made before the aids arrive.

LXVII
Innumerable ladders for the scale
Had been collected upon every hand,

And plank and beam, and hurdle's twisted mail,
For different uses, at the king's command;
And bridge and boat; and, what might more avail
Than all the rest, a first and second band
For the assault (so bids the monarch) form;
Who will himself go forth with them that storm.

LXVIII
The emperor, on the vigil of the day
Of battle, within Paris, everywhere,
By priest and friar of orders black and gray,
And white, bade celebrate mass-rite and prayer;
And those who had confessed, a fair array,
And from the Stygian demons rescued were,
Communicated in such fashions, all,
As if they were the ensuing day to fall.

LXIX
At the high church, he, girt with paladine
And preachers of the word, and barons brave,
With much devotion at those acts divine
Assisted, and a fair example gave;
And there with folded hands and face supine,
Exclaimed, "O Lord! although my sins be grave,
Permit not, that, in this their utmost need,
Thy people suffer for their king's misdeed!

LXX
"And if that they should suffer is thy will,
And that they should due penance undergo,
At least delay thy purpose to fulfil;
So that thine enemies deal not the blow.
For, when 'tis given him in his wrath to kill
Us who are deemed thy friends, the paynim foe,
That thou art without power to save, will cry,
Because thou lett'st thy faithful people die:

LXXI

"And, for one faithless found, against thy sway
A hundred shall throughout the world rebel;
So that false Babel's law will have its way,
And thus thy blessed faith put down and quell.
Defend thy suffering people, who are they
That purged thy tomb from heathen hounds and fell.
And many times and oft, by foes offended,
Thy holy church and vicars have defended.

LXXII

"That our deserts unfitting are to place
I' the scale against our mighty debt, I know;
Nor pardon can we hope, if we retrace
Our sinful lives; but if thou shouldst bestow
In aid, the gift of they redeeming grace,
The account is quit and balanced, that we owe;
Nor can we of thy succour, Lord, despair,
While we in mind thy saving mercy bear."

LXXIII

So spake the holy emperor aloud,
In humbleness of heart and deep contrition;
And added other prayers withal, and vowed
What fitted his great needs and high condition.
Now was his supplication disallowed;
For his good genius hears the king's petition,
Best of the seraphs he; who spreads his wings,
And to the Saviour's feet this offering brings.

LXXIV

Infinite other prayers as well preferred,
Were, by like couriers, to the Godhead's ear
So borne; which when the blessed spirits heard,
They all together gazed, with pitying cheer,
On their eternal, loving Lord, and, stirred

With one desire, besought that he would hear
The just petition, to his ears conveyed,
Of this his Christian people, seeking aid.

LXXV
And the ineffable Goodness, who in vain
Was never sought by faithful heart, an eye,
Full of compassion, raised; and from the train
Waved Michael, and to the arch-angel: "Hie,
To seek the Christian host that crost the main,
And lately furled their sails in Picardy:
These so conduct to Paris, that their tramp
And noise be heard not in the hostile camp.

LXXVI
"Find Silence first, and bid him, on my part,
On this emprize attend thee, at thy side:
Since he for such a quest, with happiest art
Will know what is most fitting to provide.
Next, where she sojourns, instantly impart
To Discord my command, that she, supplied
With steel and tinder, 'mid the paynims go,
And fire and flame in their encampment blow;

LXXVII
"And throughout those among them, who are said
To be the mightiest, spread such strife, that they
Together may contend, and that some dead
Remain, some hurt, some taken in the fray;
And some to leave the camp, by wrath, be led;
So that they yield their sovereign little stay."
Nothing the blessed winged-one replies,
But swoops descending from the starry skies.

LXXVIII
Where'er the angel Michael turns his wing,
The clouds are scattered and the sky turns bright;

About his person forms a golden ring,
As we see summer lightning gleam at night.
This while the courier of the heavenly king
Thinks, on his way, where he may best alight,
With the intent to find that foe to speech,
To whom he first his high behest would teach.

LXXIX
Upon the thought the posting angel brooded,
Where he, for whom he sought was used to dwell,
Who after thinking much, at last concluded
Him he should find in church or convent cell;
Where social speech is in such mode excluded,
That SILENCE, where the cloistered brethren swell
Their anthems, where they sleep, and where they sit
At meat; and everywhere in fine is writ.

LXXX
Weening that he shall find him here, he plies
With greater speed his plumes of gilded scale,
And deems as well that Peace, here guested, lies,
And Charity and Quiet, without fail.
But finds he is deceived in his surmise,
As soon as he has past the cloister's pale.
Here Silence is not; nor ('tis said) is found
Longer, except in writing, on this ground.

LXXXI
Nor here he Love, nor here he Peace surveys,
Piety, Quiet, or Humility.
Here dwelt they once; but 'twas in ancient days;
Chased hence by Avarice, Anger, Gluttony,
Pride, Envy, Sloth, and Cruelty. In amaze
The angel mused upon such novelty:
He narrowly the hideous squadron eyed,
And Discord too amid the rest espied;

LXXXII
Even her, to whom the eternal Sire as well,
Having found Silence, bade him to repair.
He had believed he to Avernus' cell,
Where she was harboured with the damned, must fare,
And now discerned her in this other hell
(Who would believe it?) amid mass and prayer.
Strange Michael thought to see her there enshrined,
Whom he believed he must go far to find.

LXXXIII
Her by her party-coloured vest he knew.
Unequal strips and many formed the gown,
Which, opening with her walk, or wind that blew,
Now showed, now hid her; for they were unsown.
Her hair appeared to be at strife; in hue
Like silver and like gold, and black and brown;
Part in a tress, in riband part comprest,
Some on her shoulders flowed, some on her breast.

LXXXIV
Examinations, summons, and a store
Of writs and letters of attorney, she,
And hearings, in her hands and bosom bore,
And consultation, and authority:
Weapons, from which the substance of the poor
Can never safe in walled city be.
Before, behind her, and about her, wait
Attorney, notary, and advocate.

LXXXV
Her Michael calls to him, and give command
That she among the strongest paynims go;
And find occasion whence amid the band
Warfare and memorable scathe may grow.
He next from her of Silence makes demand,

Who of his motions easily might know;
As one who from one land to the other hied,
Kindling and scattering fire on either side.

LXXXVI
"I recollect not ever to have viewed
Him anywhere," quoth Discord in reply;
"But oft have heard him mentioned, and for shrewd
Greatly commended by the general cry:
But Fraud, who makes one of this multitude,
And who has sometimes kept him company,
I think, can furnish news of him to thee,
And" (pointing with her finger) "that is she."

LXXXVII
With pleasing mien, grave walk, and decent vest,
Fraud rolled her eye-balls humbly in her head;
And such benign and modest speech possest,
She might a Gabriel seem who Ave said.
Foul was she and deformed, in all the rest;
But with a mantle long and widely spread,
Concealed her hideous parts; and evermore
Beneath the stole a poisoned dagger wore.

LXXXVIII
Of her the good archangel made demand
What way in search of Silence to pursue:
Who said; "He with the Virtues once was scanned
Nor dwelt elsewhere; aye guested by the crew
Of Benedict, or blest Elias' band,
When abbeys and when convent-cells were new;
And whilom in the schools long time did pass,
With sage Archytas and Pythagorus.

LXXXIX
"But those philosophers and saints of yore
Extinguished, who had been his former stay,

From the good habits he had used before
He passed to evil ones; began to stray,
Changing his life, at night with lovers, bore
Thieves company, and sinned in every way:
He oftentimes consorts with Treason; further,
I even have beheld him leagued with Murther.

XC
"With coiners him you oftentimes may see
Harbour in some obscure and close repair.
So oft he changes home and company,
To light on him would be a fortune rare:
Yet have I hope to point him out to thee;
If to Sleep's house thou wilt at midnight fare,
Him wilt thou surely find; for to repose
At night he ever to that harbour goes."

XCI
Though Fraud was alway wont to deal in lies,
So like the simple truth appears her say,
The angel yields the tale belief; and flies
Forth from the monastery without delay,
Tempers his speed, and schemes withal in wise
To finish at the appointed time his way,
That at the house of Sleep (the mansion blind
Full well he knew) this Silence he may find.

XCII
In blest Arabia lies a pleasant vale,
Removed from village and from city's reach.
By two fair hills o'ershadowed is the dale,
And full of ancient fir and sturdy beech.
Thither the circling sun without avail
Conveys the cheerful daylight: for no breach
The rays can make through boughs spread thickly round;
And it is here a cave runs under ground.

XCIII
Beneath the shadow of this forest deep,
Into the rock there runs a grotto wide.
Here widely wandering, ivy-suckers creep,
About the cavern's entrance multiplied.
Harboured within this grot lies heavy Sleep,
Ease, corpulent and gross, upon this side,
Upon that, Sloth, on earth has made her seat;
Who cannot go, and hardly keeps her feet.

XCIV
Mindless Oblivion at the gate is found,
Who lets none enter, and agnizes none;
Nor message hears or bears, and from that ground
Without distinction chases every one;
While Silence plays the scout and walks his round,
Equipt with shoes of felt and mantle brown,
And motions from a distance all who meet
Him on his circuit, from the dim retreat.

XCV
The angel him approaches quietly,
And, " 'Tis God's bidding" (whispers in his ear)
"That thou Rinaldo and his company,
Brought in his sovereign's aid, to Paris steer:
But that thou do the deed so silently,
That not a Saracen their cry shall hear;
So that their army come upon the foe,
Ere he from Fame of their arrival know."

XCVI
Silence to him no otherwise replied
Than signing with his head that he obeyed:
(And took his post behind the heavenly guide)
Both at one flight to Picardy conveyed.
The angel moved those bands of valour tried,

And short to them a tedious distance made:
Whom he to Paris safe transports; while none
Is conscious that a miracle is done.

XCVII
Silence the advancing troop kept skirting round,
In front, and flank, and rear of the array;
Above the band he spread a mist profound,
And everywhere beside 'twas lightsome day;
Nor through the impeding fog the shrilling sound
Of horn was heard, without, or trumpet's bray.
He next the hostile paynims went to find,
And with I know not what made deaf and blind.

XCVIII
While with such haste his band Rinaldo led,
That him an angel well might seem to guide,
And in such silence moved, that nought was said
Or heard of this upon the paynim side;
King Agramant his infantry had spread
Throughout fair Paris' suburbs, and beside
The foss, and underneath the walls; that day
To make upon the place his worst assay.

XCIX
He who the Moorish monarch's force would tell,
Which Charlemagne this day will have to meet,
In wooded Apennine might count as well
The trees upon its back, or waves that beat
(What time the troubled waters highest swell)
Against the Mauritanian Atlas' feet;
Or watch at midnight with how many eyes
The furtive works of lovers Heaven espies.

C
The larum-bells, loud-sounding through the air,
Stricken with frequent blows, the town affray;

And in the crowded temples every where
Movement of lips and hands upraised to pray
Are seen: if treasure seemed to God so fair
As to our foolish thoughts, upon this day
The holy consistory had bid mould
Their every statue upon earth in gold.

CI
Lamenting may be heard the aged just,
In that they were reserved for such a woe;
Calling those happy that in sacred dust
Were buried many and many a year ago.
But the bold youths who, valiant and robust,
Small thought upon the approaching ills bestow,
Scorning their elders' counsel, here and there
Hurrying, in fury, to the walls repair.

CII
Here might you paladin and baron ken,
King, duke, and marquis, count and chivalry,
And soldier, foreigner or citizen,
Ready for honour and for Christ to die;
Who, eager to assail the Saracen,
On Charlemagne to lower the bridges cry.
He witnesses with joy their martial beat,
But to permit their sally deems not meet.

CIII
And them he ordered in convenient post,
The advance of the barbarians to impede:
For this would ill suffice a numerous host,
To that he was content that few should speed.
Some worked at the machines, some wild-fire tost,
All ranged according to the separate need.
Charles, never in one place, with restless care
Provides defence and succour every where.

CIV
Paris is seated on a spacious plain,
I' the midst — the heart of France, more justly say.
A stream flows into it, and forth again;
But first, the passing waters, as they stray,
An island form, and so secure the main
And better part, dividing on their way.
The other two (three separate quarters note).
Within the river girds, without the moat.

CV
The town, whose walls for miles in circuit run,
Might well have been attacked from many a side;
Yet, for he would assail it but on one,
Nor willingly his scattered troops divide,
Westward beyond the stream Troyano's son
Retired, from thence the assailing bands to guide.
In that, he neither city had nor plain
Behind, but what was his, as far as Spain.

CVI
Where'er the walls of Paris wound about,
Large ammunition had king Charles purveyed;
Strengthening with dyke each quarter held in doubt;
And had within trench, drain, and casemate made:
And where the river entered and went out,
Had thickest chains across the channel laid.
But most of all, his prudent cares appear
Where there is greatest cause for present fear.

CVII
With eyes of Argus, Pepin's valiant son,
Where Agramant was bent to storm foresaw,
And every thing forestalled, ere yet begun
By the bold followers of Mahound's law.
With Isolier, Grandonio, Falsiron,

Serpentin, Balugantes, and Ferrau,
And what beside he out of Spain had led,
Marsilius was in arms, their valiant head.

CVIII
With old Sobrino, on the left of Seine,
Pulian and Dardinel d'Almontes meet,
With Oran's giant king, to swell the train:
Six cubits is the prince, from head to feet.
But why move I my pen with greater pain
Than these men move their arms? for in his heat
King Rodomont exclaims, blaspheming sore,
Nor can contain his furious spirit more.

CIX
As swarming to assail the pastoral bowl,
With sound of stridulous wing, through summer sky,
Or relics of a feast, their luscious dole,
Repair the ready numbers of the fly;
As starlings to the vineyard's crimsoning pole
With the ripe clusters charged, — heaven's concave high
Filling, as they advanced, with noise and shout,
Fast hurried to the storm the Moorish rout.

CX
Upon their walls the Christians in array,
With lance, sword, axe, and wild-fire tost,
The assaulted city guard without dismay,
And little reck the proud barbarian's boast:
Nor when death snatches this or that away,
Does any one in fear refuse his post.
Into the fosse below the paynim foes
Return, amid a storm of strokes and blows.

CXI
Nor in this was is iron plied alone,
But mighty masses and whole bulwarks fall,

And top of tower, huge piece of bastion,
And with much toil disrupted, solid wall;
While streams of boiling water pouring down,
Insufferably the advancing paynims gall:
An ill-resisted rain, which, in despite
Of helmet, makes its way, and blinds the sight.

CXII
And this than iron spear offended more:
Then how much more the mist of lime-dust fine!
Then how the emptied vessel, burning sore
With nitre, sulphur, pitch, and turpentine!
Nor idle lie the fiery hoops in store,
Which, wreathed about with flaming tresses, shine.
These at the foemen scaled, upon all hands,
Form cruel garlands for the paynim bands.

CXIII
Meanwhile, up to the walls the second crew
Fierce Sarza's king was driven, accompanied
By bold Orlando and Buraldo, who
The Garamantes and Marmonda guide;
Clarindo and Loridano; nor from view,
It seems, will Setta's valiant monarch hide:
Morocco's king and he of Cosco go
With these, that men their martial worth may know.

CXIV
With crimson Rodomont his banner stains,
And in the vermeil field a lion shows;
Who, bitted by a maid, to curb and reins
His savage mouth disdains not to unclose.
Himself in the submissive lion feigns
The haughty Rodomont, and would suppose
In her who curbs him with the bit and string,
Doralice, daughter to Grenada's king;

CXV

Whom Mandricardo took, as I before
Related, and from whom, and in what wise.
Even she it was, whom Sarza's monarch more
Loved than his realm, — beyond his very eyes:
And valour showed for her and courteous lore,
Not knowing yet she was another's prize.
If he had, — then, — then, first, — the story known,
Even what he did that day, he would have done.

CXVI

At once the foes a thousand ladders rear.
Against the wall by the assailants shored,
Two mannered each round; the second, in the rear,
Urged on by the first; the third the second gored.
One mounts the wall through valour, one through fear,
And all attempt perforce the dangerous ford;
For cruel Rodomont of Argier slays
Or smites the wretched laggard who delays.

CXVII

'Tis thus, 'mid fire and ruin, all assay
To mount the wall; but others to assure
Themselves, some safer passage seek, where they
Will have least pain and peril to endure.
Rodomont only scorns by any way
To wend, except by what is least secure;
And in that desperate case, where others made
Their offerings, cursed the god to whom they prayed.

CXVIII

He in a cuirass, hard and strong, was drest;
A dragon-skin it was with scaly quilt,
Which erst secured the manly back and breast
Of his bold ancestor, that Babel built;
Who hoped the rule of heaven from God to wrest,

And him would from his golden dome have split.
Perfect, and for this end alone, were made
Helmet and shield as well as trenchant blade.

CXIX
Nor Rodomont to Nimrod yields in might,
Proud and untamed; and who would not forbear
To scale the lofty firmament till night,
Could he in this wide world descry the stair.
He stood not, he, to mark the bulwark's plight
Nor if the fosse of certain bottom were.
He past, ran, — rather flew across the moat,
Plunging in filth and water to his throat.

CXX
Dripping and foul with water and with weeds,
'Mid fire and stone, and arbalests, and bows,
On drives the chief; as through the marshy reeds,
The wild-swine of our own Mallea goes;
Who makes large day-light wheresoe'er he speeds,
Parting the sedge with breast and tusk and nose.
The paynim, safe in buckler lifted high,
Scorns not the wall alone, but braves the sky.

CXXI
Rodomont has no sooner gained the shore,
Than on the wooden bartizan he stands,
Within the city walls, a bridge that bore
(Roomy and large) king Charles's Christian bands.
Here many a scull is riven, here men take more
Than monkish tonsure at the warrior's hands:
Heads fly and arms; and to the ditch a flood
Runs streaming from the wall of crimson blood.

CXXII
He drops the shield; and with two-handed sway
Wielding his sword, duke Arnulph he offends.

Who came from whence, into the briny bay,
The water of the rapid Rhine descends.
No better than the sulphur keeps away
The advancing flame, the wretch his life defends.
He his last shudder gives, and tumbles dead;
Cleft downwards, a full palm from neck and head.

CXXIII
At one back-stroke sir Spineloccio true,
Anselmo, Prando, and Oldrado fell;
The narrow place and thickly-swarming crew
Make the wide-circling blow so fully tell.
The first half Flemings were, the residue
Are Normans, who the list of slaughter swell.
Orghetto of Maganza, he from brow
To breast divides, and thence to paunch below.

CXXIV
Down from the wall Andropono and Moschine
He cast into the ditch: a priest the first;
The second, but a worshipper of wine,
Drained, at a draught, whole runlets in his thirst;
Aye wonted simple water to decline,
Like viper's blood or venom: now immersed
In this, he perishes amid that slaughter;
And, what breeds most affliction, dies by water.

CXXV
Lewis the Provencal is cleft in two;
Arnold of Thoulouse through the breast before;
Hubert of Tours, sir Dionysius, Hugh,
And Claud, pour forth their ghosts in reeking gore.
Odo, Ambaldo, Satallon ensue,
And Walter next; of Paris are the four —
With others, that by me unmentioned fall,
Who cannot tell the name and land of all.

CXXVI

The crowd, by Rodomont of Sarza led,
The ladders lift, and many places scale.
Here the Parisians make no further head,
Who find their first defense of small avail
Full well they know that danger more to dread
Within awaits the foemen who assail;
Because between the wall and second mound
A fosse descends, wide, horrid, and profound.

CXXVII

Besides, that ours, with those upon the height,
War from below, like valiant men and stout,
New files succeed to those who fall in fight,
Where, on the interior summit, stand the rout,
Who gall with lances, and a whistling flight
Of darts, the mighty multitude without;
Many of whom, I ween, that post would shun,
If it were not for royal Ulien's son.

CXXVIII

But he still heartened some, and chid the rest,
And forced them forward to their sore alarm.
One paynim's head he cleft, and other's breast,
Who turned about to fly; and of the swarm
Some shoved and pushed and to the encounter prest,
Close-grappled by the collar, hair, or arm:
And downwards from the wall such numbers threw,
The ditch was all to narrow for the crew.

CXXIX

While so the foes descend, or rather fling
Themselves into the perilous profound;
And thence by many ladders try to spring
Upon the summit of the second mound,
King Rodomont, as if he had a wing

Upon his every member, from the ground
Upraised his weight, and vaulted clean across,
Loaded with all his arms, the yawning fosse.

CXXX
The moat of thirty feet, not less, he cleared,
As dexterously as leaps the greyhound fleet,
Nor at his lighting louder noise was heard
Than if he had worn felt beneath his feet.
He now of this, now that, the mantle sheared;
As though of pewter, not of iron beat,
Or rather of soft rind their arms had been:
So matchless was his force and sword so keen!

CXXXI
This while, not idle, those of ours had laid
Snares in the inner moat, a well-charged mine:
Where broom and thick fascines, all over paid
With swarthy pitch, in plenty intertwine.
Though they from bank to bank that hollow line,
Filling the bottom well-nigh to the brink;
And countless vessels the defenders sink.

CXXXII
Charged with salt-petre, oil, or sulphur pale,
One and the other, or with such like gear;
While ours, intent the paynims that assail
The town, should pay their daring folly dear,
(Who from the ditch on different parts would scale
The inner bulwark's platform) when they hear
The appointed signal which their comrades raise,
Set, at fit points, the wildfire in a blaze.

CXXXIII
For that the moat was full from side to side,
The scattered flames united into one,
And mounted to such height, they well-nigh dried

The watery bosom of the moon; a dun
And dismal cloud above extending wide,
Dimmed every glimpse of light, and hid the sun:
A fearful crash, with a continued sound,
Like a long peal of thunder, shook the ground.

CXXXIV
A horrid concert, a rude harmony
Of deep lament, and yell and shriek, which came
From those poor wretches in extremity,
Perishing through their furious leader's blame,
Was heard, as in strange concord, to agree
With the fierce crackling of the murderous flame.
No more of this, no more! — Here, sir, I close
My canto, hoarse, and needing short repose.

CANTO 15

ARGUMENT
Round about Paris every where are spread
The assailing hosts of Africa and Spain.
Astolpho home by Logistilla sped,
Binds first Caligorantes with his chain;
Next from Orrilo's trunk divides the head;
With whom Sir Aquilant had warred in vain,
And Gryphon bold: next Sansonet discerns,
Ill tidings of his lady Gryphon learns.

I
Though Conquest fruit of skill or fortune be,
To conquer always is a glorious thing.
'Tis true, indeed, a bloody victory
Is to a chief less honour wont to bring;
And that fair field is famed eternally,

And he who wins it merits worshipping,
Who, saving from all harm his own, without
Loss to his followers, puts the foe to rout.

II
You, sir, earned worthy praise, when you o'erbore
The lion of such might by sea, and so
Did by him, where he guarded either shore
From Francolino to the mouth of Po,
That I, though yet again I heard him roar,
If you were present, should my fear forego.
How fields are fitly won was then made plain;
For we were rescued, and your foemen slain.

III
This was the Paynim little skilled to do,
Who was but daring to his proper loss;
And to the moat impelled his meiny, who
One and all perished in the burning fosse.
The mighty gulf had not contained the crew,
But that, devouring those who sought to cross,
Them into dust the flame reduced, that room
Might be for all within the crowded tomb.

IV
Of twenty thousand warriors thither sent,
Died nineteen thousand in the fiery pit;
Who to the fosse descended, ill content;
But so their leader willed, of little wit:
Extinguished amid such a blaze, and spent
By the devouring flame the Christians lit.
And Rodomont, occasion of their woes,
Exempted from the mighty mischief goes:

V
For he to the inner bank, by foes possest,
Across the ditch had vaulted wonderously:

Had he within it been, among the rest,
It sure had been his last assault. His eye
He turns, and when the wild-fires, which infest
The infernal vale, he sees ascend so high,
And hears his people's moan and dying screams,
With imprecations dread he Heaven blasphemes.

VI
This while a band King Agramant had brought,
To make a fierce assault upon a gate:
For while the cruel battle here was fought,
Wherein so many sufferers met their fate,
This haply unprovided had he thought
With fitting guard. Upon the monarch wait
King Bambirago, 'mid his knights of price,
And Baliverso, sink of every vice.

VII
And Corineus of Mulga, Prusion,
The wealthy monarch of the blessed isles;
Malabuferzo, he who fills the throne
Of Fez, where a perpetual summer smiles;
And other noble lords, and many a one
Well-armed and tried; and others 'mid their files,
Naked, and base, whose hearts in martial fields
Had found no shelter from a thousand shields.

VIII
But all things counter to the hopes ensue
Of Agramant upon his side; within,
In person, girded by a gallant crew,
Is Charlemagne, with many a paladin:
Ogier the Duke, King Salamon, the two
Guidos are seen, and either Angelin;
Bavaria's duke, and Ganelon are here,
Avino, Avolio, Otho, and Berlinghier.

IX

And of inferior count withal, a horde
Of Lombards, French, and Germans, without end;
Who, every one, in presence of his lord,
To rank among the valiantest contend,
This will I in another place record;
Who here a mighty duke perforce attend,
Who signs to me from far, and prays that I
Will not omit him in my history.

X

'Tis time that I should measure back my way
Thither, where I Astolpho left of yore;
Who, in long exile, loathing more to stay,
Burnt with desire to tread his native shore;
As hopes to him had given the sober fay,
Who quelled Alcina by her better lore,
She with all care would send the warrior back
By the securest and the freest track.

XI

And thus by her a barque is fitted out;
— A better galley never ploughed the sea;
And Logistilla wills, for aye in doubt
Of hinderance from Alcina's treachery,
That good Andronica, with squadron stout,
And chaste Sophrosina, with him shall be,
Till to the Arabian Sea, beneath their care,
Or to the Persian Gulf he safe repair.

XII

By Scyth and Indian she prefers the peer
Should coast, and by the Nabataean reign;
Content he, after such a round, should veer
For Persian gulf, or Erithraean main,
Rather than for that Boreal palace steer,

Where angry winds aye vex the rude domain:
So ill, at seasons, favoured by the sun,
That there, for months together, light is none.

XIII
Next, when she all in readiness espied,
Her license to depart the prudent fay
Accorded to the duke, first fortified
With counsel as to things too long to say;
And that he might no more by charms be stayed
In place from whence he could not wend his way,
Him with a useful book and fair purveyed,
And ever for her love to wear it prayed.

XIV
How man should guard himself from magic cheats
The book instructed, which the fay bestowed;
At the end or the beginning, where it treats
Of such, an index and appendix showed.
Another gift, which in its goodly feats
All other gifts excelled, to her he owed;
This was a horn, which made whatever wight
Should hear its clang betake himself to flight.

XV
I say, the horn is of such horrid sound,
That, wheresoe'er 'tis heard, all fly for fear;
Nor in the world is one of heart so sound
That would not fly, should he the bugle hear.
Wind, thunder, and the shock which rives the ground,
Come not, in aught, the hideous clangour near.
With thanks did the good Englishman receive
The gift, and of the fairy took his leave.

XVI
Quitting the port and smoother waves, they stand
To sea, with favouring wind which blows astern;

And (coasting) round the rich and populous land
Of odoriferous Ind the vessels turn,
Opening a thousand isles on either hand,
Scattered about that sea, till they discern
The land of Thomas; here the pilot veers
His ready tiller, and more northward steers.

XVII
Astolpho, furrowing that ocean hoar,
Marks, as he coasts, the wealthy land at ease.
Ganges amid the whitening waters roar,
Nigh skirting now the golden Chersonese;
Taprobana with Cori next, and sees
The frith which chafes against its double shore;
Makes distant Cochin, and with favouring wind
Issues beyond the boundaries of Ind.

XVIII
Scouring at large broad ocean, with a guide
So faithful and secure, the cavalier
Questions Andronica, if from that side
Named from the westering sun, of this our sphere,
Bark, which with oars or canvas stemmed the tide,
On eastern sea was wonted to appear;
— And could a wight, who loosed from Indian strand,
Reach France or Britain, without touching land.

XIX
Andronica to England's duke replies:
"Know that this earth is girt about with seas,
And all to one another yield supplies,
Whether the circling waters boil or freeze:
But, since the Aethiops' land before us lies,
Extending southward many long degrees.
Across his waters, some one has supposed
A barrier here to Neptune interposed.

XX

"Hence bark from this Levant of Ind is none
Which weighs, to shape her course for Europe's shore;
Nor navigates from Europe any one,
Our Oriental regions to explore;
Fain to retrace alike the course begun
By the mid land, extending wide before:
Weening (its limits of such length appear)
That it must join another hemisphere.

XXI

"But in the course of circling years I view
From farthest lands which catch the western ray,
New Argonauts put forth, and Tiphys new
Opening, till now an undiscovered way.
Others I see coast Afric, and pursue
So far the negroes' burning shore, that they
Pass the far sign, from whence, on his return,
The sun moves hither, leaving Capricorn;

XXII

"And find the limit of this length of land,
Which makes a single sea appear as two;
Who, scouring in their frigates every strand,
Pass Ind and Arab isles, or Persian through:
Others I see who leave, on either hand,
The banks, which stout Alcides cleft in two,
And in the manner of the circling sun,
To seek new lands and new creations run.

XXIII

"The imperial flags and holy cross I know,
Fixed on the verdant shore; see some upon
The shattered barks keep guard, and others go
A-field, by whom new countries will be won;
Ten chase a thousand of the flying foe,

Realms beyond Ind subdued by Arragon;
And see all, wheresoe'er the warriors wend,
To the fifth Charles' triumphant captains bend.

XXIV
"That this way should be hidden was God's will
Of old, and ere 'twas known long time should run;
Nor will he suffer its discovery, till
The sixth and seventh century be done.
And he delays his purpose to fulfil,
In that he would subject the world to one,
The justest and most fraught with prudent lore
Or emperors, since Augustus, or before.

XXV
"Of Arragon and Austria's blood I see
On the left bank of Rhine a monarch bred;
No sovereign is so famed in history,
Of all whose goodly deeds are heard or read.
Astraea reinthroned by him will be, —
Rather restored to life, long seeming dead;
And Virtues with her into exile sent,
By him shall be recalled from banishment.

XXVI
"For such desert, Heaven's bounty not alone
Designs he should the imperial garland bear, —
Augustus', Trajan's, Mark's, Severus', crown;
But that of every farthest land should wear,
Which here and there extends, as yet unknown,
Yielding no passage to the sun and year;
And wills that in his time Christ's scattered sheep
Should be one flock, beneath one Shepherd's keep.

XXVII
"And that this be accomplished with more ease,
Writ in the skies from all eternity,

Captains, invincible by lands and seas,
Shall heavenly Providence to him supply.
I mark Hernando Cortez bring, 'mid these,
New cities under Caesar's dynasty,
And kingdoms in the Orient so remote,
That we of these in India have no note.

XXVIII

"With Prospero Colonna, puissant peer,
A marquis of Pescara I behold; —
A youth of Guasto next, who render dear
Hesperia to the flower-de-luce of gold;
I see prepared to enter the career
This third, who shall the laurel win and hold;
As a good horse before the rest will dart,
And first attain the goal, though last to start.

XXIX

"I see such faith, such valour in the deeds
Of young Alphonso (such his name) confest,
He in his unripe age, — nor he exceeds
His sixth and twentieth year, — at Caesar's hest,
(A mighty trust) the imperial army leads:
Saving which, Caesar not alone the rest
Of his fair empire saves, but may the world
Reduce, with ensigns by this chief unfurled.

XXX

"As with these captains, where the way by land
Is free, he spreads the ancient empire's sway,
So on the sea, which severs Europe's strand
From Afric, open to the southern day,
When with good Doria linked in friendly band,
Victorious he shall prove in every fray.
This is that Andrew Doria who will sweep
From pirates, on all sides, your midland deep.

XXXI

"Pompey, though he chased rovers everywhere,
Was not his peer; for ill the thievish brood
Vanquished by him, in puissance, could compare
With the most mighty realm that ever stood.
But Doria singly will of the corsair
With his own forces purge the briny flood:
So that I see each continent and isle
Quake at his name, from Calpe to the Nile.

XXXII

"Beneath the faith, beneath the warrantry
Of the redoubted chief, of whom I say,
I see Charles enter fertile Italy,
To which this captain clears the monarch's way;
But on his country, not himself, that fee
Shall he bestow, which is his labour's pay;
And beg her freedom, where himself perchance
Another would to sovereign rule advance.

XXXIII

"The pious love he bears his native land
Honours him more than any battle's gain
Which Julius ever won on Afric's strand,
Or in thine isle, France, Thessaly, or Spain.
Nor great Octavius does more praise command,
Nor Anthony who jousted for the reign,
With equal arms: in that the wrong outweighs
— Done to their native land — their every praise.

XXXIV

"Let these, and every other wight who tries
To subject a free country, blush for shame,
Nor dare in face of man to lift his eyes,
Where he hears Andrew Doria's honoured name!
To him I see Charles other meed supplies;

For he beside his leaders' common claim,
Bestows upon the chief the sumptuous state,
Whence Norman bands their power in Puglia date.

XXXV
"Not only to this captain courtesy
Shall Charles display, still liberal of his store;
But to all those who for the empery
In his emprizes have not spared their gore.
Him to bestow a town, — a realm — I see,
Upon a faithful friend, rejoicing more,
And on all such as have good service done,
Than in new kingdom and new empire won."

XXXVI
Thus of the victories, by land and main,
Which, when long course of years shall be complete,
Charles' worthy captains for their lord will gain,
Andronica did with Astolpho treat.
This while, now loosening, tightening now, the rein
On the eastern winds, which blow upon their feet,
Making this serve or that, her comrade stands;
While the blasts rise or sink as she commands.

XXXVII
This while they saw, as for their port they made,
How wide the Persian sea extends to sight;
Whence in few days the squadron was conveyed
Nigh the famed gulf from ancient Magi hight;
Here they found harbourage; and here were stayed
Their wandering barks, which stern to shore were dight.
Secure from danger from Alcina's wrath,
The duke by land continued hence his path.

XXXVIII
He pricks through many a field and forest blind,
By many a vale and many a mountain gray;

Where robbers, now before and now behind,
Oft threat the peer by night or open day;
Lion and dragon oft of poisonous kind,
And other savage monsters cross his way:
But he no sooner has his bugle wound,
Than these are scared and scattered by the sound.

XXXIX
Through Araby the blest he fares, where grow
Thickets of myrrh, and gums odorous ooze,
Where the sole phoenix makes her nest, although
The world is all before her where to choose;
And to the avenging sea which whelmed the foe
Of Israel, his way the duke pursues;
In which King Pharaoh and his host were lost:
From whence he to the land of heroes crost.

XL
Astolpho along Trajan's channel goes,
Upon that horse which has no earthly peer,
And moves so lightly, that the soft sand shows
No token of the passing cavalier;
Who prints not grass, prints not the driven snows,
— Who dry-shod would the briny billows clear,
And strains so nimbly in the course, he wind
And thunderbolt and arrow leaves behind: —

XLI
Erst Argalia's courser, which was born
From a close union of the wind and flame,
And, nourished not by hay or heartening corn,
Fed on pure air, and Rabican his name.
His way the bearer of the magic horn
Following, where Nile received that river, came;
But ere he at its outlet could arrive,
Towards him saw a pinnace swiftly drive.

XLII
A hermit in the poop the bark did guide
With snowy beard descending to mid breast;
Who when from far the Paladin be spied,
Him to ascend his ready pinnace prest.
"My son, unless thou loathest life, (he cried)
And wouldst that Death to-day thy course arrest,
Content thee in my bark to cross the water;
For yonder path conducts thee straight to slaughter.

XLIII
"Within six miles, no further, shalt thou light
(Pursued the hermit) on the bloody seat,
Where dwells a giant, horrible to sight,
Exceeding every stature by eight feet.
From him wayfaring man or errant knight
Would vainly hope with life to make retreat;
For some the felon quarters, some he flays,
And some he swallows quick, and some he slays.

XLIV
"He, 'mid the cruel horrors he intends,
Takes pleasure in a net, by cunning hands
Contrived, which near his mansion he extends;
So well concealed beneath the crumbling sands,
That whoso uninstructed thither wends,
Nought of the subtle mischief understands;
And so the giant scares him with his cries,
That he within the toils in terror flies;

XLV
"Whom with loud laughter, to his seat hard by
He drags along, enveloped in his snare;
And knight and damsel views with equal eye,
And for his prisoners' worth has little care.
Then, having sucked their brains and life-blood dry,

Casts forth their bones upon the desert lair;
And round about his griesly palace pins,
For horrid ornament, their bloody skins.

XLVI
"Take this, — my son, oh! take this other way,
Which thee will to the sea in safety guide."
"I thank thee, holy father, for thy say,
(To him the fearless cavalier replied)
But cannot peril against honour weigh,
Far dearer than my life. To the other side
Me vainly dost thou move to pass the wave;
Rather for this I seek the giant's cave.

XLVII
"I with dishonour life to flight may owe;
But worse than death loath thus to save my head.
The worst that can befall me if I go,
Is I my blood shall with the others shed:
But if on me such mercy God bestow,
That I remain alive, the giant dead,
Secure for thousands shall I make the ways;
So that the greater good the risque o'erpays.

XLVIII
"I peril but the single life of one
Against safety of the countless rest."
— "Go then in peace," (the other said). "my son,
And to thy succour, form among the blest,
May God dispatch the Archangel Michael down."
— And him, with that, the simple hermit blest.
Astolpho pricks along Nile's rosy strand,
More in his horn confiding than his brand.

XLIX
Between the mighty river and the fen,
A path upon the sandy shore doth lie,

Barred by the giant's solitary den
Cut off from converse with humanity.
About it heads and naked limbs of men
Were fixed, the victims of his cruelty.
Window or battlements was not, whence strung
Might not be seen some wretched prisoner hung.

L

As in hill-farm or castle, fenced with moat,
The hunter, mindful what his dangers were,
Aye fastens on his door the shaggy coat
And horrid paws and monstrous head of bear;
So showed the giant those of greatest note,
Who, thither brought, had perished in his snare.
The bones of countless others wide were spread,
And every ditch with human blood was red.

LI

Caligorant was standing at the gate
(For so was the despiteous monster hight);
Who decked his house with corpses, as for state
Some theirs with cloth of gold and scarlet dight.
He scarce contained himself for joy, so great
His pleasure, when the duke appeared in sight;
For 'twas two months complete, a third was near,
Since by that road had past a cavalier.

LII

Towards the marish, where green rushes grow,
He hastes, intending from that covert blind
To double on his unsuspecting foe,
And issue on the cavalier behind:
For him to drive into the net, below
The sand, the griesly giant had designed;
As others trapt he had been wont to see,
Brought thither by their evil destiny.

LIII
When him the wary paladin espied,
He stopt his courser, not without great heed,
Lest he into the covert snare might tide,
Forewarned of this by the good hermit's rede.
Here to his horn for succour he applied,
Nor failed its wonted virtue in this need:
It smote the giant's heart with such affright,
That he turned back, and homeward fled outright.

LIV
Astolpho blew, still watchful of surprise,
Weening to see the engine sprung: fast flew
The giant, — as if heart as well as eyes
The thief had lost, — nor whitherward he knew:
Such is his fear, he kens not as he flies,
How is own covert mischief to eschew:
He runs into the net, which closing round,
Hampers the wretch, and drags him to the ground.

LV
Astolpho, who beholds his bulky prey
Fall bodily, drives thither at full speed,
Secure himself, and, bent — to make him pay
The price of slaughtered thousands — quits his steed.
Yet after, deems a helpless wight to slay
No valour were, but rather foul misdeed:
For him, arms, neck, and feet, so closely tied,
He could not shake himself, the warrior spied.

LVI
With subtle thread of steel had Vulcan wrought
The net of old, and with such cunning pain,
He, who to break its weakest mesh had sought,
Would have bestowed his time and toil in vain.
It was with this he Mars and Venus caught,

Who, hands and feet, were fettered by the chain:
Nor did the jealous husband weave the thread
For aught, but to surprise that pair in bed.

LVII
Mercury from the smith conveyed the prize,
Wanting to take young Chloris in the snare;
Sweet Chloris, who behind Aurora flies,
At rise of sun, through fields of liquid air,
And from her gathered garment, through the skies,
Scatters the violet, rose, and lily fair.
He for this nymph his toils so deftly set,
One day, in air he took her with the net.

LVIII
The nymph (it seems) was taken as she flew,
Where the great Aethiop river meets the brine:
The net was treasured in Canopus, through
Successive ages, in Anubis' shrine.
After three thousand years, Caligorant drew
The sacred relict from the palace divine:
Whence with the net the impious thief returned,
Who robbed the temple and the city burned,

LIX
He fixed it here, beneath the sandy plain,
In mode, that all the travellers whom he chased
Ran into it, and the engine was with pain
Touched, ere it arms, and feet, and neck embraced.
From this the good Astolpho took a chain,
And with the gyve his hands behind him laced:
His arms and breast he swaddled in such guise,
He could not loose himself; then let him rise.

LX
After, his other knots unfastening,
(For he was turned more gentle than a maid)

Astolpho, as a show, the thief would bring,
By city, borough-town, and farm conveyed;
The net as well; than which no quainter thing
Was ever by the file and hammer made.
On him, like sumpter-nag he laid the load,
In triumph led, behind him, on his road.

LXI
Him helm and shield he gives alike to bear,
As to a valet; hence proceeds the peer,
Gladdening the fearful pilgrim every where,
Who joys to think, henceforth his way is clear.
So far an end does bold Astolpho fare,
He is to Memphis' tombs already near, —
Memphis renowned for pyramids; in sight,
He marks the populous Cairo opposite.

LXII
Ran all the people in tumultuous tide,
To see him drag the unmeasured wight along.
"How can it be," (each to his fellow cried)
"That one so weak could master one so strong?"
Scarce can Astolpho put the press aside,
So close from every part their numbers throng;
While all admire him as a cavalier
Of mighty worth, and make him goodly cheer.

LXIII
Then Cairo was not such, as common cry
Pronounces in our age that costly seat;
— That eighteen thousand districts ill supply
Lodging to those who in her markets meet;
— And though the houses are three stories high,
Numbers are forced to sleep in the open street;
And that the soldan has a palace there
Of wonderous size, and passing rich and fair;

LXIV

And therein (Christian renegadoes all)
Keeps fifteen thousand vassals, for his needs,
Beneath one roof supplied with bower and stall,
Themselves, and wives, and families, and steeds.
The duke desired to see the river's fall,
And how far Nile into the sea proceeds.
At Damietta; where wayfaring wight,
He heard, was prisoner made or slain outright.

LXV

For at Nile's outlet there, beside his bed,
A sturdy thief was sheltered in a tower,
Alike the native's and the stranger's dread,
Wont even to Cairo's gate the road to scower.
Him no one could resist, and, it was said,
That man to slay the felon had no power.
A hundred thousand wounds he had in strife
Received, yet none could ever take his life.

LXVI

To see if he could break the thread which tied
The felon's life, upon his way the knight
Set forward, and to Damietta hied,
To find Orrilo, so the thief was hight;
Thence to the river's outlet past, and spied
The sturdy castle on the margin dight;
Harboured in which the enchanted demon lay,
The fruit of a hobgoblin and a fay.

LXVII

He here Orrilo and two knights in mail
Found at fierce strife: the two ill held their own
Against him; so Orrilo did assail
The warlike pair, although himself alone;
And how much either might in arms avail,

Fame through the universal world had blown.
Of Oliviero's seed was either plant;
Gryphon the white, and sable Aquilant.

LXVIII
The necromancer had this while (to say
The truth) with vantage on his side, begun
The fight, who brought a monster to the fray,
Found only in those parts, and wont to won
Ashore or under water, and to prey,
For food, on human bodies; feeding on
Poor mariners and travelling men, who fare,
Of the impending danger, unaware.

LXIX
The monster, slaughtered by the brethren two,
Upon the sand beside the haven lies;
And hence no wrong they to Orrilo do,
Assailing him together in this guise.
Him they dismembered often and not slew:
Now he, — because dismembered, — ever dies;
For he replaces leg or hand like wax,
Which the good faulchion from his body hacks.

LXX
Gryphon and Aquilant by turns divide,
Now to the teeth, now breast, the enchanted wight.
The fruitless blow Orrilo does deride,
While the two baffled warriors rage for spite.
Let him who falling silver has espied
(Which mercury by alchymists is hight)
Scatter, and reunite each broken member,
Hearing my tale, what he has seen remember.

LXXI
If the thief's head be severed by the pair,
He lights and staggers till he finds it; now

Uptaken by the nose or by the hair,
And fastened to the neck, I know not how.
This sometimes Gryphon takes, and whirled through air,
Whelms in the stream; but bootless is the throw:
For like a fish can fierce Orrilo swim;
And safely, with the head, regains the brim.

LXXII
Two ladies, meetly clad in fair array,
One damsel was in black and one in white,
And who had been the occasion of that fray,
Stood by to gaze upon the cruel fight:
Either of these was a benignant fay,
Whose care had nourished one and the other knight,
Oliver's children; when the babes forlorn
They from the claws of two huge birds had torn.

LXXIII
Since, from Gismonda they had these conveyed,
Borne to a distance from their native sky.
But more to say were needless, since displaid
To the whole world has been their history.
Though the author has the father's name mis-said;
One for another (how I know not, I)
Mistaking. Now this fearful strife the pair
Of warriors waged at both the ladies' prayer.

LXXIV
Though it was noon in the happy islands, day
Had vanished in this clime, displaced by night;
And, underneath the moon's uncertain ray,
And ill-discerned, were all things hid from sight;
When to the fort Orrilo took his way.
Since both the sable sister and the white
Were pleased the furious battle to defer,
Till a new sun should in the horizon stir.

LXXV

The duke, who by their ensigns, and yet more
Had by the sight of many a vigorous blow,
Gryphon and Aquilant long time before
Agnized, to greet the brethren was not slow:
And they, who in the peer, victorious o'er
The giant, whom he led a captive, know
The BARON OF THE PARD, (so styled at court)
Him to salute, with no less love resort.

LXXVI

The ladies to repose the warriors led
To a fair palace near, their sumptuous seat:
Thence issuing courtly squire and damsel sped,
Them with lit torches in mid-way to meet.
Their goodly steeds they quit, there well bested,
Put off their arms, and in a garden sweet
Discern the ready supper duly laid
Fast by, where a refreshing fountain played.

LXXVII

Here they bid bind the giant on the green,
Fast-tethered by a strong and weighty chain
To a tough oak, whose ancient trunk they ween
May well be proof against a single strain;
With that, by ten good serjeants overseen,
Lest he by night get loose, and so the train
Assault and haply harm; while careless they
Without a guard and unsuspecting lay.

LXXVIII

At the abundant and most sumptuous board,
With costly viands (its least pleasure) fraught,
The longest topic for discourse afford
Orrilo's prowess, and the marvel wrought;
For head or arm dissevered by the sword,

They (who upon the recent wonder thought)
Might think a dream to see him re-unite,
And but return more furious to the fight.

LXXIX
Astolpho in his book had found exprest
(That which prescribed a remedy for spell)
How he who of one hair deprived the pest
Only could him in battle hope to quell:
But this plucked out or sheared, he from his breast
Parforce the felon's spirit would expell.
So says the volume; but instructs not where,
'Mid locks so thickly set, to find the hair.

LXXX
The duke no less with hope of conquest glows
Than if the palm he has already won;
As he that hopes with small expense of blows
To pluck the hair, the wizard-wight undone.
Hence does he to the youthful pair propose
The burden of that enterprize upon
Himself to take: Orrilo will he slay,
If the two brethren nought the intent gainsay,

LXXXI
But willingly to him these yield the emprize,
Assured his toil will be bestowed in vain;
And now a new Aurora climbs the skies,
And from his walls Orrilo on the plain
Drops, — and the strife begins — Orrilo plies
The mace, the duke the sword; he 'mid a rain
Of strokes would from the body at one blow
Divorce the spirit of the enchanted foe:

LXXXII
Together with the mace he lops the fist;
And now this arm, now the other falls to ground;

Sometimes he cleaves the corslet's iron twist,
And piecemeal shares and maims the felon round.
Orrilo re-unites the portions missed,
Found on the champagne, and again is sound:
And, though into a hundred fragments hewed,
Astolpho sees him, in a thought, renewed.

LXXXIII

After a thousand blows, Astolpho sped
One stroke, above the shoulders and below
The chin, which lopt away both helm and head:
Nor lights the duke less swiftly than his foe.
Then grasps the hair defiled with gore and red,
Springs in a moment on his horse, and lo!
Up-stream with it along Nile's margin hies,
So that the thief cannot retake the prize.

LXXXIV

That fool, who had not marked the warrior's feat,
Was searching in the dust to find his head;
But when he heard the charger in retreat,
Who through the forest with the plunder fled,
Leapt quickly into his own courser's seat,
And in pursuit of bold Astolpho sped.
Fain had Orrilo shouted "Hola! stay!"
But that the duke had borne his mouth away:

LXXXV

Yet pleased Astolpho had not in like guise
Borne off his heels, pursues with flowing rein.
Him Rabican, who marvellously flies,
Distances by a mighty length of plain.
This while the wizard's head Astolpho eyes
From poll to front, above the eyebrows twain,
Searching, in haste, if he the hair can see
Which makes Orrilo's immortality.

LXXXVI

Amid innumerable locks, no hair
Straiter or crisper than the rest was seen.
How then should good Astolpho, in his care
To slay the thief, so many choose between?
"To cut them all (he said) it better were."
And since he scissors lacked and razor keen,
He wanting these, resorted to his glaive,
Which cut so well, it might be said to shave.

LXXXVII

And, holding, by the nose, the severed head,
Close-sheared it all, behind and eke before.
He found, among the rest, the fatal thread.
Then pale became the visage, changing sore,
Turned up its eyes, and signals sore and dread
Of the last agony of nature wore;
And the headless body seated in the sell,
Shuddered its last, and from the courser fell.

LXXXVIII

The duke returns where he the champions two
And dames had left, the trophy in his hand,
Which manifests of death the tokens true;
And shows the distant body on the sand.
I know not if they this with pleasure view,
Though him they welcome with demeanour bland:
For the intercepted victory might pain
Perchance inflict upon the envying twain.

LXXXIX

Nor do I think that either gentle fay
With pleasure could that battle's issue see:
Since those kind dames, because they would delay
The doleful fate which shortly was to be
In France the brethren's lot, had in that fray

With fierce Orrilo matched the warriors free;
And so to occupy the pair had cast,
Till the sad influence of the skies were past.

XC
When to the castellan was certified
In Damietta, that the thief was dead,
He loosed a carrier pigeon, having tied
Beneath her wing a letter by a thread.
She went to Cairo; and, to scatter wide
The news, another from that town was sped
(Such is the usage there); so, Egypt through,
In a few hours the joyful tidings flew.

XCI
As he had brought the adventure to an end,
The duke now sought the noble youths to stir,
(Though of themselves that way their wishes tend,
Nor they to whet that purpose need the spur)
That they the Church from outrage to defend,
And rights of Charles, the Roman Emperor,
Would cease to war upon that Eastern strand,
And would seek honour in their native land.

XCII
Gryphon and Aquilant thus bid adieu,
One and the other, to his lady fair;
Who, though it sorely troubled them, ill knew
How to resist the wishes of the pair.
The duke, together with the warlike two,
Turns to the right, resolved to worship, where
God erst incarnate dwelt, the holy places,
Ere he to cherished France his way retraces.

XCIII
The warriors to the left-hand might incline,
As plainer and more full of pleasant cheer,

Where still along the sea extends their line;
But take the right-hand path, abrupt and drear;
Since the chief city of all Palestine,
By six days' journey, is, through this, more near.
Water there is along this rugged track,
And grass; all other needful matters lack.

XCIV
So that, before they enter on their road,
All that is needful they collect, and lay
Upon the giant's back the bulky load,
Who could a tower upon his neck convey.
The Holy Land a mountain-summit showed,
At finishing their rough and salvage way;
Where HEAVENLY LOVE a willing offering stood,
And washed away our errors with his blood.

XCV
They, at the entrance of the city, view
A gentle stripling; and in him the three
Agnize Sir Sansonet of Mecca, who
Was, in youth's flower, for sovereign chivalry,
For sovereign goodness, famed the country through,
And wise beyond his years: from paganry
Converted by Orlando to the truth,
Who had, with his own hands, baptized the youth.

XCVI
Designing there a fortilage, in front
Of Egypt's caliph they the warrior found;
And with a wall two miles in length, the mount
Of Calvary intending to surround.
Received with such a countenance, as is wont
To be of inward love the surest ground,
Them he conducted to his royal home,
And, with all comfort, harboured in the dome.

XCVII
As deputy, the sainted land he swayed,
Conferred on him by Charlemagne, in trust,
To him the English duke a present made
Of that so sturdy and unmeasured beast,
That it ten draught horse burdens had conveyed;
So monstrous was the giant, and next gave
The net, in which he took the unwieldy slave.

XCVIII
In quittance, Sansonet, his sword to bear,
Gave a rich girdle to Astolpho bold,
And spurs for either heel, a costly pair,
With bucklers and with rowels made of gold;
Which ('twas believed) the warrior's relicts were,
Who freed the damsel from that dragon old;
Spoils, which Sir Sansonet, with many more,
From Joppa, when he took the city, bore

XCIX
Cleansed of their errors in a monastery,
From whence the odour of good works upwent,
They of Christ's passion every mystery
Contemplating, through all the churches went;
Which now, to our eternal infamy,
Foul Moor usurp; what time on strife intent,
All Europe rings with arms and martial deeds,
And war is everywhere but where it needs.

C
While grace the warlike three devoutly sought,
Intent on pardon and on pious lore,
A Grecian pilgrim, known to Gryphon, brought
Tidings, which ill the afflicted champion bore,
From his long-cherished vow and former thought,

Too foreign, too remote; and these so sore
Inflamed his troubled breast, and bred such care,
They wholly turned aside his mind from prayer.

CI
For his misfortune, one of lovely feature
Sir Gryphon worshipped, Origilla hight.
Of fairer visage and of better stature,
Not one among a thousand meets the sight:
But faithless, and of such an evil nature,
That thou mightst town and city search outright,
And continent and island, far and near,
Yet, never, as I think, wouldst find her peer.

CII
In Constantine's imperial city, burned
With a fierce fever, he had left the fair;
And hoped to find her, to that place returned,
Lovelier than ever; and enjoy her there.
But she to Antioch (as the warrior learned)
Had with another leman made repair;
Thinking, while such fresh youth was yet her own,
'Twere not a thing to brook — to sleep alone.

CIII
Sir Gryphon, from the time he heard the news
Had evermore bemoaned him, day or night:
Whatever pleasure other wight pursues
Seems but the more to vex his troubled sprite.
Let each reflect, who to his mischief woos,
How keenly tempered are Love's darts of might,
And, heavier than all ills, the torment fell,
In that he was ashamed his grief to tell.

CIV
This: for that Aquilant had oft before
Reproved him for the passion which he nursed,

And sought to banish her from his heart's core;
— Her, who of all bad women is the worst,
He still had censured, in his wiser lore,
If by his brother Aquilant accurst,
Her Gryphon, in his partial love, excuses,
For mostly self-conceit our sense abuses.

CV
It therefore is his purpose, without say
To Aquilant, alone to take the quest
As far as Antioch, and bear her away,
Who had borne off his heart-core from his breast:
To find him, who had made the dame his prey,
And take such vengeance of him, ere he rest,
As shall for aye be told. My next will tell
How he effected this, and what befell.

CANTO 16

ARGUMENT
Gryphon finds traitorous Origilla nigh
Damascus city, with Martano vile.
Slaughtered the Saracens and Christians lie
By thousands and by thousands heaped this while;
And if the Moor outside of Paris die,
Within the Sarzan so destroys each pile,
Such slaughter deals, that greater ill than this
Never before has been exprest, I wiss.

I
Love's penalties are manifold and dread:
Of which I have endured the greater part,
And, to my cost, in these so well am read,
That I can speak of them as 'twere my art.
Hence if I say, or if I ever said,

(Did speech or living page my thoughts impart)
"One ill is grievous and another light."
Yield me belief, and deem my judgment right.

II
I say, I said, and, while I live, will say,
"He, who is fettered by a worthy chain,
Though his desire his lady should gainsay,
And, every way averse, his suit disdain;
Though Love deprive him of all praised pay,
After long time and trouble spent in vain,
He, if his heart be placed well worthily,
Needs not lament though he should waste and die."

III
Let him lament, who plays a slavish part,
Whom two bright eyes and lovely tresses please:
Beneath which beauties lurks a wanton heart
With little that is pure, and much of lees.
The wretch would fly; but bears in him a dart,
Like wounded stag, whichever way he flees;
Dares not confess, yet cannot quench, his flame,
And of himself and worthless love has shame.

IV
The youthful Gryphon finds him in this case,
Who sees the error which he cannot right;
He sees how vilely he his heart does place
On faithless Origille, his vain delight:
Yet evil use doth sovereign reason chase,
And free will is subdued by appetite.
Though a foul mind the lady's actions speak,
Her, wheresoe'er she is, must Gryphon seek.

V
Resuming the fair history, I say,
Out of the city he in secret rode;

Nor to his brother would his plan bewray,
Who oft on him had vain reproof bestowed:
But to the left t'wards Ramah shaped his way,
By the most level and most easy road.
Him six days' journey to Damascus brought,
Whence, setting out anew, he Antioch sought.

VI
He nigh Damascus met the lover, who
Perfidious Origilla's heart possest,
And matched in evil customs were the two,
Like stalk and flower: for that in either's breast
Was lodged a fickle heart; the dame untrue,
And he a traitor whom she loved the best.
While both the lovers hid their nature base,
To others' cost, beneath a courteous face.

VII
As I relate to you, the cavalier
Came on huge courser, trapped with mickle pride;
With faithless Origille, in gorgeous gear,
With gold embroidered, and with azure dyed.
Two ready knaves, who serve the warrior, rear
The knightly helm and buckler at his side;
As one who with fair pomp and semblance went
Towards Damascus, to a tournament.

VIII
Damascus' king a splendid festival
Had in these days bid solemnly proclaim;
And with what pomp they could, upon his call,
Thither, in shining arms, the champions came.
At Gryphon's sight the harlot's spirits fall,
Who fears that he will work her scathe and shame;
And knows her lover has not force and breath
To save her from Sir Gryphon, threatening death;

IX

But like most cunning and audacious quean,
Although she quakes from head to foot with fear,
Her voice so strengthens, and so shapes her mien,
That in her face no signs of dread appear,
Having already made her leman ween
The trick devised, she feigns a joyous cheer,
Towards Sir Gryphon goes, and for long space
Hangs on his neck, fast-locked in her embrace.

X

She, after suiting with much suavity
The action to the word, sore weeping, cried:
"Dear lord, is this the guerdon due to me,
For love and worship? that I should abide
Alone one live long year, deprived of thee,
— A second near — and, yet upon thy side
No grief? — and had I borne for thee to stay,
I know not if I should have seen that day.

XI

"When I from Nicosia thee expected
(When thou wast journeying to the plenar court)
To cheer me, — left with fever sore infected,
And in the dread of death, — I heard report
That thou wast gone to Syria; and dejected
By that ill tiding, suffered in such sort,
I, all unable to pursue thy quest,
Had nigh with this right hand transfixt my breast.

XII

"But fortune, by her double bounty, shows
She guards me more than thou: me to convey
She sent my brother here, who with me goes,
My honour safe in his protecting stay;
And this encounter with thee now bestows,

Which I above all other blessings weigh,
And in good time; for hadst thou longer stayed,
My lord, I should have died of hope delayed."

XIII
The wicked woman, full of subtlety
(Worse than a fox in crafty hardihood)
Pursues, and so well shapes her history,
She wholly throws the blame on Gryphon good;
Makes him believe that other not to be
Her kin alone, but of her flesh and blood,
Got by one father; — and so puts upon
The knight, that he less credits Luke and John.

XIV
Nor he the fraud of her, more false than fair,
Only forbore with just reproach to pay;
Nor only did the threatened stranger spare,
Who was the lover of that lady gay;
But deemed to excuse himself sufficient were,
Turning some portion of the blame away;
And as the real brother she profest,
Unceasingly the lady's knight carest;

XV
And to Damascus, with the cavalier
Returned, who to Sir Gryphon made report,
That Syria's wealthy king, with sumptuous cheer,
Within that place would hold a splendid court;
And who, baptized or infidel, appear
There at his tourney (of whatever sort),
Within the city and without, assures
From wrong, for all the time the feast endures.

XVI
Yet I of Origilla's treachery
Shall not so steadfastly pursue the lore,

Who, famed not for one single perfidy,
Thousands and thousands had betrayed before,
But that I will return again to see
Two hundred thousand wretched men or more
Burnt by the raging wild-fire, where they spread,
About the walls of Paris, scathe and dread.

XVII

I left you where king Agramant prepared
To storm a gate, and to the assault was gone:
This he had hoped to find without a guard;
And work elsewhere to bar the way was none.
For there, in person, Charles kept watch and ward
With many, practised warriors every one;
Two Angelines, two Guidos, Angelier,
Avino, Avolio, Otho, and Berlinghier.

XVIII

One and the other host its worth, before
Charles and king Agramant, desire to show,
Where praise, where riches are, they think, in store
For those that do their duty on the foe.
But such were not the atchievements of the Moor
As to repair the loss; for, to his woe,
Full many a Saracen the champaign prest;
Whose folly was a beacon to the rest.

XIX

The frequent darts a storm of hail appear,
Which from the city-wall the Christians fling;
The deafening clamours put the heavens in fear,
Which, from our part, and from that other, ring.
But Charles and Agramant must wait; for here
I of the Mars of Africa will sing,
King Rodomont, that fierce and fearful man,
That through the middle of the city ran.

XX

I know not, sir, if you the adventure dread
Of that so daring Moor to mind recall,
The leader, who had left his people dead,
Between the second work and outer wall;
Upon those limbs the ravening fire so fed,
Was never sight more sad! — I told withal,
How vaulting o'er that hindrance at a bound,
He cleared the moat which girt the city round.

XXI

When he was known the thickening crowd among,
By the strange arms he wore and scaly hide,
There, where the aged sires and feebler throng.
Listened to each new tale on every side;
Heaven-high groan, moan, and lamentation rung,
And loud they beat their lifted palms and cried:
While those who had the strength to fly aloof,
Sought safety not from house or temple's roof.

XXII

But this the cruel sword concedes to few,
So brandished by that Saracen robust;
And here, with half a leg dissevered, flew
A foot, there head divided from the bust:
This cleft across, and that behold him hew,
From head to hips, so strong the blow and just.
While, of the thousands wounded by the Moor,
Is none that shows an honest scar before.

XXIII

What by weak herd, in fields of Hircany,
The tiger does, or Indian Ganges near,
Or wolf, by lamb or kid, on heights which lie
On Typheus' back, the cruel cavalier
Now executes on those, I will not, I

Call phalanxes or squadrons, but a mere
Rabble, that I should term a race forlorn,
Who but deserved to die ere they were born.

XXIV
Of all he cuts, and thrusts, and maims, and bleeds,
There is not one who looks him in the face.
Throughout that street, which in a straight line leads
Up to St. Michael's bridge, so thronged a space,
Rodomont, terrible and fearful, speeds,
Whirling his bloody brand, nor grants he grace,
In his career, to servant or to lord;
And saint and sinner feel alike the sword.

XXV
Religion cannot for the priest bespeak
Mercy, nor innocence avail the child:
Nor gently beaming eyes, nor vermeil cheek,
Protect the blooming dame or damsel mild.
Age smites its breast and flies: while bent to wreak
Vengeance, the Saracen, with gore defiled,
Shows not his valour more than cruel rage,
Heedless alike of order, sex, and age.

XXVI
Nor the impious king alone with human blood,
— Lord of the impious he — his hand distains,
But even on walls so sorely vents his mood,
He fires fair houses, and polluted fanes.
The houses almost all were made of wood,
Then (as 'tis told) and this, by what remains,
May be believed; for yet in Paris we
Six out of ten no better builded see.

XXVII
Though flames demolish all things far and wide,
This ill appears his furious hate to slake:

Where'er the paynim has his hands applied,
He tumbles down a roof at every shake.
My lord, believe, you never yet espied
Bombard in Padua, of so large a make,
That it could rend from wall of battered town
What, at a single pull, the king plucked down.

XXVIII
While the accursed man, amid the rout,
So warred with fire and sword, if at his post,
King Agramant had prest it from without,
The ample city had that day been lost.
But he was hindered by the warrior stout,
Who came from England with the advancing host,
Composed of English and of Scotch allied,
With Silence and the Angel for their guide.

XXIX
It was God's will, that while through town and tower
The furious Rodomont such ruin spread,
Thither arrived Rinaldo, Clermont's flower.
Three leagues above, he o'er the river's bed
Had cast a bridge; from whence his English power
To the left-hand by crooked ways he led;
That, meaning to assail the barbarous foes,
The stream no obstacle might interpose.

XXX
Rinaldo had, with Edward, sent a force,
Six thousand strong, of archer infantry,
And sped, with Ariman, two thousand horse
Of lightest sort; and foot and cavalry
Sought Paris by those roads, which have their course
Directly to, and from, the Picard sea;
That by St. Martin's and St. Denys' gate,
They might convey the aid the burghers wait.

XXXI

Rinaldo sent with these the baggage train
And carriages, with which his troops were stored;
And fetching, with the forces that remain,
A compass, he the upper way explored.
He bridge, and boat, and means to pass the Seine,
Had with him; for it here was ill to ford.
He past his army, broke the bridges down,
And rank'd in line the bands of either crown.

XXXII

But having first the peers and captains wheeled
About him in a ring, the cavalier
Mounted the bank which overtopt the field,
So much, that all might plainly see and hear;
And cried, "My lords, you should thanksgiving yield,
With lifted hands, to God, who brought you here;
Through whom, o'er every nation, you may gain
Eternal glory, bought with little pain.

XXXIII

"Two princes, by your means, will rescued be,
If you relieve those city gates from siege;
Him, your own king, whom you from slavery
And death to save, a subject's vows oblige;
And a famed emperor, of more majesty
Than ever yet in court was served by liege,
And with them other kings, and dukes, and peers,
And lords of other lands, and cavaliers.

XXXIV

"So that one city saving, not alone
Will the Parisians bless your helping hand,
Who, sadder than for sorrows of their own,
Timid, afflicted, and disheartened stand;
And their unhappy wives and children moan,

Which share in the same peril, and the band
Or virgins, dedicate to heavenly spouse,
Lest this day frustrate see their holy vows;

XXXV
— "I say, this city saved from deadly wound,
Not only will Parisians hold you dear;
But habitants of all the countries round:
Nor speak I only of the nations near;
For city there is none on Christian ground.
But what has citizens beleaguered here;
So that to you, for vanquishing the foe,
More lands than France will obligation owe.

XXXVI
"If him the ancients with a crown endued,
Who saved one citizen by worthy deed,
For rescuing such a countless multitude,
What recompense shall be your worthy meed?
But if, from jealousy or sloth, so good
And holy, enterprise should ill succeed,
Believe me, only while these walls endure,
Is Italy or Almayn's realm secure;

XXXVII
"Or any other part, where men adore
Him, who for us upon the cross was hung;
Nor think that distance saves you from the Moor,
Nor deem your island strong, the waves among.
For if, from far Gibraltar's straits of yore,
And old Alcides' pillars, sailed the throng,
To bear off plunder from your sea-girt strands,
What will they do when they possess our lands?

XXXVIII
"And, if in this fair enterprise arrayed,
No gain, no glory served you as a guide,

A common debt enjoins you mutual aid,
Militant here upon one Church's side.
Moreover, let not any be afraid,
Our broken foemen will the assault abide;
Who seem to me ill-taught in warlike art,
A feeble rabble without arms or heart."

XXXIX
Such reasons, and yet better for, that need
Might good Rinaldo in his speech infer;
And with quick phrase and voice, to valiant deed
The high-minded barons and bold army stir;
And this was but to goad a willing steed
(As the old proverb says) who lacks no spur.
He moved the squadrons, having closed his speech,
Softly, beneath their separate banners, each.

XL
He, without clamour, without any noise.
So moves his triple host, their flags below.
Zerbino, marching by the stream, enjoys
The honour first to assail the barbarous foe;
The paladin the Irishmen employs
More inland, with a wider wheel to go.
Thus England's horse and foot, the two between,
Led by the Duke of Lancaster, are seen.

XLI
The paladin rode on, along the shore,
When he had put the warriors in their way,
And, passing by their squadrons, pricked before
Valiant Zerbino and his whole array,
Until he reached the quarters of the Moor,
Where Oran's king, and king Sobrino lay;
Who, half-a-mile removed from those of Spain,
Posted upon that side, observed the plain.

XLII
With such a faithful escort fortified
And sure, the Christians who had thither wound,
With Silence and the Angel for their guide,
No longer could stand mute or keep their ground:
But hearing now the foe, with shouts defied
Their host, and made the shrilling trumpets sound;
And with loud clamours, which Heaven's concave fill,
Sent through the paynim's bones a deadly chill.

XLIII
Rinaldo spurs before the troops combined
His foaming courser, and his weapon rests;
And a full bow-shot leaves the Scots behind:
So all delay the impatient peer molests.
As oftentimes an eddying gust of winds
Issues, ere yet the horrid storm infests,
So sallying swiftly from the following herd,
Rinaldo forth upon Baiardo spurred.

XLIV
As the aspect of the paladin of France,
The wavering Moorish files betray their fear;
And, trembling in their hands, is seen the lance,
Their thighs and stirrups quivering, like the spear.
King Pulian only marks the knight's advance,
Knowing Rinaldo not, unchanged in cheer;
Nor thinking such a cruel shock to meet,
Gallops against him on his courser fleet.

XLV
He stoops upon the weapon which he strains,
Whole and collected for the martial game:
Then to his horse abandoning the reins,
And goading with both spurs the courser, came.
Upon the other side no valour feigns,

But shows, by doings, what he is in name;
— With what rare grace and matchless art he wars,
The son of Aymon, rather son of Mars.

XLVI
Well-matched in skill, they aimed their cruel blows,
With lances at each other's heads addrest;
Ill matched, in arms and valour, were the foes,
For this past on, and that the champaigne prest.
More certain proof of worth, when warriors close,
There needs than knightly lance, well placed in rest;
But Fortune even more than Valour needs,
Which ill, without her saving succour, speeds.

XLVII
With the good spear new levelled in his fist,
At Oran's king behold Rinaldo dart.
Of bulk, and bone, and sinew, to resist
The monarch was, but ill supplied with heart.
And his might pass for a fair stroke in list,
Though planted in the buckler's nether part.
Let those excuse it who refuse to admire,
Since the good paladin could reach no higher.

XLVIII
Nor did the buckler so the weapon stay,
Though made of palm within, and steel without,
But that it pierced the paunch, and made a way
To let that mean and ill matched spirit out.
The courser, who had deemed that all the day
He must so huge a burden bear about,
Thanked in his heart the warrior, who well met,
Had thus preserved him from so sore a sweat.

XLIX
Rinaldo, having broke his rested spear,
So wheels his horse, he seems equipt with wings;

Who, turning swiftly with the cavalier,
Amid the closest crowd, impetuous springs.
Composed of brittle glass the arms appear
Where Sir Rinaldo red Fusberta swings.
Nor tempered steel is there, nor corslet thick,
Which keeps the sword from biting to the quick.

L

Yet few the tempered plates or iron pins
With which encounters that descending brand;
But targets, some of oak and some of skins,
And quilted vest and turban's twisted band.
Lightly such drapery good Rinaldo thins,
And cleaves, and bores, and shears, on either hand;
Nor better from his sword escapes the swarm,
Than grass from sweeping scythe, or grain from storm.

LI

The foremost squadron had been put to flight,
When thither the vanguard Zerbino led.
Forth pricking from the following crowd, in sight
Appeared, with levelled lance, their youthful head:
With no less fury those who trooped to fight
Beneath his banner, to the combat sped;
Like lions, like so many wolves, who leap
In fury to the assault of goat or sheep.

LII

Both spurred their coursers on, with rested lance,
When either warrior to his foe was near;
And that short interval, that small expanse,
Of plain, between, was seen to disappear.
Was never witnessed yet a stranger dance!
For the Scots only ply the murderous spear;
Only the scattered paynims slaughtered lie,
As if conducted thither but to die.

LIII

It seemed as if each coward paynim grew
More cold than ice, each Scot more fierce than flame.
The Moors believed that with Rinaldo's thew
And muscle fortified, each Christian came.
Sobrino quickly moved his ordered crew,
Nor stayed till herald should his call proclaim:
Better were they than those which went before,
For captain, armour, and for martial lore.

LIV

Less worthless men of Africa were they,
Though ill had they been deemed of much avail.
Ill harnessed, and worse trained to martial fray,
Forthwith King Dardinel, the foe to assail,
Moved up his host, himself in helmet gay,
And sheathing all his limbs in plate and mail.
The fourth division I believe was best,
Which, under Isolier, to battle prest.

LV

Thraso, this while, the valiant Duke of Mar,
Glad in the tumult, for the cavaliers
Who muster in his train, uplifts the bar,
And to the lists of fame his following chears,
When Isolier, with horsemen of Navarre,
Entered in that fierce fray he sees and hears.
Next Ariodantes moved his chivalry,
Who was of late made Duke of Albany.

LVI

The deep sonorous trumpet's bellowing,
And sound of drum, and barbarous instrument,
Combined with twang of bow, and whiz of sling,
Wheel and machine, and stone from engine sent,
And (what more loud than these appeared to ring)

Tumult, and shriek, and groan, and loud lament,
Composed a direr whole than what offends
The neighbouring tribes where deafening Nile descends.

LVII
The arrows' double shower the ample sky
With wide-extended shade is seen to shrowd;
Breath, smoke of sweat and dust ascend on high,
And seem to stamp in air a murky cloud.
By turns each host gives way, and you might spy,
Now chasing, now in flight, the self-same crowd;
And here some wight, beside his foeman slain,
Or little distant, prostrate on the plain.

LVIII
When, harassed with fatigue, a wearied crew
Withdraw, fresh files their fellows reinforce:
Men, here and there, the wasted ranks renew;
Here march supplies of foot, and there of horse:
Her mantle green for robe of crimson hue
Earth shifts, ensanguined where the warriors course:
And there were azure flowers and yellow sprung,
Now slaughtered men lie stretched their steeds among.

LIX
Zerbino was more wonders seen to do
Than ever stripling of his age, he strowed
The ground with heaps of dead, and overthrew
The paynim numbers which about him flowed.
The valiant Ariodantes to his new-
Entrusted squadron mighty prowess showed;
Filling with dread and wonder, near and far,
The squadrons of Castile and of Navarre.

LX
Chelindo and Mosco (bastards were the twain
Of Calabrun, late king of Arragon),

And one esteemed among the valiant train,
Calamidor, of Barcellona's town,
Leaving their standards, in the hope to gain,
By young Zerbino's death, a glorious force,
And wounded in his flanks the prince's horse.

LXI
Pierced by three lances lay the courser strong,
But bold Zerbino quickly rose anew;
And, eager to avenge his charger's wrong,
The assailants, where he sees them, will pursue.
Zerbino at Mosco first, that overhung
Him, in the hope to make him prisoner, flew,
And pierced him in the flank; who from his sell,
Pallid and cold, upon the champaign fell.

LXII
When him so killed, as 'twere by stealthy blow,
Chelindo viewed, to avenge his brother slain,
He charged, intent the prince to overthrow;
But he seized fast his courser by the rein,
And, thence to rise not, laid the charger low,
Destined no more to feed on hay or grain;
For at one stroke, so matchless was his force,
Zerbino cleft the rider and his horse.

LXIII
When that fell blow Calamidor espied,
He turned the bridle short to speed away,
But him with downright cut Zerbino plied
Behind, and cried withal, "Stay, traitor, stay."
Nor from its aim the sword-stroke wandered wide,
Though from the mark it went somedeal astray;
The falchion missed the rider as he fled,
But reached the horse's croup, and stretched him dead,

LXIV

He quits the horse, and thence for safety crawls;
But he with little boot escapes his foe;
For him Duke Thraso's horse o'erturns and mawls,
Opprest the ponderous courser's weight below.
Where the huge crowd upon Zerbino falls,
Ariodantes and Lurcanio go;
And with them many a cavalier and count,
Who do their best Zerbino to remount.

LXV

Then Artalico and Margano knew
The force of Ariodantes' circling brand:
While Casimir and Enearco rue
More deeply yet the puissance of his hand.
Smote by the knight, escaped the former two;
The others were left dead upon the strand.
Lurcanio shows what are his force and breath;
Who charges, smites, o'erturns, and puts to death.

LXVI

Sir, think not that more inland on the plain
The warfare is less mortal than along
The stream, nor that the troops behind remain
Which to the duke of Lancaster belong.
He valiantly assailed the flags of Spain,
And long in even scale the battle hung.
For Horse and Foot, and Captains of those bands,
On either side, could deftly ply their hands.

LXVII

Forward Sir Oldrad pricks and Fieramont;
This Glocester's duke, and York's the other knight;
With them conjoined is Richard, Warwick's count,
And the bold duke of Clarence, Henry hight.
These Follicon and Matalista front,

And Baricond, with all they lead to fight.
Almeria this, and that Granada guides,
And o'er Marjorca Baricond presides.

LXVIII
Well matched awhile the Christian and the Moor
Appeared, without advantage in the fray.
Not this, now that gave ground, like corn before
The light and fickle breeze which blows in May:
Or as the sea which ripples on the shore,
Still comes and goes, nor keeps one certain way,
When hollow Fortune thus had sported long,
She proved disastrous to the paynim throng.

LXIX
The duke of Glocester Matalista bold
Assailed this while, and hurtled from his sell;
Fieramont Follicon o'erturned and rolled,
In the right shoulder smit, on earth as well.
The advancing English either paynim hold,
And bear their prisoners off to dungeon cell.
This while, Sir Baricond is, in the strife,
By Clarence's bold duke deprived of life.

LXX
Hence 'tis among the Moors amazement all,
While hence the Christians take such heart and pride,
The bands do nought but quit their ground and fall,
And break their order on the Paynim side,
What time the Christian troops come on, and gall
Their flying rants, which nowhere will abide:
And had not one arrived to aid their host.
The Paynim camp had on that side been lost.

LXXI
But Ferrau, who till this time ever nigh
Marsilius, scarce had quitted him that day,

When half destroyed he marked his chivalry,
And saw that baffled banner born away,
Pricked his good courser forth, in time to spy,
(Where mid those squadrons hottest waxed the fray)
With his head severed in a griesly wound,
Olympio de la Serra fall to ground:

LXXII
A stripling he, who such sweet musick vented,
Accorded to the horned lyre's soft tone;
That at the dulcet melody relented
The hearer's heart, though harder than a stone.
Happy! if, with such excellence contented,
He had pursued so fair a fame alone,
And loathed shield, quiver, helmet, sword and lance;
Destined by these to die a youth in France.

LXXIII
When bold French beheld his cruel plight,
For whom he love and much esteem profest,
He felt more pity at the doleful sight
Than, 'mid those thousands slain, for all the rest.
And smote the foe who slew him with such might,
That he his helm divided from the crest;
Cut front, eyes, visage, and mid bosom through,
And cast him down amid the slaughtered crew.

LXXIV
Nor stops he here, nor leaves a corslet whole,
Nor helm unbroken, where his sword is plied,
Of this the front or cheek, of that the poll,
The arm of other foe his strokes divide;
And he, of these divorcing body and soul,
Restores the wavering battle on that side;
Whence the disheartened and ignoble throng
Are scattered wide, and broke, and driven along.

LXXV

Into the medley pricks King Agramant,
Desirous there his bloody course to run;
With him King Baliverzo, Farurant,
Soridan, Bambirago, Prusion;
And next so many more of little vaunt,
Whose blood will form a lake ere day be done,
That I could count each leaf with greater ease
When autumn of their mantle strips the trees.

LXXVI

Agramant from the wall a numerous band
Of horse and foot withdraws, and sends the array
Beneath the king of Fez, with a command
Behind the Moorish tents to make his way,
And those of Ireland in their march withstand,
Whom he sees hurrying with what haste they may,
And with wide wheel and spacious compass wind,
To fall upon the paynim camp behind.

LXXVII

The king of Fez upon this service prest;
For all delay might sore his work impede.
This while King Agramant unites the rest,
And parts the troops who to the battle speed.
He sought himself the river, where he guessed
The Moorish host might most his presence need;
And, from that quarter, had a courier prayed,
By King Sobrino sent, the monarch's aid.

LXXVIII

He more than half his camp behind him led,
In one deep phalanx. At the mighty sound
Alone, the Scotsmen trembled, and in dread
Abandoned honour, order, and their ground:
Lurcanio, Ariodantes, and their head,

Zerbino, there alone the torrent bound;
And haply he, who was afoot, had died,
But that in time his need Rinaldo spied.

LXXIX
Elsewhere the paladin was making fly
A hundred banners: while the cavalier
So chased the quailing Saracens, the cry
Of young Zerbino's peril smote the ear;
For, single and afoot, his chivalry
Amid the Africans had left the peer.
Rinaldo turned about and took his way
Where he beheld the Scots in disarray.

LXXX
He plants his courser, where their squadrons yield
To the fierce paynims, and exclaims: "Where go
Your bands, and why so basely quit the field,
Yielding so vilely to so vile a foe?
Behold the promised trophies, spear and shield,
Spoils which your loaded churches ought to show!
What praise! what glory! that alone, and reft
Of his good horse, your monarch's son is left!

LXXXI
He from a squire receives a lance, and spies
King Prusion little distant, sovereign
Of the Alvaracchiae, and against him hies;
Whom he unhorses, dead upon the plain.
So Agricalt, so Bambirago dies;
And next sore wounded is Sir Soridane;
Who had been slain as well amid the throng,
If good Rinaldo's lance had proved more strong.

LXXXII
That weapon broken, he Fusberta rears,
And smites Sir Serpentine, him of the star.

Though charmed from mischief are the cavalier's
Good arms, he falls astounded by the jar,
And thus Rinaldo round Zerbino clears
The field so widely, where those champions war,
That without more dispute he takes a horse
Of those, who masterless, at random, course.

LXXXIII
That he in time remounted it was well,
Who haply would not, if he more delayed:
For Agramant at once, and Dardinel,
Sobrino, and Balastro thither made;
But he, who had in time regained the sell,
Wheeled, here and there his horse, with brandished blade,
Dispatching into hell the mixt array,
That how men live above their ghosts might say.

LXXXIV
The good Rinaldo, who to overthrow
The strongest of the foeman covets still,
At Agramant directs a deadly blow,
— Who seems too passing-proud, and greater ill
Works there, than thousand others of the foe —
And spurs his horse, the Moorish chief to spill.
He smote the monarch, broadside charged the steed,
And man and horse reversed upon the mead.

LXXXV
What time, without, in such destructive frays
Hate, Rage, and Fury, all offend by turns,
In Paris Rodomont the people slays,
And costly house, and holy temple burns:
While Charles elsewhere anther duty stays,
Who nothing hears of this, nor aught discerns.
He, in the town, receives the British band,
Which Edward and Sir Ariman command.

LXXXVI

To him a squire approached, who pale with dread,
Scarce drew his breath, and cried: "Oh, well away!
Alas! alas!" (and thus he often said,
Ere he could utter aught beside). "To-day,
To-day, sire, is the Roman empire sped,
And Christ to the heathen makes his flock a prey.
A fiend from air to-day has dropt, that none
Henceforth may in this city make their won.

LXXXVII

"Satan (in sooth, it can no other be)
Destroys and ruins the unhappy town.
Turn, and the curling wreaths of vapour see,
From the red flames which wander up and down;
List to those groans, and be they warrantry
Of the sad news thy servant now makes known!
One the fair city wastes with sword and fire,
Before whose vengeful fury all retire."

LXXXVIII

Even such as he, who hears the tumult wide,
And clatter of church-bells, ere he espy
The raging fire, concealed from none beside
Himself, to him most dangerous, and most nigh;
Such was King Charles; who heard, and then descried
The new disaster with his very eye.
Hence he the choicest of his meiny steers
Thither, where he the cry and tumult hears.

LXXXIX

With many peers and chiefs, who worthiest are,
Summoned about him, Charlemagne is gone:
He bids direct his standards to the square
Whither the paynim had repaired; hears groan
And tumult, spies the horrid tokens there

Of cruelty, sees human members strown.
— No more — Let him return another time,
Who willingly will listen to this rhyme.

CANTO 17

ARGUMENT
Charles goes, with his, against King Rodomont.
Gryphon in Norandino's tournament
Does mighty deeds; Martano turns his front,
Showing how recreant is his natural bent;
And next, on Gryphon to bring down affront,
Stole from the knight the arms in which he went;
Hence by the kindly monarch much esteemed,
And Gryphon scorned, whom he Martano deemed.

I
God, outraged by our rank iniquity,
Whenever crimes have past remission's bound,
That mercy may with justice mingled be,
Has monstrous and destructive tyrants crowned;
And gifted them with force and subtlety,
A sinful world to punish and confound.
Marius and Sylla to this end were nursed,
Rome with two Neros and a Caius cursed;

II
Domitian and the latter Antonine;
And, lifted from the lowest rabble's lees,
To imperial place and puissance, Maximine:
Hence Thebes to cruel Creon bent her knees,
Mezentius ruled the subject Agiline,
Fattening his fields with blood. To pests like these
Our Italy was given in later day,
To Lombard, Goth, and Hun a bleeding prey.

III
What shall I of fierce Attila, what say
Of wicked Ezzeline, and hundreds more?
Whom, because men still trod the crooked way,
God sent them for their pain and torment sore.
Of this ourselves have made a clear assay,
As well as those who lived in days of yore;
Consigned to ravening wolves, ordained to keep
Us, his ill-nurturing and unuseful sheep;

IV
Who, as if having more than served to fill
Their hungry maw, invite from foreign wood
Beyond the mountain, wolves of greedier will,
With them to be partakers of their food.
The bones which Thrasymene and Trebbia fill,
And Cannae, seem but few to what are strewed
On fattened field and bank, where on their way
Adda and Mella, Ronco and Tarro stray.

V
Now God permits that we should feel the spite
Of people, who are haply worse than we,
For errors multiplied and infinite,
And foul and pestilent iniquity.
The time will come we may such ill requite
Upon their shores, if we shall better be,
And their transgressions ever prove above
The long endurance of AETERNAL LOVE.

VI
The Christian people then God's placid front
Must have disturbed with their excesses sore;
Since them with slaughter, rape, and rapine hunt,
Through all their quarters, plundering Turk and Moor:
But the unsparing rage of Rodomont

Proves worse than all the ills endured before.
I said that Charlemagne had made repair
In search of him towards the city square.

VII
Charles, by the way, his people's butchery
Beholds — burnt palaces and ruined fanes —
And sees large portion of the city lie
In unexampled wreck. — "Ye coward trains,
Whither in heartless panic would ye fly?
Will none his loss contemplate? what remains
To you, — what place of refuge, say, is left,
If this from you so shamefully be reft?

VIII
"Then shall one man alone, a prisoned foe,
Who cannot scale the walls which round him spread,
Unscathed, unquestioned, from your city go,
When all are by his vengeful arm laid dead?"
Thus Charlemagne, whose veins with anger glow,
And shame, too strong to brook, in fury said;
And to the spacious square made good his way,
Where he beheld the foe his people slay.

IX
Thither large portion of the populace,
Climbing the palace roof, had made resort;
For strongly walled, and furnished was the place
With ammunition, for their long support.
Rodomont, mad with pride, had, in his chace
Of the scared burghers, singly cleared the court,
He with one daring hand, which scorned the world,
Brandished the sword; — his other wildfire hurled;

X
And smote and thundered, 'mid a fearful shower,
At the sublime and royal house's gate.

To their life's peril, crumbling roof and tower
Is tost by them that on the summit wait:
Nor any fears to ruin hall or bower;
But wood and stone endure one common fate,
And marbled column, slab, and gilded beam,
By sire and grandsire held in high esteem.

XI
Rodomont stands before the portal, bright
With steel, his head and bust secured in mail,
Like to a serpent, issued into light,
Having cast off his slough, diseased and stale:
Who more than ever joying in his might,
Renewed in youth, and proud of polished scale,
Darts his three tongues, fire flashing from his eyes;
While every frighted beast before him flies.

XII
Nor bulwark, stone, nor arbalest, nor bow,
Nor what upon the paynim smote beside,
Sufficed to arrest the sanguinary foe;
Who broke and hewed, and shook that portal wide,
And in his fury let such day-light through,
'Twas easy to espy — and might be spied —
In visages o'ercast in death-like sort,
That full of people was the palace court.

XIII
Through those fair chambers echoed shouts of dread,
And feminine lament from dame distrest;
And grieving, through the house, pale women fled,
Who wept, afflicted sore, and beat their breast.
And hugged the door-post and the genial bed,
Too soon to be by stranger lords possest.
The matter in this state of peril hung
When thither came the king, his peers among.

XIV
Charles turned him round to these, of vigorous hand,
Whom he had found in former peril true.
"Are you not those that erst with me did stand
'Gainst Agolant in Aspramont? In you
Is vigour now so spent, (he said), the band,
Who him, Troyano, and Almontes slew,
With hundreds more, that you now fear to face
One of that very blood, that very race?

XV
"Why should I now in contest with the foe
Less strength in you behold than them? Your might
Upon this hound (pursued the monarch) show;
This hound who preys on man. — A generous sprite
The thought of death — approach he fast or slow —
So that he dies but well, holds cheap and light.
But where you are, I doubt my fortune ill,
For by your succour, have I conquered still."

XVI
This said, he spurred his courser, couched his spear,
And charged the paynim; nor of life less free,
Sir Ogier joined the king in his career;
Namus and Oliver; and, with the three,
Avino, Avolio, Otho, and Berlinghier:
(For one without the rest I never see)
And on the bosom, flanks, and on the front,
All smote together at King Rodomont.

XVII
But let us, sir, for love of Heaven, forego
Of anger and of death the noisome lore;
And be it deemed that I have said enow,
For this while, of that Saracen, not more
Cruel than strong; 'tis time in trace to go

Of Gryphon, left with Origille, before
Damascus' gate, and him who with her came,
The adulterer, not the brother of the dame.

XVIII
Of all the cities under eastern skies,
Most wealthy, populous, and fairly dight,
'Tis said, Damascus is; which distant lies
From Salem seven days' journey; its fair site,
A fertile plain, abundant fruits supplies,
Winter and summer, sojourn of delight.
Shading the city from the dawning day,
A mountain intercepts its early ray.

XIX
Two crystal streams the wealthy city scower;
Whose currents, parted into many a rill,
Infinite gardens, never bare of flower,
Or stript of leaf, with grateful murmur fill:
'Tis said the perfumed waters are of power
(So plenteously they swell) to turn a mill;
And that whoever wander through the streets,
Scent, issuing from each home, a cloud of sweets.

XX
Then the high-street gay signs of triumph wore,
Covered with showy cloths of different dye,
Which deck the walls, while sylvan leaves in store,
And scented herbs upon the pavement lie.
Adorned is every window, every door,
With carpeting and finest drapery;
But more with ladies fair, and richly drest,
In costly jewels and in gorgeous vest.

XXI
Within the city gates in frolic sport,
Many are seen to ply the festive dance;

And here the burghers of the better sort
Upon their gay and well-trapt coursers prance.
A fairer show remains; the sumptuous court
Of barons bold and vassals, who advance,
Garnished with what could be procured, of ore
And pearl, from Ind and Erythraean shore.

XXII
Forward Sir Gryphon pricked, with his array,
Surveying, here and there, the whole at ease;
When them a knight arrested by the way,
And (such his wont and natural courtesies)
Obliged beneath his palace-roof to stay;
Where he let nought be wanting which might please;
And chearfully the guests, with bath restored,
Next welcomed at his costly supper-board;

XXIII
And told how he, who, Norandino hight,
Damascus and all Syria's kingdom swayed,
Native and foreigner had bade invite,
On whom the sword of knighthood had been laid,
To a fair joust, which at the morrow's light,
Ensuing, in the square was to be made.
Where they might show, and without further faring,
If they had valour equal to their bearing.

XXIV
Gryphon, though he came not that joust to see,
Accepts the challenge of the cavalier;
For when occasion serves, it cannot be
An evil use to make our worth appear:
Then questioned more of that solemnity;
— If 'twere a wonted feast, held every year,
Or new emprise; by which, in martial course,
The monarch would assay his warriors' force. —

XXV

"The gorgeous feast our monarch will display
Each fourth succeeding moon," the baron said;
"This is the first that you will now survey;
None have been held beside. The cause which bred
The solemn usage is, that on such day
The king from sovereign peril saved his head,
After four months, consumed in doleful wise,
'Mid tears and groans, with death before his eyes.

XXVI

"Our monarch, who is named king Norandine
(Fully to you the matter to recite),
Through many and many a year for her did pine,
Above all other damsels fair and bright,
The king of Cyprus' daughter; whom, in fine,
Espoused, he, with his bride, and dame, and knight,
To wait upon her home, a fair array,
Towards his Syrian realm had shaped his way.

XXVII

"But as we scoured the fell Carpathian sea,
With flowing sheet, at distance from the shore,
A storm assailed us, of such cruelty,
The tempest even scared our pilot hoar.
Drifting three days and nights at random, we
Our devious course 'mid threatening waves explore;
Then, wet and weary, land 'mid verdant hills,
Between well-shaded and refreshing rills.

XXVIII

"We our pavilions pitch, and, 'mid those groves,
Joyfully strain our awnings overhead;
And kitchens there construct, and rustic stoves,
And carpets for the intended banquet spread.
Meanwhile through neighbouring vale the monarch roves,

And secret wood, scarce pervious to the tread,
Seeking red deer, goat, fallow-buck, and doe;
And, following him, two servants bear his bow.

XXIX
"While, with much solace, seated in a round,
We from the chace expect our lord's return,
Approaching us along the shore, astound,
The orc, that fearful monster, we discern.
God grant, fair sir, he never may confound
Your eyesight with his semblance foul and stern!
Better it is of him by fame to hear,
Than to behold him by approaching near.

XXX
"To calculate the griesly monster's height,
(So measureless is he) exceeds all skill;
Of fungus-hue, in place of orbs of sight,
Their sockets two small bones like berries fill.
Towards us, as I say, he speeds outright
Along the shore, and seems a moving hill.
Tusks jutting out like savage swine he shows,
A breast with drivel foul, and pointed nose.

XXXI
"Running, the monster comes, and bears his snout
In guise of brach, who enters on the trail.
We who behold him fly (a helpless rout),
Wherever terror drives, with visage pale.
'Tis little comfort, that he is without
Eye-sight, who winds his plunder in the gale,
Better than aught possest of scent and sight:
And wing and plume were needed for our flight.

XXXII
"Some here, some there make off, but little gain
By flying him; for swifter is the pest

Than the south wind. Of forty, ten, with pain,
Swimming aboard the bark in safety rest.
Under his arm some wretches of our train
He packed, nor empty left his lap or breast:
And loaded a capacious scrip beside,
Which, like a shepherd's, to his waist was tied.

XXXIII
"Us to his den the sightless monster carried,
Hollowed within a rock, upon the shore;
Of snowy marble was that cavern quarried,
As white as leaf, unstained by inky score.
With him within the cave a matron tarried,
Who marked by grief and pain a visage wore.
With her were wife and maid, a numerous court,
Both fair and foul, of every age and sort.

XXXIV
"Large as the other, and that grotto near,
Almost upon the summit of the rock,
Another cavern was contrived, to rear,
And from the weather fend his woolly flock,
Which he still herded through the changeful year;
So numerous, it were hard to count his stock:
Wont in due season these to pen or loose,
And play the shepherd more for sport than use.

XXXV
"The flesh of man he savoured more than sheep,
And this, before he reached the cave, was seen.
Three youths of ours, ere yet he climbed the steep,
He are alive, or rather swallowed clean;
Then moved the stone, which closed that cavern deep,
And lodged us there. With that, to pasture green
His flock he led, as wont, the meads among,
Sounding the pipe which at his neck was hung.

XXXVI

"Our lord, meanwhile, returning to the strand,
The loss which he had suffered comprehends;
For in deep silence, upon every hand,
Through empty tent and hut the monarch wends:
Nor who has robbed him can be understand;
And full of terror to the beach descends;
Whence he his sailors in the offing sees
Unmoor and spread their canvas to the breeze.

XXXVII

"As soon as Norandino was in view,
They launched and sent their pinnace to convey
The monarch thence: but he no sooner knew
Of the fell orc, and those he made his prey,
Then he, without more thought, would him pursue
And follow, wheresoe'er he bent his way.
To lose Lucina is such cruel pain,
That life is loathsome save he her regain.

XXXVIII

"When on the newly printed sand his eyes
Norandine fixt, he with the swiftness sped
With which the rage of love a man supplies,
Until he reached the cave of which I said,
Where we, enduring greater agonies
Than e'er were suffered, there await in dread
The orc, and deem at every sound we hear,
The famished brute about to re-appear.

XXXIX

"The monarch to the cave did Fortune guide,
When the orc's wife alone was in the lair.
Seeing the king: `Fly! — Woe to thee!' (she cried)
`Should the orc take thee!' — `Woeful every where
I cannot choose but be,' (the king replied)

`Whether be take or miss me, kill or spare.
Not hither I by chance have wandered, I
Come with desire beside my wife to die.'

XXX
"He afterwards the dame for tidings pressed
Of those the orc had taken on the shore;
And of Lucina above all the rest;
If slain or prisoner kept. With kindly lore,
She Norandino, in return, addressed;
And said Lucina lived, nor need he more
Have of her future safety any dread,
For the orc on flesh of woman never fed.

XLI
" `Of this you may behold the proof in me,
And all these other dames who with me dwell;
Nor me, nor them the orc offends, so we
Depart not ever from this caverned cell.
But vainly who would from her prison flee,
Hopes peace or pardon from our tyrant fell:
Buried alive, or bound with griding band,
Of, in the sun, stript naked on the sand.

XLII
" `When hither he to-day conveyed your crew,
The females from the males he severed not;
But, as he took them, in confusion threw
All he had captive made, into that grot.
He will scent out their sex; not tremble, you,
Lest he the women slay: the others' lot
Is fixt; and, of four men or six a-day,
Be sure the greedy orc will make his prey.

XLIII
" `I have no counsel for you how to free
The lady; but content thyself to hear,

She in no danger of her life will be,
Who will our lot, in good or evil, share.
But go, for love of Heaven, my son, lest thee
The monster smell, and on thy body fare;
For when arrived, he sniffs about the house,
And, such his subtle scent, can wind a mouse.'

XLIV
"To her the amorous monarch made reply,
That he the cave would not abandon, ere
He saw Lucina, and near her to die,
Than to live far from her, esteemed more dear.
— Seeing that she can nothing more supply
Fitted to shake the purpose of the peer,
Upon a new design the matron hits.
Pursued with all her pains, with all her wits.

XLV
"With slaughtered sheep and goat was evermore
The cavern filled, the numerous flock's increase,
Which served her and her household as a store;
And from the ceiling dangled many a fleece.
The dame made Norandino from a hoar
And huge he-goat's fat bowels take the grease,
And with the suet all his members pay,
Until he drove his natural scent away.

XLVI
"And when she thought he had imbibed the smell
Which the rank goat exhales, she took the hide,
And made him creep into the shaggy fell;
Who was well covered by that mantle wide.
Him in this strange disguise she from the cell
Crawling (for such was her command) did guide,
Where, prisoned by a stone, in her retreat,
Was hid his beauteous lady's visage sweet.

XLVII

"Kin Norandine, as bid, took up his ground
Before the cavern, on the greensward laid,
That he might enter with the flock who wound
Homeward; and longing sore, till evening stayed.
At eve he hears the hollow elder's sound,
Upon whose pipes the wonted tune was played,
Calling his sheep from pasture to their rock,
By the fell swain who stalked behind his flock.

XLVIII

"Think if his heart is trembling at its core,
When Norandino hears the approaching strains;
And now advancing to the cavern door,
The sight of that terrific face sustains!
But if fear shook him, pity moved him more:
You see if he loves well or only feigns!
The orc removed the stone, unbarred the cote,
And the king entered, amid sheep and goat.

XLIX

"His flock so housed, to us the orc descended,
But first had care the cavern door to close:
Then scented all about, and having ended
His quest, two wretches for his supper chose.
So is remembrance by this meal offended,
It makes me tremble yet: this done, he goes;
And being gone, the king his goatish vest
Casts off, and folds his lady to his breast.

L

"Whereas she him with pleasure should descry,
She, seeing him, but suffers grief and pain.
She sees him thither but arrived to die,
Who cannot hinder her from being slain.
` "Twas no small joy 'mid all the woes, that.'

To him exclaimed Lucina, 'here sustain.
That thou wert not among us found to-day,
When hither I was brought, the monster's prey.

LI
" `For though to find myself about to leave
This life be bitter and afflict me sore,
Such is our common instinct, I should grieve
But for myself; but whether thee, before
Of after me, the orc of life bereave,
Assure thyself thy death will pain me more
Than mine.' And thus the dame persists to moan
More Norandino's danger than her own.

LII
" `A hope conducts me here,' the monarch said,
`To save thee and thy followers every one;
And, if I cannot, I were better dead,
Than living without light of thee, my sun!
I trust to scape, as hither I have spied;
As ye shall all, if, as ourselves have done,
To compass our design, you do not shrink
To imbue your bodies with the loathsome stink.'

LIII
"The trick he told, wherewith the monster's smell
To cheat, as first to him the wife had told:
In any case to cloathe us in the fell,
That he may feel is issueing from the fold.
As many men as women in the cell,
We slay (persuaded by the monarch bold)
As many goats as with our number square,
Of those which stink the most and oldest are.

LIV
"We smeared our bodies with the fruitful grease
Which round about the fat intestines lay,

And cloathed our bodies with the shaggy fleece:
This while from golden dwelling broke the day.
And now, his flock returning to release,
We viewed the shepherd, with the dawning ray;
Who, giving breath to the sonorous reeds,
Piped forth his prisoned flock to hill and meads.

LV
"He held his hand before the opened lair,
Lest with the herd we issued from the den,
And stopt us short; but feeling wool or hair
Upon our bodies, let us go again.
By such a strange device we rescued were,
Cloathed in our shaggy fleeces, dames and men:
Nor any issuing thence the monster kept,
Till thither, sore alarmed, Lucina crept.

LVI
"Lucina — whether she abhorred the scent,
And, like us others, loathed herself to smear,
— Or whether with a slower gait she went
Than might like the pretended beast's appear,
— Or whether, when the orc her body hent,
Her dread so mastered her, she screamed for fear,
— Or that her hair escaped from neck or brow,
Was known; nor can I well inform you how.

LVII
"So were we all intent on our own case,
We for another's danger had no eyes:
Him, turning at the scream. I saw uncase
Already her whom he had made his prize,
And force her to the cavern to retrace
Her steps: we, couching in our quaint disguise,
Wend with the flock, where us the shepherd leads,
Through verdant mountains, into pleasant meads.

LVIII
"There we awaited, till beneath the shade
Secure, we saw the beaked orc asleep;
When one along the shore of ocean made,
And one betook him to the mountain steep.
King Norandine his love alone delayed;
Who would return disguised among the sheep,
Nor from the place depart, while life remained,
Unless his faithful consort he regained.

LIX
"For when before, on the flock issuing out,
He saw her prisoned in the cave alone,
Into the orc's wide throat he was about
To spring; so grief had reason overthrown,
And he advanced even to the monster's snout,
And, but by little, scaped the grinding stone:
Yet him the hope detained amid the flock,
Trusting to bear Lucina from the rock.

LX
"The orc, at eve, when to the cave again
He brings the herd, nor finds us in the stall,
And knows that he must supperless remain,
Lucina guilty of the whole does call,
Condemned to stand, fast girded with a chain,
In open air, upon the summit tall.
The king who caused her woes, with pitying eye
Looks on, and pines, — and only cannot die.

LXI
"Morning and evening, her, lamenting sore,
Ever the unhappy lover might survey;
What time he grieving went afield before
The issuing flock, or homeward took his way.
She, with sad face, and suppliant evermore,

Signed that for love of Heaven he would not stay;
Since there he tarried at great risk of life.
Nor could in any thing assist his wife.

LXII
"So the orc's wife, as well upon her side,
Implored him to depart, but moved him nought;
To go without Lucina he denied,
And but remained more constant in his thought.
In this sad servitude he long was tried,
By Love and Pity bound: till Fortune brought
A pair of warriors to the rocky won,
Gradasso, and Agrican's redoubted son:

LXIII
"Where, with their arms so wrought the champions brave,
They freed Lucina from the chains she wore,
(Though he Wit less than Fortune served in save)
And running to the sea their burden bore:
Her to her father, who was there, they gave.
This was at morn, when in the cavern hoar,
Mixt with the goats, king Norandino stood,
Which ruminating, chewed their grassy food:

LXIV
"But when, at day-light, 'twas unbarred, and now
He was instructed that his wife was gone;
For the orc's consort told the tale, and how,
In every point, the thing rehearsed was done;
He thanked his God, and begged, with promised vow,
That, since 'twas granted her such ill to shun,
He would direct his wife to some repair,
Whence he might free her, by arms, gold, or prayer.

LXV
"Together with the flat-nosed herd his way
He took, and for green meads rejoicing made.

He here expected, till the monster lay
Extended, underneath the gloomy shade:
Then journeyed all the night and all the day;
Till, of the cruel orc no more afraid,
He climbed a bark on Satalia's strand,
And, three days past, arrived on Syrian land.

LXVI
"In Cyprus, and in Rhodes, by tower and town,
Which in near Egypt, Turkey, or Afric lay,
The king bade seek Lucina up and down,
Nor could hear news of her till the other day.
The other day, his father-in-law made known
He had her safe with him. What caused her stay
In Nicosia was a cruel gale
Which had long time been adverse to her sail.

LXVII
"The king, for pleasure of the tidings true,
Prepares the costly feast in solemn state;
And will on each fourth moon that shall ensue
Make one, resembling this we celebrate.
Pleased of that time the memory to renew,
That he, in the orc's cavern, had to wait,
— For four months and a day — which is to-morrow;
When he was rescued from such cruel sorrow.

LXVIII
"The things related I in part descried,
And from him, present at the whole, heard more;
From Norandine, through calend and through ide,
Pent, till he changed to smiles his anguish sore:
And if from other you hear aught beside,
Say, he is ill instructed in his lore."
The Syrian gentleman did thus display
The occasion of that feast and fair array.

LXIX

Large portion of the night, in like discourse,
Was by those cavaliers together spent,
Who deemed that Love and Pity's mickle force
Was proved in that so dread experiment;
Then rising, when the supper's sumptuous course
Was cleared, to good and pleasant lodgings went;
And, as the ensuing morning fairly broke,
To sounds of triumph and rejoicing woke.

LXX

The circling drums' and trumpets' echoing strain
Assemble all the town within the square;
And now, when mixt with sound of horse and wain,
Loud outcries through the streets repeated are,
Sir Gryphon dons his glittering arms again,
A panoply of those esteemed most rare;
Whose mail, impassable by spear or brand,
She, the white fay, had tempered with her hand.

LXXI

The man of Antioch in his company,
Armed him (a recreant worse than he was none),
Provided by their landlord's courtesy
With sturdy spears and good, the course to run;
Who with his kindred, a fair chivalry,
To bring the warriors to the square is gone;
With squires afoot and mounted upon steeds,
Whom he bestowed, as aptest for their needs.

LXXII

They in the square arrived and stood aside,
Nor of themselves awhile would make display;
Better to see the martial gallants ride
By twos and threes, or singly, to the fray.
One told, by colours cunningly allied,

His joy or sorrow to his lady gay;
One, with a painted Love on crest or shield,
If she were cruel or were kind, revealed.

LXXIII
It was the Syrians' practise in that age
To arm them in this fashion of the west.
Haply this sprung out of their vicinage
And constant commerce with the Franks, possest
In those days of the sacred heritage,
That God incarnate with his presence blest;
Which now, to them abandoned by the train
Of wretched Christians, heathen hounds profane.

LXXIV
God's worshippers, where they should couch the lance,
For furtherance of his holy faith and true,
Against each other's breast the spear advance,
To the destruction of the faithful few.
You men of Spain, and you, ye men of France,
And Switzers, turn your steps elsewhere , and you,
Ye Germans, worthier empire to acquire;
For that is won for Christ, which you desire.

LXXV
If verily most Christian you would be,
— I speak to you, that catholic are hight —
Why slain by you Christ's people do I see?
Wherefore are they despoiled of their right?
Why seek you not Jerusalem to free
From renegades? By Turkish Moslemite
Impure, why is Byzantium, with the best
And fairest portion of the world, possest?

LXXVI
Thou Spain, hast thou not fruitful Afric nigh?
And has she not in sooth offended more

Than Italy? yet her to scathe, that high,
And noble, enterprize wilt thou give o'er.
Alas! thou sleepest, drunken Italy,
Of every vice and crime the fetid sewer!
Nor grievest, as a hand-maid, to obey,
In turn, the nations that have owned thy sway.

LXXVII
If fear of famishing within thy cave,
Switzer, does thee to Lombardy convey,
And thou, among our people, dost but crave
A hand to give thee daily bread, or slay, —
The Turk has ready wealth; across the wave,
Drive him from Europe or from Greece away:
So shalt thou in those parts have wherewithal
To feed thy hunger, or more nobly fall.

LXXVIII
I to the German neighbour of thy lair
Say what I say to thee; the wealth o' the west,
Which Constantine brought off from Rome, is there —
Brought off the choicest, gave away the rest —
There golden Hermus and Pactolus are,
Mygdonia and Lydia: nor that country blest,
Which many tales for many praises note,
If thou wouldst thither wend, is too remote.

LXXIX
Thou mighty Lion, that art charged to keep
The keys of Paradise, a weighty care,
Oh! let not Italy lie plunged in sleep,
If thy strong hand is planted in her hair.
To thee, his shepherd, God, to guide his sheep,
Has given that wand and furious name to bear;
That thou may'st roar, and wide thine arms extend,
And so from greedy wolves thy flock defend.

LXXX

But whither have I roved! who evermore
So from one topic to the other stray?
Yet think not I the road I kept before
To have missed so far, but I can find my way.
I said, the Syrians then observed the lore
Or arming like the Christians of that day.
So that Damascus' crowded square was bright
With corslet, plate, and helm of belted knight.

LXXXI

The lovely ladies from their scaffolds throw
Upon the jousters yellow flowers and red;
While these, as loud the brazen trumpets blow,
Make their steeds leap and wheel and proudly tread.
Each, rode he well or ill, his art would show,
And with the goring spur his courser bled.
Hence this good cavalier earns fame and praise,
While others scornful hoots and laughter raise.

LXXXII

A suit of arms was prize of the assay,
Presented to the king some days before;
Which late a merchant found upon the way
Returning from Armenia; this the more
To grace, a vest, with noblest tissue gay,
The Syrian king subjoined, so powdered o'er
With jewels, gold, and pearls in rich device,
They made the meed a thing of passing price.

LXXXIII

If the good king had known the panoply,
This he had held above all others dear;
Nor this had given, as full of courtesy,
To be contented for with sword and spear.
'Twere long to tell who so unworthily

Had erst mistreated thus the goodly gear,
That lay the way the harness had been strowed,
A prey to whosoever past the road.

LXXXIV
Of this you more in other place shall hear.
Of Gryphon now I tell, who at the just
Arrived, saw broken many a knightly spear,
And more than one good stroke and one good thrust.
Eight were there who made league together, dear
To Norandine, and held in sovereign trust;
Youths quick in arms and practised in the shock:
All lords, or scions of illustrious stock.

LXXXV
At open barriers, one by one, the place
They kept against all comers for a day;
At first with lance, and next with sword or mace,
While them the king delighted to survey.
Ofttimes they pierce the corslet's iron case,
And every thing in fine perform in play,
Which foemen do that deadly weapons measure,
Save that the king may part them at his pleasure.

LXXXVI
That witless Antiochite, who, worthily,
By name was cowardly Martano hight,
Thinking, because his comrade, he must be
Partaker of the noble Gryphon's might,
Into the martial press rides valiantly,
Then stops; and the issue of a furious fight,
Which had begun between two cavaliers,
To wait, retiring from the strife, appears.

LXXXVII
Seleucia's lord, of those companions one,
Combined in that emprize to keep the place,

Who then a course with bold Ombruno run,
Wounded the unhappy warrior in mid-face,
So that he slew him; mourned by every one,
Who as a worthy knight the warrior grace,
And over and above his worth, before
All others, hold him for his courteous lore.

LXXXVIII
When vile Martano from his place discerned
The fate which might be his with fearful eye,
Into his craven nature be returned,
And straight began to think how he might fly:
But him from flight the watchful Gryphon turned,
And, after much ado, with act and cry,
Urged him against a knight upon the ground,
As at the ravening wolf men slip the hound.

LXXXIX
Who will pursue the brindled beast for ten,
Or twenty yards, and, after, stop to bay;
When he beholds his flashing eyes, and when
He sees the griesly beast his teeth display.
'Twas thus, before those valiant gentlemen
And princes, present there in fair array,
Fearful Martano, seized with panic dread,
Turned to the right his courser's rein and head.

XC
Yet he who would excuse the sudden wheel,
Upon his courser might the blame bestow:
But, after, he so ill his strokes did deal,
Demosthenes his cause might well forego.
With paper armed he seems, and not with steel,
So shrinks he at the wind of every blow:
At length he breaks the ordered champions through,
Amid loud laughter from the circling crew.

XCI
Clapping of hands, and cries, at every turn,
Were heard from all that rubble widely spread.
As a wolf sorely hunted makes return
To earth, to his retreat Martano fled.
Gryphon remained, and sullied with the scorn
Esteemed himself, which on his mate was shed;
And rather than be there, he, in his ire,
Would gladly find himself i' the midst of fire.

XCII
With burning heart, and visage red with shame,
He thinks the knight's disgrace is all his own,
Because by deeds like his with whom he came,
He weens the mob expects to see him known.
So that it now behoves his valour flame
More clear than light, or they, to censure prone,
— Errs he a finger's breadth — an inch — will swell
His fault, and of that inch will make an ell.

XCIII
Already he the lance upon his thigh
Has rested, little used to miss the foe:
Then makes with flowing rein his courser fly,
And next, somedeal advanced, directs the blow;
And, smiting, puts to the last agony
Sidonia's youthful lord, by him laid low.
O'ercome with wonder each assistant rises,
Whom sore the unexpected deed surprises.

XCIV
Gryphon returned, and did the weapon wield.
Whole and recovered, which he couched before,
And in three pieces broke it on the shield
Which bold Laodicea's baron bore.
Thrice of four times about to press the field

He seemed, and lay along the crupper, sore
Astound; yet rose at length, unsheathed his blade,
Wheeled his good courser, and at Gryphon made.

XCV
Gryphon, who in his saddle sees the peer
Advancing towards him, nor unseated by
The encounter, says: "The failure of the spear
In a few strokes the sabre shall supply;"
And on his temples smote a stroke so shear,
It seemed that it descended from the sky;
And matched it with another, and again
Another, till he stretched him on the plain.

XCVI
Here two good brothers of Apamia were,
In tourney wont to have the upper hand:
Corimbo named and Thyrsis was the pair;
Both overturned by Gryphon on the land.
One at the encounter left his saddle bare,
On the other Gryphon used his trenchant brand:
This valiant knight, was, in the common trust,
Sure to obtain the honours of the just.

XCVII
Bold Salinterno, mid the warlike train,
Was in the lists, vizier and marshal hight,
Who had the government of all that reign,
And was, withal, a puissant man of might:
The tourney's prize he sees, with much disdain,
About to be borne off by foreign knight.
A lance he snatches, and to Gryphon cries,
And him with many menaces defies.

XCVIII
But he makes answer with a massy spear,
Out of ten others chosen as the best;

And levelling at the buckler of the peer,
For greater surety, pierces plate and breast.
'Twixt rib and rib, it bored the cavalier,
Issuing a palm behind. To all the rest,
The king excepted, welcome was the blow:
For each was greedy Salinterno's foe.

XCIX
Two of Damascus next Sir Gryphon sped,
Hermophilo and Carmondo. This, arraid
Under his flag, the king's militia led;
That was as lord high admiral obeyed.
This lightly at the shock on earth was shed,
And that, reversed, upon the ground o'erlaid
By his weak horse, too feeble to withstand
Sir Gryphon's mighty push and puissant hand.

C
Yet in the field remained Seleucia's knight,
The best of all the other seven at need;
And one who well accompanied his might
With perfect armour and a gallant steed.
Both at the helmet, where it locks, take sight,
And with their spears to the encounter speed:
But Gryphon hardest smote, whose paynim foe
Lost his left stirrup, staggered by the blow.

CI
They cast the truncheons down, their coursers wheel,
And, full of daring, with drawn falchions close.
Sir Gryphon was the first a stroke to deal,
Which might have split an anvil; at the blow's
Descent, the shield is splintered — bone and steel —
This had its lord mid thousand others chose;
And, but 'twas double, and the coat as well,
The sword had cleft the thigh on which it fell.

CII

He of Seleucia at Sir Gryphon's casque,
At the same time, so fell a blow addrest,
It would have rent and torn the iron mask,
Had it not been enchanted like the rest.
The paynim's labour is a fruitless task,
Of arms so hard Sir Gryphon is possest;
Who has the foe's already cleft and broke
In many parts, nor thrown away a stroke.

CIII

Each one might see how much Seleucia's lord
Was overmatched by Gryphon, and that day,
The worsted men had perished by the sword,
Had not the monarch quickly stopt the fray.
To his guard king Norandino spake the word,
And bade them enter, and the duel stay:
They part the knight, whom they asunder bear,
And much the king is lauded for his care.

CIV

The eight, who had to keep the field pretended
From all the world, nor yet their part had done
On a sole knight, — their quarrel ill defended, —
Had vanished from the tilt-yard one by one.
The others, who with them should have contended,
Stood idle; for to answer them was none.
Since Gryphon had forestalled, in the debate,
What they should all have done against those eight;

CV

And, for such little time endured the play,
Less than an hour sufficed to finish all.
But Norandine, the pastime to delay,
And to continue it till even-fall,
Descending from his place, bade clear the way;

And the huge squad divided, at his call,
Into two troops, whom, ranked by blood and might,
The monarch formed, and marched for other fight.

CVI
Sir Gryphon, during this, had made return
Homeward, with anger and with fury stung;
Less thinking of his honours that the scorn
Which on the vile Martano had been flung.
Hence, from himself the opprobrious shame to turn,
Martano now employs his lying tongue;
And she, the false and cunning courtezan,
Assists him in his scheme as best she can.

CVII
Whether the youth believed the tale or no,
He the excuse received, like one discreet;
And deemed it best for them at once to go,
And secretly and silently retreat,
For fear, that if the populace should know
Martano base, they him might ill entreat.
So, by short ways and close, they quit the abode,
And issue from the gates upon their road.

CVIII
Sir Gryphon, was he or his horse foredone
With toil, or was it sleep his eyes down weighed,
Ere yet the troop beyond two miles had gone,
At the first inn upon the highway stayed.
He doffed his armour all, and morion,
And had the steeds of trappings disarrayed;
And next alone he to a chamber sped,
Locked himself in, undrest, and went to bed.

CIX
No sooner he his head had rested there,
Than, with deep sleep opprest, he closed his eye:

So heavily, no badgers in their lair,
Or dormice, overcome with slumber, lie.
Martano and Origille, to take the air,
Entered this while a garden which was nigh;
And there the strangest fraud together bred,
Which ever entered into mortal head.

CX
Martano schemed to take away the steed
And gear, in which Sir Gryphon had been dight,
And stand before the monarch, in the weed
Of him who had in joust so proved his might.
As he had shaped in thought, he did the deed:
He took away the warrior's horse, more white
Than milk, his buckler, surcoat, arms, and crest;
In all Sir Gryphon's knightly ensigns drest.

CXI
He, who was clad in trappings not his own,
Like the ass mantled in the lion's hide,
As he expected, to the king, unknown,
Was called in place of Gryphon: when descried
Or Norandine, he rising from his throne,
Embraced and kissed, and placed him by his side:
Nor deems enough to praise and hold him dear,
But wills that all around his praise should hear:

CXII
And bids them the sonorous metal blow,
Proclaiming him the conqueror of that day:
And round about loud voices, high and low,
The unworthy name throughout the lists convey.
He wills that, side by side, with him shall go
The knight, when homeward he shall take his way;
And him such favour shows, intent to please,
As might have honoured Mars or Hercules.

CXIII

Him lodgings fair he gave, wherein to dwell
At court; and she who with the peer did ride
Was honoured by the courteous king as well,
— False Origille, — with knight and page supplied.
But it is time that I of Gryphon tell;
Who unsuspecting, she, or wight beside,
Him would with treacherous stratagem deceive,
Had fallen asleep, nor ever waked till eve.

CXIV

When he how late it was, awaking, knew,
With speed he from the chamber did withdraw;
And hastened where he, with the other crew,
Left Origille and her false brother-in-law:
And when, nor these, nor, upon better view,
His armour nor his wonted clothes he saw,
Suspicious waxed; and more suspicion bred
The ensigns of his comrade left instead.

CXV

The host, arriving, him at full possest
Of every thing, — and how, in white array,
That warrior, with the lady and the rest,
Had to the city measured back their way.
By little and by little, Gryphon guessed
What love from him had hidden till that day;
And knew, to his great sorrow, in the other
Origille's paramour, and not her brother.

CXVI

Now he lamenting for his folly stood,
That having heard the truths the pilgrim said,
He should have let her story change his mood,
Who him before so often had betrayed.
He might have venged himself, nor did: — now wou'd,

Too late, inflict the punishment delaid;
Constrained (a crying error!) in his need
To take that wily treachour's arms and steed.

CXVII
He better would have gone like naked man,
Than braced the unworthy cuirass on his breast;
Or hastened the detested shield to span,
Or place upon his helm the scorned crest.
But of the lover, and that courtezan,
He, passion mastering reason, took the quest:
And bending to Damascus' gate his way,
Arrived an hour before the close of day.

CXVIII
On the left hand a castle richly dight
Stood nigh the gate, to which Sir Gryphon rode.
Besides, that it was strong and armed for fight,
Filled with rare chambers was the rich abode.
The first of Syria, king, and lord, and knight,
And lady, in a gentle group bestowed,
There in an open gallery fairly met,
Were at their glad and costly supper set.

CXIX
With the high tower the beauteous gallery, clear
Beyond the city-wall, projected out,
From whence might be discovered, far and near,
The spacious fields and different roads about.
When Gryphon now, in his opprobrious gear,
And arms, dishonoured by the rabble's flout,
Makes, by ill fortune, to the gate resort,
He by the king is seen, and all his court;

CXX
And, taken for the man whose crest he wears,
In dame and knight moves laughter, through the ring.

The vile Martano, as a man who shares
The royal grace, sits next below the king;
And next, she, whom her love so fitly pairs;
Whom Norandino gaily questioning.
Demands of them, who is the coward knight,
That of his honour makes so passing light;

CXXI
Who, after feat so base and foul, anew
Approaches, with such front and shameless cheer,
— And cries, "It seems a thing unheard, that you,
An excellent and worthy cavalier,
Should take this man for your companion, who
Has not in all our wide Levant his peer.
Did you with him for contrast-sake combine,
That so your valour might more brightly shine?

CXXII
"— But did not love for you my will restrain,
By the eternal gods, I truly swear,
He should endure such ignominious stain,
As I am wont to make his fellows share:
Him would I make of my long-nursed disdain
Of cowardice perpetual record bear.
To you, by whom he hither was conveyed,
If now unpunished, let his thanks be paid."

CXXIII
That vessel of all filthy vices, he,
Made answer: "Mighty sir, I cannot say
Who is the stranger, that fell in with me
Journeying from Antioch hither, by the way:
But him I worthy of my company
Deemed, by his warlike semblance led astray.
I nothing of his deeds have heard or seen,
Save what ill feats to-day have witnessed been;

CXXIV
"Which moved me so, it little lacked but I,
For punishment of his unworthy fear,
Had put him out of case again to ply,
In martial tournament, the sword or spear;
And, but in reverence to your majesty
And presence, I forbore by hand to rear,
Not for his sake: — nor by thy mercy showed
On him, as my companion on the road;

CXXV
"Whose former fellowship appears a stain;
And ever 'twill sit heavy at my heart,
If I, uninjured, see the wretch again
'Scape, to the scandal of the warlike art.
'Twere better he from tower, a worthy pain,
Were gibbeted, than suffered to depart:
Hung as a beacon for the coward's gaze.
Such were a princely deed, and worthy praise."

CXXVI
A voucher he in Origilla had,
Who well, without a sign, his purpose read.
"I deem not," cried the king, "his works so bad,
That they should cost the stranger knight his head:
Enough that he again the people glad,
For penance of his weighty sin." This said,
He quickly called a baron of his crew,
And him enjoined the deed he was to do.

CXXVII
With many armed men that baron fares,
And to the city-gate descending, here
Collects his troop, and for the attempt prepares,
Waiting the coming of the cavalier;
And him surprises so at unawares,

He, softly, 'twixt two bridges, takes the peer;
And him detains, with mockery and scorn,
In a dark chamber, till returning morn.

CXXVIII
The early sun had scarce his golden hair
Uplifted from his ancient nurse's breast,
Beginning, upon Alpine regions bare,
To chase the shades and gild the mountain-crest,
When Martan', fearing Gryphon might declare
His wrong, and to the king the truth attest,
Retorting upon him the slander cast,
Took leave, and thence upon his journey past.

CXXIX
His ready wit a fit excuse supplies
Why he stays not, to see the recreant shown.
He is with other gifts, beside the prize,
Rewarded for the victory, not his own,
And letters patent, drawn in ample wise,
Wherein his lofty honours wide are blown.
Let him depart; I promise he shall meet
A guerdon worthy of his treacherous feat.

CXXX
Gryphon is brought with shame into the square,
When it is fully thronged with gazing wight,
Whom they of cuirass and of helmet bare,
And leave in simple cassock, meanly dight;
And, as to slaughter he conducted were,
Place on a wain, conspicuous to the sight;
Harnessed to which two sluggish cows are seen,
Weary and weak, and with long hunger lean.

CXXXI
Thronging about the ignoble car, appear
Brazen-faced boy and girl of evil fame,

Who, each in turn, will play the charioteer,
And all assail the knight with bitter blame.
The boys might be a cause of greater fear,
For, joined to mocks and mows, and words of shame,
The warrior they with volleyed stones would slay,
But that the wiser few their fury stay.

CXXXII
That which of his disgrace had been the ground,
Though no true evidence of guilt, his mail
And plate, are dragged in due dishonour round,
Suspended at the shameful waggon's tail.
The wain is stopt, and to the trumpet's sound,
Heralds, in front of a tribunal's pale,
His shame, before his eyes, amid the crowd,
(Another's evil deed) proclaim aloud.

CXXXIII
They take their prisoner thence, and so repair
In front of temple, dwelling-house, and store;
Nor any cruel name of mockery spare,
Nor leave unsaid a word of filthy lore;
And him at last without the city bear:
The foolish rabble, trusting evermore
Their thrall to banish to the sound of blows,
Who passing little of its prisoner knows.

CXXXIV
The warrior's gyves no sooner they undo,
And from their manacles free either hand,
Than Gryphon seizes shield and sword, and, through
The rabble, makes long furrows with his brand.
With pike and spear unfurnished was the crew,
Who without weapons came, a witless band.
The rest for other canto I suspend,
For, sir, 'tis time this song should have an end.

CANTO 18

ARGUMENT
Gryphon is venged. Sir Mandricardo goes
In search of Argier's king. Charles wins the fight.
Marphisa Norandino's men o'erthrows.
Due pains Martano's cowardice requite.
A favouring wind Marphisa's gallery blows,
For France with Gryphon bound and many a knight.
The field Medoro and Cloridano tread,
And find their monarch Dardinello dead.

I
High minded lord! your actions evermore
I have with reason lauded, and still laud;
Though I with style inapt, and rustic lore,
You of large portion of your praise defraud:
But, of your many virtues, one before
All others I with heart and tongue applaud,
— That, if each man a gracious audience finds,
No easy faith your equal judgment blinds.

II
Often, to shield the absent one from blame,
I hear you this, or other, thing adduce;
Or him you let, at least, an audience claim,
Where still one ear is open to excuse:
And before dooming men to scaith and shame,
To see and hear them ever is your use;
And ere you judge another, many a day,
And month, and year, your sentence to delay.

III
Had Norandine been with your care endued,
What he by Gryphon did, he had not done.
Profit and fame have from your rule accrued:

A stain more black than pitch he cast upon
His name: through him, his people were pursued
And put to death by Olivero's son;
Who at ten cuts or thrusts, in fury made,
Some thirty dead about the waggon laid.

IV

Whither fear drives, in rout, the others all,
Some scattered here, some there, on every side,
Fill road and field; to gain the city-wall
Some strive, and smothered in the mighty tide,
One on another, in the gateway fall.
Gryphon, all thought of pity laid aside,
Threats not nor speaks, but whirls his sword about,
Well venging on the crowd their every flout.

V

Of those who to the portal foremost fleed,
The readiest of the crowd their feet to ply,
Part, more intent upon their proper need
Than their friends' peril, raise the draw-bridge high:
Part, weeping and with deathlike visage, speed,
Nor turn their eyes behind them as they fly:
While, through the ample city, outcry loud,
And noise, and tumult rises from the crowd.

VI

Two nimble Gryphon seizes, mid the train,
When to their woe the bridge is raised; of one,
Upon the field the warrior strews the brain,
Which he bears out on a hard grinding stone;
Seized by the breast, the other of the twain
Over the city-wall by him is thrown,
Fear chills the townsmen's marrow, when they spy
The luckless wretch descending from the sky.

VII
Many there were who feared in their alarms,
Lest o'er the wall Sir Gryphon would have vaulted;
Nor greater panic seized upon those swarms,
Than if the soldan had the town assaulted.
The sound of running up and down, of arms,
Of cry of Muezzins, on high exalted;
Of drums and trumpets, heaven, 'twould seem, rebounded,
And, that the world was by the noise confounded.

VIII
But I will to another time delay,
What chanced on this occasion, to recount.
'Tis meet I follow Charles upon his way,
Hurrying in search of furious Rodomont,
Who did the monarch's suffering people slay.
I said, with him, the danger to affront,
Went Namus, Oliver, the Danish peer,
Avino, Avolio, Otho and Berlinghier.

IX
Eight lances' shock, that eight such warriors guide,
Which all at once against the king they rest,
Endured the stout and scaly serpent's hide,
In which the cruel Moor his limbs had drest.
As a barque rights itself, — the sheet untied,
Which held its sail, — by growing wind opprest;
So speedily Sir Rodomont arose,
Though a hill had been uprooted by the blows.

X
Rainier and Guido, Richard, Salomon,
Ivan, Ughetto, Turpin, and the twain —
Angiolin, Angelier — false Ganellon,
And Mark and Matthew from St. Michael's plain,
With the eight of whom I spake, all set upon

The foe, with Edward and Sir Arimane;
Who leading succours from the English shore,
Had lodged them in the town short time before.

XI
Not so, well-keyed into the solid stone,
Groans upon Alpine height the castle good,
When by rude Boreas' rage or Eurus' strown,
Uptorn are ash and fir in mountain wood,
As groans Sir Rodomont, with pride o'erblown,
Inflamed with anger and with thirst of blood:
And, as the thunder and the lightning's fire
Fly coupled, such his vengeance and his ire.

XII
He at his head took aim who stood most nigh;
Ughetto was the miserable wight,
Whom to the teeth he clove, and left to die;
Though of good temper was his helmet bright.
As well the others many strokes let fly
At him, himself; which all the warrior smite,
But harm (so hard the dragon's hide) no more,
Than needle can the solid anvil score.

XIII
All the defences, round, abandoned are,
The unpeopled city is abandoned all;
For, where the danger is the greater, there
The many give their aid, at Charles' call:
Through every street they hurry to the square,
Since flying nought avails, from work and wall.
Their bosoms so the monarch's presence warms,
That each again takes courage, each takes arms.

XIV
As when within the closely-fastened cage
Of an old lioness, well used to fight,

An untamed bull is prisoned, to engage
The savage monster, for the mob's delight;
The cubs, who see him cresting in his rage,
And round the den loud-bellowing, to the sight
Of the huge beast's enormous horns unused,
Cower at a distance, timid and confused;

XV
But if the mother spring at him, and hang,
Fixing her cruel tusks into his ear,
Her whelps as well will blood their greedy fang,
And, bold in her defence, assail the steer:
One bites his paunch, and one his back: so sprang
That band upon the paynim cavalier.
From roof and window, and from place more nigh,
Poured in a ceaseless shower, the weapons fly.

XVI
Of cavaliers and footmen such the squeeze,
That hardly can the place the press contain:
They cluster there as thick as swarming bees,
Who thither from each passage troop amain.
So that, were they unarmed, and with more ease
Than stalks or turnips he could cleave the train,
Ill Rodomont in twenty days would clear
The gathering crowd, united far and near.

XVII
Unknowing how himself from thence to free,
The paynim by this game is angered sore,
Who little thins the gathering rabblery,
Staining the ground with thousands slain or more;
And all the while, in his extremity,
Finds that his breath comes thicker than before;
And sees he cannot pierce the hostile round,
Unless he thence escape while strong and sound.

XVIII

The monarch rolls about his horrid eyes,
And sees that foes all outlets barricade;
But, at the cost of countless enemies,
A path shall quickly by his hand be made.
Where Fury calls him, lo! the felon hies,
And brandishes on high his trenchant blade,
To assail the newly entered British band,
Which Edward and Sir Ariman command.

XIX

He who has seen the fence, in well-thonged square,
(Against whose stakes the eddying crowd is born)
By wild bull broken, that has had to bear,
Through the long day, dogs, blows, and ceaseless scorn;
Who hunts the scattered people here and there,
And this, or that, now hoists upon his horn;
Let him as such, or fiercer yet, account,
When he breaks forth, the cruel Rodomont.

XX

At one cross-blow fifteen or twenty foes
He hews, as many leaves without a bead,
At cross or downright-stroke; as if he rows
Trashes in vineyard or in willow-bed,
At last all smeared with blood the paynim goes,
Safe from the place, which he has heaped with dead;
And wheresoe'er he turns his steps, are left
Heads, arms, and other members, maimed and cleft.

XXI

He from the square retires in such a mode,
None can perceive that danger him appals;
But, during this, what were the safest road,
By which to sally, he to thought recals.
He comes at last to where the river flowed

Below the isle, and past without the walls.
In daring men at arms and mob increase,
Who press him sore, nor let him part in peace.

XXII
As the high-couraged beast, whom hunters start
In the wild Nomade or Massilian chace,
Who, even in flying, shows his noble heart,
And threatening seeks his lair with sluggish pace;
From that strange wood of sword, and spear, and dart,
Turns Rodomont, with action nothing base;
And still impeded by the galling foe,
Makes for the river with long steps and slow.

XXIII
He turned upon the rabble-rout who bayed
Behind him, thrice or more, by anger driven,
And stained anew his falchion, by whose blade
More than a hundred deadly wounds were given.
But reason, finally, his fury stayed
Before the bloody carnage stank to heaven;
And he, with better counsel, from the side
Cast himself down into Seine's foaming tide.

XXIV
Athwart the current swam, with arms and all,
As if by corks upborn, the cavalier.
Though thou Antaeus bred'st, and Hannibal,
O Africa! thou never bred'st his peer! —
When now across the stream, without the wall,
He turned, and saw the royal town appear,
— To have traversed all the city moved his ire,
Leaving it undestroyed by sword or fire;

XXV
And him so sorely anger stung and pride,
Thither he thought a second time to go;

And from his inmost bosom groaned and sighed,
Nor would depart until he laid it low.
But he saw one along the river-side
Approach, who made him rage and hate forego;
Strait shall you hear who 'twas, approached the king,
But first I have to say of other thing.

XXVI
I have of haughty Discord now to say,
To whom the archangel Michael gave command,
To heat to enmity and fierce affray
The best of Agramant's besieging band.
She went that evening from the abbey gray,
Her task committing to another's hand;
— Left it to Fraud to feed, till her return,
The war, and make the fires she kindled burn;

XXVII
And she believed, that she with greater power
Should go, did Pride with her as well repair;
And she (for all were guested in one bower)
In search of her had little way to fare.
Pride went with her; but, that in hall or tower,
A vicar too her charge might duly bear,
She for those days she absent thought to be,
For her lieutenant left Hypocrisy.

XXVIII
The implacable Discord went, and with the dame,
(Companion of the enterprise, was Pride)
Upon her road; and found that, by the same,
Was journeying to the paynim camp, beside,
Comfortless Jealousy, with whom there came
A little dwarf, attending as a guide;
Who erst had been sent forward with advice
To Sarza's king, by beauteous Doralice.

XXIX

When she fell into Mandricardo's hand,
(I have before recounted when and where)
She had in secret given the dwarf command,
He to the king should with the tidings fare;
By whom she hoped not vainly would be scanned
The tale her messenger was charged to bear,
But wonderous deeds be done for her relief,
With sad and signal vengeance on the thief.

XXX

Jealousy had that little dwarf espied,
And kenned the reason of his mission too,
And joined him, journeying with him side by side,
Deeming that she therein a part might do.
Discord, with pleasure, Jealousy decried,
But with more joy, when she the occasion knew
Which thither brought the dame, who much (she wist)
Might in the task she had in hand assist.

XXXI

Of means to embroil the Sarzan and the son
Of Agrican, she deems herself possest.
A certain mode to enrage these two is won;
And other means may work upon the rest.
She thither with the dwarfish page is gone,
Where the fierce Pagan in his clutch had prest
Proud Paris, and they reached the river strand,
Exactly as the felon swam to land.

XXXII

As soon as the redoubted Rodomont
Knew in the dwarf the courier of his dame,
He all his rage extinguished, cleared his front,
And felt his courage brighten into flame.
All else he deems the courier may recount,

Save that a wight had wrought him scaith and shame,
And cries (encountering him with chearful brow)
"How fares our lady? wither sent art thou?"

XXXIII
"Nor mine nor thine that lady will I say,
Who is another's thrall," the dwarf replied.
"We, on our road, encountered yesterday
A knight, who seized and bore away the bride."
Jealousy, upon this, took up the play,
And, cold as asp, embraced the king: her guide
Pursued his tale, relating how the train,
Their mistress taken, by one man were slain.

XXXIV
Her flint and steel, fell Discord, as he said,
Took forth, and somewhile hammered on the stone.
Pride, underneath, the ready tinder spread,
And the quick fire was in a moment blown:
This on the paynim's soul so fiercely fed,
He could not find a resting place: 'mid groan
And sob he storms, with horrid face and eye,
Which threat the elements and ample sky.

XXXV
As tiger rages, who in vain descends
Into her den, and finds herself alone,
And, circling all the cavern, comprehends,
At last, that her beloved young are gone;
To ire, to rage like hers his wrath extends:
Nor night the king regards, nor rock, nor stone,
Nor stream: — Nor length of way nor storm arrest
The speed with which he on the plunderer prest.

XXXVI
So raging, to the pigmy dwarf who bore
The news, exclaimed the king, "Now hence away!"

Nor horse he waits, nor carriage, nor, before
Departing, deigns to his a word to say.
He hurries with such speed, that not with more
The lizard darts at noon across the way.
Horse had he none, but be he whose he might,
Would make his own the first which came in sight.

XXXVII

Discord at this, who read his secret thought,
Exclaimed, as she looked smilingly on Pride,
Through her he to a courser should be brought,
By which new cause of strife should be supplied;
And, that by him no other might be caught,
She from his path would keep all steeds beside;
And knew already where the prize to seek.
— But her I leave, again of Charles to speak.

XXXVIII

When, on the Saracen's departure, spent,
About King Charles, was the consuming flame,
He ranged his troops anew: some warriors went
To strengthen feeble posts which succours claim;
The rest against the Saracens are sent,
To give the foe checkmate and end the game;
And from St. German's to Saint Victor's gates,
He pours the host, which on his signal waits.

XXXIX

He these at Saint Marcellus' gate, where lay,
Outstretched a large circumference of plain,
Bade one another wait, in one array,
To reunite against the paynim train.
Inflaming every one to smite and slay,
In guise, that for a record should remain,
He made the various troops fall in below
Their banners, and the battle-signal blow.

XL

Agramant has remounted in his sell,
While this is doing in his foe's despite,
And with the stripling who loved Isabel,
Is waging perilous and fearful fight.
Lurcanio with Sobrino strives as well;
Rinaldo a troop encounters, whom the knight,
With Valour and with Fortune for his guide,
Charges, and breaks, and routs on every side.

XLI

While so the battle stands, king Charlemagne
Falls on the rear guard of the paynim foe,
Where bold Marsilius halts the flower of Spain,
And forms the host, his royal flag below.
On these king Charlemagne impels his train,
Who, foot with horse to flank, against them go.
While so the deafening drum and trumpet sounds,
'Twould seem the spacious world the din rebounds.

XLII

The Saracenic squadrons had begun
To bend, and all the army of the Moor
Had turned, disordered, broken, and undone,
Never to be arrayed or rallied more,
But that Grandonio stood, and Falsiron,
Tried oftentimes in greater ill before,
With Serpentine and Balugantes proud,
And the renowned Ferrau, who cried aloud:

XLIII

"O valiant men," he — "O companions," cries,
"O brethren, stand, and yet your place maintain;
Like cobweb-threads our cruel enemies
Will find their works, if we our part sustain.
What this day Fortune offers to our eyes,

If now we conquer, see the praise, the gain! —
If conquered, see the utter loss and shame
Which will for ever wait upon your name!"

XLIV
He in this time a mighty lance had spanned,
And spurred at once against Sir Berlinghier,
Who Argaliffa guided with his hand,
And broke his helmet's frontal with the spear,
Cast him on earth, and with the cruel brand
Unhorsed perhaps eight other warriors near.
His mighty strokes discharging, at each blow,
He ever laid at least one horseman low.

XLV
In other part, Rinaldo, in his mood,
Has slain more enemies than I can say,
Before the warlike knight no order stood;
You might have seen the ample camp give way.
No less Zerbino and Lurcanio good
Do deeds, which will be told in every day;
This, with a thrust, has bold Balastro slain,
That Finaduro's helm has cleft in twain.

XLVI
The first was of the Alzerban army head,
Ruled by Tardocco some short time before;
The other one the valiant squadrons led
Of Saphi, and Morocco, and Zamor.
"Where, 'mid the paynims," might to me be said,
"Is knight whose sword can cleave or lance can gore?"
But step by step I go, and as I wind
My way, leave none who merits praise behind.

XLVII
Zumara's king is not forgotten here,
Dardinel, who Sir Dulphin of the mount,

Claude of the wood, and Hubert, with the spear,
(Of Mirford he) and Elio did dismount,
And, with the faulchion, Stamford's cavalier,
Sir Anselm, Raymond and Sir Pinnamont
From London-town; though valiant were the twain;
Two stunned, one wounded, the four others slain.

XLVIII
Yet will his squadron not so firmly stand,
Maugre the valour which his deeds display,
So firmly, as to wait the Christian band,
In number less, but steadier in array,
More used to joust and manage of the brand,
And all things appertaining to the gray.
Setta and Morocco turned, and, seized with dread,
Zumara and Canaries' islesmen fled.

XLIX
But faster than the rest Alzerba flies,
Whom Dardinel opposed, and now with sore
Reproach, and now with prayer he moves, and tries
What best he deems their courage may restore.
"If good Almontes has deserved," he cries,
"That you should by his memory set such store,
Now shall be seen — be seen, if you will me,
His son, abandon in such jeopardy.

L
"For sake of my green youth, I pray you stand,
That youth whereon your hopes were wont to feed,
And suffer not that, scattered by the brand,
To Africa be lost our noble seed.
Save you united go, be sure the land
Is shut against you, wheresoe'er you speed.
Too high a wall to climb is mountain-steep,
The yawning sea a ditch too wide to leap.

LI
"Far better 'tis to perish than to be
Torn by these dogs, or lie at their control.
Since vain is every other remedy,
Wait, friends, for love of Heaven, the advancing shoal:
They are not gifted with more lives than we;
Have but one pair of hands, have but one soul."
So saying, the bold youth, amid the crew
Of enemies, the Earl of Huntley slew.

LII
Almontes' memory, through the Moorish bands,
Makes every bosom with such ardour glow,
They deem 'tis better to use arms and hands
In fight, than turn their backs upon the foe.
Taller than all William of Burnwich stands,
An Englishman, whom Dardinel brings low,
And equals with the rest; then smites upon,
And cleaves, the head of Cornish Aramon.

LIII
Down fell this Aramon, and to afford
Him succour, thitherward his brother made;
But from the shoulder him Zumara's lord
Cleft to the fork, with his descending blade;
Next Bogio de Vergalla's belly gored,
And from his debt absolved (the forfeit paid)
Who to return within six months, if life
Were granted him, had promised to his wife.

LIV
Lurcanio next met Dardinello's eye;
He upon earth Dorchino had laid low,
Pierced through the throat, and hapless Gardo nigh
Cleft to the teeth; at him, as all too slow,
He from Altheus vainly seeks to fly,

Whom as his heart Lurcanio loves, a blow
Upon his head behind the Scotchman speeds;
And. slaughtered by the stroke, the warrior bleeds.

LV
Dardinel, to avenge him, took a spear,
And, should he lay the fierce Lurcanio dead,
Vowed to his Mahomet, if he could hear,
The mosque should have his empty arms; this said,
Ranging the field in haste, that cavalier
He in the flank, with thrust so full and dread,
Encountered, that it went through either side:
And he to his to strip the baron cried.

LVI
From me it sure were needless to demand,
If Ariodantes, when his brother fell,
Was grieved; if he with his avenging hand
Among the damned would send Sir Dardinell;
But all access the circling troops withstand
And bar, no less baptized than infidel:
Yet would he venge himself, and with his blade,
Now here, now there, an open passage made.

LVII
He charges, chases, breaks, and overthrows
Whoever cross him on the crowded plain;
And Dardinello, who his object knows,
Would fain the wish content; but him the train
Impedes as well, which round about him flows,
And renders aye his every purpose vain.
If one on all sides thins the Moorish rank,
The other slays Scot, Englishman, and Frank.

LVIII
Fortune still blocked their path throughout the day,
So that they met not, 'mid that chivalry,

And kept one as a mightier champion's prey;
For rarely man escapes his destiny.
Behold the good Rinaldo turns that way!
That, for this one no refuge there might be.
Lo! good Rinaldo comes: him Fortune guides,
And for his sword King Dardinel provides.

LIX
But here enough for this one while is shown
Of their illustrious doings in the west;
'Tis time I seek Sir Gryphon, and make known
How he, with fury burning in his breast,
That rabble-rout had broke and overthrown,
Struck with more fear than ever men possest.
Thither speeds Norandine on that alarm,
And for his guard above a thousand arm.

LX
King Norandine, girt with peer and knight,
Seeing on every side the people fly,
Rides to the gates, with squadron duly dight,
And at his hest the portals open fly.
Meanwhile Sir Gryphon, having put to flight
The weak and worthless rabble far and nigh,
The scorned arms (to keep him from that train),
Such as they were, took up and donned again.

LXI
And nigh a temple strongly walled, and round
Whose base a moat for its protection goes,
Upon a little bridge takes up his ground,
That him his enemies may not enclose.
Lo! loudly shouting, and with threatening sound,
A mighty squadron through the gateway flows.
The valiant Gryphon changes not his place,
And shows how small his fear by act and face.

LXII

But when, approaching near, he saw the band,
He sallied forth to meet them by the way;
And wielding still his sword in either hand,
Made cruel havoc in the close array.
Then on the narrow bridge resumed his stand,
Nor there his hunters only held at bay:
Anew he sallied, and returned anew,
Aye leaving bloody signs when he withdrew.

LXIII

Fore-stroke and back he deals, and on the ground
Horsemen and foot o'erthrows on every side:
This while the ample mob the knight surround,
And more and more the warfare rages wide.
At length Sir Gryphon fears he shall be drowned,
(So waxed their numbers) in the increasing tide;
And hurt in the left shoulder, through his mail,
And thigh, his wind as well begins to fail.

LXIV

But Valour, who so oft befriends her own,
Makes him find grace in Norandino's eyes;
Who, while alarmed, he hurries there, o'erthrown
So many men, such heaps of dead espies,
While he views wounds, which Hector's hand alone
He weens could deal, — to him all testifies
That he had put an undeserved shame
Upon a cavalier of mighty name.

LXV

Next seeing him more near, whose falchion's sweep
Had dealt such deaths amid his chivalry,
And raised about himself that horrid heap,
And stained the water with that bloody dye,
He thought that he beheld Horatius keep,

Singly, the bridge against all Tuscany;
And vext, and anxious to remove the stain,
Recalled his men, and that with little pain.

LXVI
And, lifting his bare hand, in sign affied,
From ancient times, of treaty and of truce,
Repenting him, he to Sir Gryphon cried,
"It grieves me sorely, and I cannot choose
But own my sin: let counsels which misguide,
And my own little wit, such fault excuse.
What by the vilest knight I thought to do,
I to the best on earth have done in you.

LXVII
"And though the bitter injuries and shame
That have to thee through ignorance been done,
Are equalled, and all cancelled by thy fame,
And merged, in truth, in glory thou hast won;
Whatever satisfaction thou canst claim,
Within my power or knowledge, count upon,
When I know how atonement may be made,
By city, castle, or by money paid.

LXVIII
"Demand of me this kingdom's moiety,
And from this day thou its possessor art,
Since not alone thy worth deserves this fee,
But merits, I with this should give my heart;
Then, pledge of faith and lasting love, to me,
In the meanwhile, thy friendly hand impart."
So saying, from his horse the king descended,
And towards Gryphon his right-hand extended.

LXIX
When he beheld the monarch's altered cheer,
Who bent to clasp his neck, towards him paced,

His sword and rancour laid aside, the peer
Him humbly underneath the hips embraced.
King Norandine, who saw the sanguine smear
Of his two wounds, bade seek a leech in haste;
And bade them softly with the knight resort
Towards the town, and lodge him in his court.

LXX
Here, wounded, he remained some days before
He could bear arms: but him, in the design
Of seeking out Sir Aquilant once more,
And good Astolpho, left in Palestine,
I quit; they vainly did his path explore,
After Sir Gryphon left the holy shrine,
Through Solyma in every place of note,
And many, from the Holy Land remote.

LXXI
One and the other are alike to seek
In the inquiry where the knight may use;
But they encounter with the pilgrim-Greek,
Who of false Origilla gives them news;
Relating, as of her he haps to speak,
That towards Antioch she her way pursues,
By a new leman of that city charmed,
Who her with fierce and sudden flame had warmed.

LXXII
Aquilant asked him, if he had possest
Sir Gryphon of the news to them conveyed,
Who, hearing that he had, surmised the rest, —
Where he was gone, and by what motive swayed:
He followed Origille, was manifest,
And had in quest of her for Antioch made,
To take her from his rival, and with view
On him some memorable scathe to do.

LXXIII
Aquilant brooked not Gryphon such a feat,
Without him, and alone, should thus assay,
And took his armour and pursued his beat;
But first besought the duke he would delay
To visit France and his paternal seat,
Till he from Antioch measured back his way.
At Joppa he embarks, who deems by sea
The better and securer way to be.

LXXIV
From the south-east up-sprung so strong a breeze,
And which for Gryphon's galley blew so right,
That the third day he Tyre's famed city sees,
And lesser Joppa quick succeeds to sight.
By Zibellotto and Baruti flees,
(Cyprus to larboard left) the galley light;
From Tripoli to Tortosa shapes her way,
And so to Lizza and Lajazzo's bay.

LXXV
From thence, towards the east the pilot veered
Her ready tiller, prompt his course to scan;
And straightway for the wide Orontes steered,
And watched his time, and for the harbour ran.
Aquilant, when his bark the margin neared,
Bade lower the bridge, and issued, horse and man,
It armour, and along the river wended,
Up-stream, till he his way at Antioch ended.

LXXVI
To inform himself of that Martano bent;
And heard that he to Antioch was addrest,
With Origilla, where a tournament
Was to be solemnized by royal hest.
To track whom Aquilant was so intent,

Assured that Gryphon had pursued his quest,
He Antioch left again that very day,
But not by sea again would take his way.

LXXVII
He towards Lidia and Larissa goes,
— At rich Aleppo makes a longer stay.
God, to make plain that he, even here, bestows
On evil and on good their fitting pay,
At a league's distance from Mamuga, throws
Martano in the avenging brother's way,
Martano travelling with the tourney's prize,
Displayed before his horse in showy wise.

LXXVIII
Sir Aquilant believed, at the first show,
His brother he in vile Martano spied.
For arms and vest, more white than virgin snow,
The coward in the warrior's sight belied,
And sprang towards him, with that joyful "Oh!"
By which delight is ever signified;
But changed his look and tone, when, nearer brought
He sees that he is not the wight he sought:

LXXIX
And through that evil woman's treachery,
Deemed Gryphon murdered by the cavalier;
And, "Tell me," he exclaimed, "thou, who must be
Traitor and thief — both written in thy cheer —
Whence are these arms? and wherefore do I thee
View on the courser of my brother dear?
Say is my brother slaughtered or alive?
How didst thou him of horse and arms deprive?"

LXXX
When Origille hears him, in affright
She turns her palfrey, and for flight prepares:

But Aquilant, more quick, in her despite,
Arrests the traitress, ere she further fares.
At the loud threats of that all furious knight,
By whom he so was taken unawares,
Martan' turns pale and trembles like a leaf,
Nor how to act or answer knows the thief.

LXXXI
Aquilant thundered still, and, to his dread,
A falchion, pointed at his gullet, shewed,
And swore with angry menaces, the head
From him and Origille should be hewed,
Save in all points the very truth be said.
Awhile on this ill-starred Martano chewed,
Revolving still what pretext he might try
To lessen his grave fault, then made reply:

LXXXII
"Know, sir, you see my sister in this dame,
And one of good and virtuous parents born,
Though she has lately led a life of shame,
And been by Gryphon foully brought to scorn;
And, for I loathed such blot upon our name,
Yet weened that she could ill by force be torn
From such a puissant wight, I laid a scheme
Her by address and cunning to redeem.

LXXXIII
"With her I planned the means, who in her breast
Nursed the desire a better life to prove,
That she, when Gryphon was retired to rest,
In silence from the warrior should remove.
This done: lest he should follow on our quest,
And so undo the web we vainly wove,
Him we deprived of horse and arm, and we
Are hither come together, as you see."

LXXXIV
His cunning might have proved of good avail,
For Aquilant believed him easily;
And, save in taking Gryphon's horse and mail,
He to the knight had done no injury;
But that he wrought so high the specious tale,
As manifested plainly, 'twas a lie.
In all 'twas perfect, save that he the dame
Had for his sister vouched with whom he came.

LXXXV
Aquilant had in Antioch chanced to know
She was his concubine, — well certified
Of this by many, — and in furious glow
Exclaimed; "Thou falsest robber, thou hast lied!"
And dealt, with that, the recreant such a blow,
He drove two grinders down his throat; then tied
(Not sought Martano with his foe to cope)
The caitiff's arms behind him with a rope.

LXXXVI
And, though she for excuse tried many wiles,
Did thus as well by Origille untrue;
And till he reached Damascus' lofty piles,
Them by town, street, or farm, behind him drew:
And will a thousand times a thousand miles,
With sorrow and with suffering, drag the two,
Till he his brother find; who, at his pleasure,
May vengeance to the guilty couple measure.

LXXXVII
Sir Aquilant made squires and beasts as well
Return with him, and to Damascus came;
And heard Renown, throughout the city, swell,
Plying her ample wings, Sir Gryphon's name.
Here, great and little — every one, could tell

'Twas he that in the tourney won such fame,
And had, by one that ill deserved his trust,
Been cheated of the honours of the just.

LXXXVIII
Pointing him out to one another's sight,
The hostile people all Martano bayed;
"And is not this (they cried) that ribald wight
Who in another's spoils himself arrayed,
And who the valour of a sleeping knight,
With his own shame and infamy o'erlaid?
And this the woman of ungrateful mood,
Who aids the wicked and betrays the good?"

LXXXIX
Others exclaimed, "How fittingly combined,
Marked with one stamp, and of one race are they!"
Some loudly cursed them, and some raved behind,
While others shouted, "Hang, burn, quarter, slay!"
The throng to view them prest, with fury blind,
And to the square before them made its way.
The monarch of the tidings was advised,
And these above another kingdom prized.

XC
Attended with few squires the Syrian king,
As then he chanced to be, came forth with speed,
And with Sir Aquilant encountering,
Who Gryphon had avenged with worthy deed,
Him honoured with fair cheer, and home would bring,
And in his palace lodged, as fitting meed;
Having the prisoned pair, with his consent,
First in the bottom of a turret pent.

XCI
Thither they go, where Gryphon from his bed
Has not as yet, since he was wounded, stirred;

Who at his brother's coming waxes red,
Surmising well he of his case has heard:
And after Aquilant his say had said,
And him somedeal reproached, the three conferred
As to what penance to the wicked two,
So fallen into their hands, was justly due.

XCII
'Tis Aquilant's, 'tis Norandino's will
A thousand tortures shall their guerdon be:
But Gryphon, who the dame alone can ill
Excuse, entreats for both impunity;
And many matters urges with much skill.
But well is answered: and 'tis ruled, to flea
Martano's body with the hangman's scourge,
And only short of death his penance urge.

XCIII
Bound is the wretch, but not 'mid grass and flower,
Whose limbs beneath the hangman's lashes burn
All the next morn: they prison in the tower
Origille, till Lucina shall return;
To whom the counselling lords reserve the power
To speak the woman's sentence, mild or stern.
Harboured, till Gryphon can bear arms, at court,
Aquilant fleets the time in fair disport.

XCIV
The valiant Norandino could not choose
(Made by such error temperate and wise),
But full of penitence and sorrow, muse,
With downcast spirit, and in mournful guise,
On having bid his men a knight misuse,
Whom all should worthily reward and prize;
So that he, night and morning, in his thought,
How to content the injured warrior sought.

XCV
And he determined, in the public sight
O' the city, guilty of that injury,
With all such honour as to perfect knight
Could by a puissant monarch rendered be,
Him with the glorious guerdon to requite,
Which had been ravished by such treachery:
And hence, within a month, proclaimed the intent
To hold another solemn tournament.

XCVI
For which he made what stately preparation
Was possible to make by sceptered king.
Hence Fame divulged the royal proclamation
Throughout all Syria's land, with nimble wing,
Phoenicia and Palestine; till the relation
Of this in good Astolpho's ears did ring;
Who, with the lord who ruled that land in trust,
Resolved he would be present at the just.

XCVII
For a renowned and valiant cavalier
Has the true history vaunted, Sansonnet,
By Roland christened, Charles (I said), the peer
Over the Holy Land as ruler set:
He with the duke takes up his load, to steer
Thither, where Rumour speaks the champions met.
So that his ears, on all sides in the journey,
Are filled with tidings of Damascus' tourney.

XCVIII
Thither the twain their way those countries through,
By easy stages and by slow, addrest,
That fresh upon the day of joust the two
Might in Damascus-town set up their rest.
When at the meeting of cross-ways they view

A person, who, in movement and in vest,
Appears to be a man, but is a maid;
And marvellously fierce, in martial raid.

XCIX
Marphisa was the warlike virgin's name,
And such her worth, she oft with naked brand
Had pressed Orlando sore in martial game,
And him who had Mount Alban in command;
And ever, night and day, the armed dame
Scowered, here and there, by hill and plain, the land;
Hoping with errant cavalier to meet,
And win immortal fame by glorious feat.

C
When Sansonnetto and the English knight
She sees approaching her, in warlike weed,
Who seem two valiant warriors in her sight,
As of large bone, and nerved for doughty deed,
On them she fain would prove her martial might,
And to defy the pair has moved her steed.
When, eyeing the two warriors, now more near,
Marphisa recognized the duke and peer.

CI
His pleasing ways she did in mind retrace,
When arms in far Catay with her he bore
Called him by name, nor would in iron case;
Retain her hand, upraised the casque she wore,
And him, advanced, to meet with glad embrace,
Though, of all living dames and those of yore,
The proudest, she; nor with less courteous mien
The paladin salutes the martial queen.

CII
They questioned one another of their way;
And when the duke has said (who first replied)

That he Damascus seeks, where to assay
Their virtuous deeds, all knights of valour tried
The Syrian king invites, in martial play, —
The bold Marphisa, at his hearing cried,
(Ever to prove her warlike prowess bent)
"I will be with you at this tournament."

CIII
To have such a comrade either cavalier
Is much rejoiced. They to Damascus go,
And in a suburb, of the city clear,
Are lodged, upon the day before the show;
And, till her aged lover, once so dear,
Aurora roused, their humble roof below,
In greater ease the weary warriors rested
Than had they been in costly palace guested.

CIV
And when the clear and lucid sun again
Its shining glories all abroad had spread,
The beauteous lady armed, and warriors twain,
Having first couriers to the city sped,
Who, when 'twas time, reported to the train,
That, to see truncheons split in contest dread,
King Norandine had come into the square
In which the cruel games appointed were.

CV
Straight to the city ride the martial band,
And, through the high-street, to the crowded place;
Where, waiting for the royal signal, stand,
Ranged here and there, the knights of gentle race.
The guerdons destined to the conqueror's hand,
In that day's tourney, were a tuck and mace
Richly adorned, and, with them, such a steed
As to the winning lord were fitting meed.

CVI

Norandine, sure that, in the martial game,
Both prizes destined for the conquering knight,
As well as one and the other tourney's fame,
Must be obtained by Gryphon, named the white,
To give him all that valiant man could claim,
Nor could he give the warrior less, with right,
The armour, guerdon of this final course
Placed with the tuck and mace and noble horse.

CVII

The arms which in the former joust the due
Of valiant Gryphon were, who all had gained,
(With evil profit, by the wretch untrue,
Martan' usurped, who Gryphon's bearing feigned)
To be hung up on high in public view
With the rich-flourished tuck, the king ordained,
And fastened at the saddle of the steed
The mace, that Gryphon might win either meed.

CVIII

But from effecting what he had intended
He was prevented by the warlike maid;
Who late into the crowded square had wended,
With Sansonnet and England's duke arrayed,
Seeing the arms of which I spoke suspended,
She straight agnized the harness she surveyed,
Once hers, and dear to her; as matters are
Esteemed by us as excellent and rare;

CIX

Though, as a hindrance, she upon the road
Had left the arms, when, to retrieve her sword,
She from her shoulders slipt the ponderous load,
And chased Brunello, worthy of the cord.
More to relate were labour ill bestowed,

I deem, nor further of the tale record.
Enough for me, by you 'tis understood,
How here she found anew her armour good.

CX
You shall take with you, when by manifest
And certain tokens they by her were known,
She, for no earthly thing, the iron vest
And weapons for a day would have foregone.
She thinks not if this mode or that be best
To have them, anxious to regain her own;
But t'wards the arms with hand extended hies,
And without more regard takes down the prize.

CXI
And throwing some on earth, it chanced that more
Than was her own she in her hurry took.
The Syrian king, who was offended sore,
Raised war against her with a single look.
For ill the wrong his angered people bore,
And, to avenge him, lance and falchion shook;
Remembering not, on other day, how dear
They paid for scathing errant cavalier.

CXII
No wishful child more joyfully, 'mid all
The flowers of spring-tide, yellow, blue, and red,
Finds itself, nor at concert or at ball
Dame beauteous and adorned, than 'mid the tread
Of warlike steeds, and din of arms, and fall
Of darts, and push of spears. — where blood is shed,
And death is dealt, in the tumultuous throng, —
SHE finds herself beyond all credence strong.

CXIII
She spurred her courser, and with lance in rest,
Imperious at the foolish rabble made,

And — through the neck impaled or through the breast, —
Some pierced, some prostrate at the encounter layed.
Next this or that she with the falchion prest;
The head from one she severed with the blade,
And from that other cleft: another sank,
Short of right arm or left, or pierced in flank.

CXIV
Bold Sansonnetto and Astolpho near,
Who had, with her, their limbs in harness dight,
Though they for other end in arms appear,
Seeing the maid and crowd engaged in fight,
First lower the helmet's vizor, next the spear,
And with their lances charge the mob outright:
Then bare their falchions, and, amid the crew,
A passage with the trenchant weapons hew.

CXV
The errant cavaliers who to that stage,
To joust, from different lands had made resort,
Seeing them warfare with such fury wage,
And into mourning changed the expected sport,
Because all knew not what had moved the rage
Of the infuriate people in that sort,
Nor what the insult offered to the king,
Suspended stood in doubt and wondering.

CXVI
Of these, some will the crowded rabble's band
(Too late repentant of the feat) befriend:
Those, favouring not the natives of the land
More than the foreigners, to part them wend.
Others more wary, with their reins in hand,
Sit watching how the mischief is to end.
Gryphon and Aquilant are of the throng
Which hurry forward to avenge the wrong.

CXVII

The pair of warlike brethren witnessing
The monarch's drunken eyes with venom fraught,
And having heard from many in the ring
The occasion which the furious strife had wrought,
Himself no whit less injured than the king
Of Syria's land, offended Gryphon thought.
Each knight, in haste, supplied himself with spear,
And thundering vengeance drove in full career.

CXVIII

On Rabican, pricked forth before his hand,
Valiant Astolpho, from the other bound,
With the enchanted lance of gold in hand,
Which at the first encounter bore to ground
What knights he smote with it; and on the sand
Laid Gryphon first; next Aquilant he found,
And scarcely touched the border of his shield,
Ere he reversed the warrior on the field.

CXIX

From lofty saddle Sansonnet o'erthrew,
Famous for price and prowess, many a knight.
To the outlet of the square the mob withdrew;
The monarch raged with anger and despite.
Meanwhile, of the first cuirass and the new
Possest, as well as either helmet bright,
Marphisa, when she all in flight discerned,
Conqueror towards her suburb-inn returned.

CXX

Sansonnet and Astolpho are not slow
In following t'wards the gate the martial maid,
(The mob dividing all to let them go)
And halt when they have reached the barricade.
Gryphon and Aquilant, who saw with woe

Themselves on earth at one encounter laid,
Their drooping heads, opprest with shame, decline,
Nor dare appear before King Norandine.

CXXI
Seizing their steeds and mounting, either son
Of Oliver to seek their foemen went:
With many of his vassals too is gone
The king; on death or vengeance all intent.
The foolish rabble cry, "Lay on, lay on."
And stand at distance and await the event.
Gryphon arrived where the three friends had gained
A bridge, and facing round the post maintained.

CXXII
He, at the first approach, Astolpho knew,
For still the same device had been his wear,
Even from the day he charmed Orrilo slew,
His horse, his arms the same: him not with care
Sir Gryphon had remarked, nor stedfast view,
When late he jousted with him in the square:
He knows him here and greets; next prays him show
Who the companions are that with him go;

CXXIII
And why they had those arms, without the fear
Of Syria's king, pulled down, and to his slight.
Of his champions England's cavalier,
Sir Gryphon courteously informed aright.
But little of those arms, pursued the peer,
He knew, which were the occasion of the fight;
But (for he thither with Marphisa came
And Sansonnet) had armed to aid the dame.

CXXIV
While he and Gryphon stood in colloquy,
Aquilant came, and knew Astolpho good,

Whom he heard speaking with his brother nigh,
And, though of evil purpose, changed his mood.
Of Norandine's trooped many, these to spy;
But came not nigh the warriors where they stood:
And seeing them in conference, stood clear,
Listening, in silence, and intent to hear.

CXXV
Some one who hears Marphisa hold is there,
Famed, through the world, for matchless bravery,
His courser turns, and bids the king have care,
Save he would lose his Syrian chivalry,
To snatch his court, before all slaughtered are,
From the hand of Death and of Tisiphone:
For that 'twas verily Marphisa, who
Had borne away the arms in public view.

CXXVI
As Norandine is told that name of dread,
Through the Levant so feared on every side,
Whose mention made the hair on many a head
Bristle, though she was often distant wide.
He fears the ill may happen which is said,
Unless against the mischief he provide;
And hence his meiny, who have changed their ire
Already into fear, he bids retire.

CXXVII
The sons of Oliver, on the other hand,
With Sansonnetto and the English knight,
So supplicate Marphisa, she her brand
Puts up, and terminates the cruel fight;
And to the monarch next, amid his brand,
Cries, proudly, "Sir, I know not by what right
Thou wouldst this armour, not thine own, present
To him who conquers in thy tournament.

CXXVIII
"Mine are these arms, which I, upon a day,
Left on the road which leads from Armeny,
Because, parforce a-foot, I sought to stay
A robber, who had sore offended me.
The truth of this my ensign may display.
Which here is seen, if it be known to thee."
With that she on the plate which sheathed the breast
(Cleft in three places) showed a crown imprest.

CXXIX
"To me this an Armenian merchant gave,
'Tis true," replied the king, "some days ago;
And had you raised your voice, the arms to crave,
You should have had them, whether yours or no.
For, notwithstanding I to Gryphon gave
The armour, I so well his nature know,
He freely would resign the gift he earned,
That it by me to you might be returned.

CXXX
"Your allegation needs not to persuade
These arms are yours — that they your impress bear;
Your word suffices me, by me more weighed
Than all that other witness could declare.
To grant them yours is but a tribute paid
To Virtue, worthy better prize to wear.
Now have the arms, and let us make accord;
And let some fairer gift the knight reward."

CXXXI
Gryphon, who little had those arms at heart,
But much to satisfy the king was bent,
Replied: "You recompense enough impart,
Teaching me how your wishes to content."
— "Here is my honour all at sake," apart,

"Meseemeth," said Marphisa, and forewent
Her claim for Gryphon's sake, with courteous cheer;
And, as his gift, in fine received the gear.

CXXXII
To the city, their rejoicings to renew,
In love and peace they measured back their way.
Next came the joust, of which the honour due,
And prize was Sansonnet's; since from the fray
Abstained Astolpho and the brethren two,
And bold Marphisa, best of that array,
Like faithful friends and good companions; fain
That Sansonnet the tourney's meed should gain.

CXXXIII
Eight days or ten in joy and triumph dwell
The knights with Norandine; but with such strong
Desire of France the warriors' bosoms swell,
Which will not let them thence be absent long,
They take their leave. Marphisa, who as well
Thither would go, departs the troop among.
Marphisa had long time, with sword and lance,
Desired to prove the paladins of France;

CXXXIV
And make experiment, if they indeed
Such worth as is by Rumour voiced display.
Sansonnet leaves another, in his stead,
The city of Jerusalem to sway,
And now these five, in chosen squadron speed,
Who have few peers in prowess, on their way.
Dismist by Norandine, to Tripoli
They wend, and to the neighbouring haven hie.

CXXXV
And there a carack find, about to steer
For western countries, taking in her store:

They, with the patron, for themselves and gear,
And horses, make accord; a seaman hoar
Of Luna he: the heavens, on all sides clear,
Vouch many days' fair weather. From the shore
They loose, with sky serene, and every sail
Of the yare vessel stretched by favouring gale.

CXXXVI
The island of the amorous deity
Breathed upon them an air, in her first port,
Which not alone to man does injury,
But moulders iron, and here life is short;
— A marsh the cause, — and Nature certainly
Wrongs Famagosta, poisoning, in such sort,
That city with Constantia's fen malign,
To all the rest of Cyprus so benign.

CXXXVII
The noxious scents that from the marish spring,
After short sojourn there, compel their flight.
The barque to a south-easter every wing
Extends, and circles Cyprus to the right,
Makes Paphos' island next, and, anchoring,
The crew and warriors on the beach alight;
Those to ship merchandize, and these, at leisure,
To view the laughing land of Love and Pleasure.

CXXXVIII
Inland six miles or seven from thence, a way
Scales, with an easy rise, a pleasant hill;
Which myrtle, orange, cedar-tree, and bay,
And other perfumed plants by thousands fill;
Thyme, marjoram, crocus, rose, and lily gay
From odoriferous leaf such sweets distill,
That they who sail the sea the fragrance bland,
Scent in each genial gale which blows from land.

CXXXIX
A fruitful rill, by limpid fountain fed,
Waters, all round about, the fertile space.
The land of Venus truly may be said
That passing joyous and delightful place:
For every maid and wife, who there is bred,
Is through the world beside, unmatched in grace:
And Venus wills, till their last hour be tolled,
That Love should warm their bosoms, young and old.

CXL
'Twas here they heard the same which they before
Of the orc and of Lucina, erst had heard
In Syria; how she to return once more
In Nicosia, to her lord prepared.
Thence (a fair wind now blowing from the shore)
His bark for sea the ready Patron cleared,
Hawled up his anchor, westward turned the head
Of the good ship, and all his canvas spread.

CXLI
To the north wind, which blew upon their right,
Stretching to seaward, they their sails untie:
When lo! a south-south-wester, which seemed light,
In the beginning, while the sun was high,
And afterwards increased in force t'wards night,
Raised up the sea against them mountains high;
With such dread flashes, and loud peals of thunder,
As Heaven, to swallow all in fire, would sunder.

CXLII
The clouds their gloomy veil above them strain,
Nor suffer sun or star to cheer the view.
Above the welkin roared, beneath the main;
On every side the wind and tempest grew;
Which, with sharp piercing cold and blinding rain,

Afflicted sore the miserable crew.
While aye descending night, with deeper shade,
The vext and fearful billows overlayed.

CXLIII
The sailors, in this war of wind and flood,
Were prompt to manifest their vaunted art.
One blowing through the shrilling whistle stood,
And with the signal taught the rest their part.
One clears the best bower anchor: one is good
To lower, this other to hawl home or start
The braces; one from deck the lumber cast,
And this secured the tiller, that the mast.

CXLIV
The cruel wind increased throughout the night,
Which grew more dismal and more dark than hell.
The wary Patron stood to sea outright,
Where he believed less broken was the swell;
And turned his prow to meet, with ready sleight,
The buffets of the dreadful waves which fell;
Never without some hope, that at day-break
The storm might lull, or else its fury slake.

CXLV
It lulls not, nor its fury slakes, but grown
Wilder, shows worse by day, — if this be day,
Which but by reckoning of the hours is known,
And not by any cheering light or ray.
Now, with more fear (his weaker hope o'erthrown).
The sorrowing Patron to the wind gives way,
He veers his barque before the cruel gale,
And scowers the foaming sea with humble sail.

CXLVI
While Fortune on the sea annoys this crew,
She grants those others small repose by land,

Those left in France, who one another slew, —
The men of England and the paynim band.
These bold Rinaldo broke and overthrew;
Nor troops nor banners spread before him stand:
I speak of him, who his Baiardo fleet
Had spurred the gallant Dardinel to meet.

CXLVII
The shield, of which Almontes' son was vain,
That of the quarters, good Rinaldo spied;
And deemed him bold, and of a valiant strain,
Who with Orlando's ensign dared to ride.
Approaching nearer, this appeared more plain,
When heaps of slaughtered men he round him eyed.
"Better it were," he cried, "to overthrow
This evil plant, before it shoot and grow."

CXLVIII
Each to retreat betook him, where the peer
His face directed, and large passage made.
Nor less the Saracens than faithful, clear
The way, so reverenced is Fusberta's blade.
Save Dardinel, Mount Alban's cavalier,
Saw none, nor he to chase his prey delayed.
To whom, "He cast upon thee mickle care,
Poor child, who of that buckler left thee heir.

CXLIX
"I seek thee out to prove (if thou attend
My coming) how thou keep'st the red and white,
For thou, save this from me thou canst defend,
Canst ill defend it from Orlando's might."
To him the king: "Now clearly comprehend,
I what I bear, as well defend in fight;
And I more honour hope than trouble dread
From my paternal quartering, white and red.

CL
"Have thou no hope to make me fly, or yield
To thee my quarters, though a child I be;
My life shalt thou take from me, if my shield;
But I, in God, well hope the contrary.
— This as it may! — shall none, in fighting field,
Say that I ever shamed my ancestry."
So said, and grasping in his hand the sword,
The youthful king assailed Mount Alban's lord.

CLI
Upon all parts, a freezing fear goes through
The heart blood of each trembling paynim nigh,
When they amazed the fierce Rinaldo view;
Who charged the monarch with such enmity,
As might a lion, which a bullock, new
To stings of love, should in a meadow spy.
The Moor smote first, but fruitless was his task,
Who beat in vain upon Mambrino's casque.

CLII
Rinaldo smiled, and said: "I'd have thee know
If I am better skilled to find the vein."
He spurs, and lets with that the bridle go,
And a thrust pushes with such might and main,
— A thrust against the bosom of his foe,
That at his back the blade appears again.
Forth issued blood and soul, and from his sell
Lifeless and cold the reeling body fell.

CLIII
As languishes the flower of purple hue,
Which levelled by the passing ploughshare lies;
Or as the poppy, overcharged with dew,
In garden droops its head in piteous wise:
From life the leader of Zumara's crew

So past, his visage losing all its dyes;
So passed from life; and perished with their king,
The heart and hope of all his following.

CLIV
As waters will sometime their course delay,
Stagnant, and penned in pool by human skill,
Which, when the opposing dyke is broke away,
Fall, and with mighty noise the country fill:
'Twas so the Africans, who had some stay,
While Dardinello valour did instil,
Fled here and there, dismayed on every side,
When they him hurtling form his sell descried.

CLV
Letting the flyers fly, of those who stand
Firm in their place, Rinaldo breaks the array;
Ariodantes kills on every hand;
Who ranks well nigh Rinaldo on that day.
These Leonetto's, those Zerbino's brand
O'erturns, all rivals in the glorious fray.
Well Charles and Oliver their parts have done,
Turpin and Ogier, Guido and Salomon.

CLVI
In peril were the Moors, that none again
Should visit Heatheness, that day opprest:
But that the wise and wary king of Spain,
Gathered, and from the field bore off the rest:
To sit down with his loss he better gain
Esteemed, that here to hazard purse and vest:
Better some remnant of the host to save,
Than bid whole squadrons stand and find a grave.

CLVII
He bids forthwith the Moorish ensigns be
Borne to the camp, which fosse and rampart span.

With the bold monarch of Andology,
The valiant Portuguese, and Stordilan.
He sends to pray the king of Barbary,
To endeavour to retire, as best be can;
Who will no little praise that day deserve,
If he his person and his place preserve.

CLVIII
That king, who deemed himself in desperate case,
Nor ever more Biserta hoped to see;
For, with so horrible and foul a face
He never Fortune had beheld, with glee
Heard that Marsilius had contrived to place
Part of his host in full security;
And faced about his banners and bade beat
Throughout his broken squadrons a retreat.

CLIX
But the best portion neither signal knew,
Nor listened to the drum or trumpet's sound.
So scared, so crowded is the wretched crew,
That many in Seine's neighbouring stream are drowned,
Agramant, who would form the band anew,
(With him Sobrino) scowers the squadrons round;
And with them every leader good combines
To bring the routed host within their lines.

CLX
But nought by sovereign or Sobrino done,
Who, toiling, them with prayer or menace stirred,
To march, where their ill-followed flags are gone.
Can bring (I say not all) not even a third.
Slaughtered or put to flight are two for one
Who 'scapes, — nor he unharmed: among that herd,
Wounded is this behind, and that before,
And wearied, one and all, and harassed sore.

CLXI

And even within their lines, in panic sore,
They by the Christian bands are held in chase;
And of all needful matters little store
Was made there, for provisioning the place.
Charlemagne wisely by the lock before
Would grapple Fortune, when she turned her face,
But that dark night upon the field descended,
And hushed all earthly matters and suspended:

CLXII

By the Creator haply hastened, who
Was moved to pity for the works he made.
The blood in torrents ran the country through,
Flooding the roads: while on the champaign laid
Were eighty thousand of the paynim crew,
Cut off that day by the destroying blade:
Last trooped from caverns, at the midnight hour,
Villain and wolf to spoil them and devour.

CLXIII

King Charles returns no more within the town,
But camps without the city, opposite
The Moor's cantonments, and bids up and down,
And round, high-piled and frequent watch-fires light.
The paynim fashions ditch and bastion,
Rampart and mine, and all things requisite;
Visits his outposts and his guards alarms,
Nor all the livelong night puts off his arms.

CLXIV

That livelong night the foes, throughout their tents,
As insecure and with their scathe deprest,
Poured tears, and uttered murmurs and laments;
But, as they could, their sounds of woe suppress.
One grief for slaughtered friends or kindred vents;

Some are by sorrows of their own distrest,
As wounded or as ill at ease; but more
Tremble at mischief which they deem in store.

CLXV
Two Moors amid the paynim army were,
From stock obscure in Ptolomita grown;
Of whom the story, an example rare
Of constant love, is worthy to be known:
Medoro and Cloridan were named the pair;
Who, whether Fortune pleased to smile or frown,
Served Dardinello with fidelity,
And late with him to France had crost the sea.

CLXVI
Of nimble frame and strong was Cloridane,
Throughout his life a follower of the chase.
A cheek of white, suffused with crimson grain,
Medoro had, in youth a pleasing grace.
Nor bound on that emprize, 'mid all the train,
Was there a fairer or more jocund face.
Crisp hair he had of gold, and jet-black eyes:
And seemed an angel lighted from the skies.

CLXVII
These two were posted on a rampart's height,
With more to guard the encampment from surprise,
When 'mid the equal intervals, at night,
Medoro gazed on heaven with sleepy eyes.
In all his talk, the stripling, woful wight,
Here cannot choose, but of his lord devise,
The royal Dardinel; and evermore
Him, left unhonoured on the field, deplore.

CLXVIII
Then, turning to his mate, cries: "Cloridane,
I cannot tell thee what a cause of woe

It is to me, my lord upon the plain
Should lie, unworthy food for wolf or crow!
Thinking how still to me he was humane,
Meseems, if in his honour I forego
This life of mine, for favours so immense
I shall but make a feeble recompense.

CLXIX
"That he may lack not sepulture, will I
Go forth, and seek him out among the slain;
And haply God may will that none shall spy
Where Charles's camp lies hushed. Do thou remain;
That, if my death be written in the sky,
Thou may'st the deed be able to explain.
So that if Fortune foil so fear a feat,
The world, through Fame, my loving heart may weet."

CLXX
Amazed was Cloridan a child should show
Such heart, such love, and such fair loyalty;
And fain would make the youth his though forego,
Whom he held passing dear; but fruitlessly
Would move his stedfast purpose; for such woe
Will neither comforted nor altered be.
Medoro is disposed to meet his doom,
Or to enclose his master in the tomb.

CLXXI
Seeing that nought would bend him, nought would move,
"I too will go," was Cloridan's reply,
"In such a glorious act myself will prove;
As well such famous death I cover, I:
What other thing is left me, here above,
Deprived of thee, Medoro mine? To die
With thee in arms is better, on the plain,
Than afterwards of grief, should'st thou be slain."

CLXXII
And thus resolved, disposing in their place
Their guard's relief, depart the youthful pair,
Leave fosse and palisade, and, in small space,
Are among ours, who watch with little care:
Who, for they little fear the paynim race,
Slumber with fires extinguished everywhere.
'Mid carriages and arms, they lie supine
Up to the eyes, immersed in sleep and wine.

CLXXIII
A moment Cloridano stopt and cried:
"Not to be lost are opportunities.
This troop, by whom my master's blood was shed,
Medoro, ought not I to sacrifice?
Do thou, lest any one this way be led,
Watch everywhere about, with ears and eyes.
For a wide way, amid the hostile horde,
I offer here to make thee with my sword."

CLXXIV
So said he, and his talk cut quickly short,
Coming where learned Alpheus slumbered nigh;
Who had the year before sought Charles's court,
In medicine, magic, and astrology
Well versed; but now in art found small-support,
Or rather found that it was all a lie.
He had foreseen, that he his long-drawn life
Should finish in the bosom of his wife.

CLXXV
And now the Saracen with wary view
Has pierced his weasand with the pointed sword.
Four others he neat that Diviner, slew,
Nor gave the wretches time to say a word.
Sir Turpin in his story tells not who,

And Time had of their names effaced record.
Palidon of Moncalier next he speeds;
One who securely sleeps between two steeds.

CLXXVI
Next came the warrior where, with limbs outspread,
Pillowed on barrel, lay the wretched Gryll:
This he had drained, and undisturbed by dread,
Hoped to enjoy a peaceful sleep and still.
The daring Saracen lopt off his head,
Blood issues from the tap-hole, with a rill
Of wine; and he, well drenched with many a can,
Dreams that he drinks, dispatched by Cloridan.

CLXXVII
Next Gryll, Andropono and Conrad hight,
A Greek and German, at two thrusts he gored,
Who in the air had past large part of night
With dice and goblet; blest it at that board
They still had watched, till, clothed in amber light,
The radiant sun had traversed Indus' ford!
But mortals Destiny would set at nought
If every wight futurity were taught.

CLXXVIII
As, in full fold, a lion long unfed,
Whom wasting famine had made lean and spare,
Devours and rends, and swallows, and lays dead
The feeble flock, which at his mercy are;
So, in their sleep, the cruel paynim bled
Our host, and made wide slaughter everywhere:
Nor blunted was the young Medoro's sword,
But he disdained to smite the ignoble horde.

CLXXIX
He to Labretto's duke, leaving those dead,
Had come, who slumbered with a gentle mate,

Each clasping each so closely in their bed,
That air between them could not penetrate.
From both Medoro cleanly lopt the head.
Oh! blessed way of death! oh! happy fate!
For 'tis my trust, that as their bodies, so
Their souls embracing to their bourne shall go.

CLXXX
Malindo, with Andalico, he slew,
His brother, sons to the earl of Flanders they:
To whom has bearings (each to arms was new)
Charles had the lilies given; because that day
The monarch had beheld the valiant two
With crimsoned staves, returning from the fray;
And them with lands in Flanders vowed to glad;
And would, but that Medoro this forbad.

CLXXXI
Rearing the insidious blade, the pair are near
The place, where round King Charles' pavilion
Are tented warlike paladin and peer,
Guarding the side that each is camped upon.
When in good time the paynims backward steer,
And sheathe their swords, the impious slaughter done;
Deeming impossible, in such a number,
But they must light on one who does not slumber.

CLXXXII
And though they might escape well charged with prey,
To save themselves they think sufficient gain.
Thither by what he deems the safest way
(Medoro following him) went Cloridane
Where, in the field, 'mid bow and falchion, lay,
And shield and spear, in pool of purple stain,
Wealthy and poor, the king and vassal's corse,
And overthrown the rider and his horse.

CLXXXIII
The horrid mixture of the bodies there
Which heaped the plain where roved these comrades sworn,
Might well have rendered vain their faithful care
Amid the mighty piles, till break of morn,
Had not the moon, at young Medoro's prayer,
Out of a gloomy cloud put forth her horn.
Medoro to the heavens upturns his eyes
Towards the moon, and thus devoutly cries:

CLXXXIV
"O holy goddess! whom our fathers well
Have styled as of a triple form, and who
Thy sovereign beauty dost in heaven, and hell,
And earth, in many forms reveal; and through
The greenwood holt, of beast and monster fell,
— A huntress bold — the flying steps pursue,
Show where my king, amid so many lies,
Who did, alive, thy holy studies prize."

CLXXXV
At the youth's prayer from parted cloud outshone
(Were it the work of faith or accident)
The moon, as fair, as when Endymion
She circled in her naked arms: with tent,
Christian or Saracen, was Paris-town
Seen in that gleam, and hill and plain's extent.
With these Mount Martyr and Mount Levy's height,
This on the left, and that upon the right.

CLXXXVI
The silvery splendor glistened yet more clear,
There where renowned Almontes' son lay dead.
Faithful Medoro mourned his master dear,
Who well agnized the quartering white and red,
With visage bathed in many a bitter tear

(For he a rill from either eyelid shed),
And piteous act and moan, that might have whist
The winds, his melancholy plaint to list;

CLXXXVII
But with a voice suppress: not that he aught
Regards if any one the noise should hear,
Because he of his life takes any thought;
Of which loathed burden he would fain be clear;
But, lest his being heard should bring to nought
The pious purpose which has brought them here.
The youths the king upon their shoulders stowed;
And so between themselves divide the load.

CLXXXVIII
Hurrying their steps, they hastened, as they might,
Under the cherished burden they conveyed;
And now approaching was the lord of light,
To sweep from heaven the stars, from earth the shade.
When good Zerbino, he, whose valiant sprite
Was ne'er in time of need by sleep down-weighed,
From chasing Moors all night, his homeward way
Was taking to the camp at dawn of day.

CLXXXIX
He has with him some horsemen in his train,
That from afar the two companions spy.
Expecting thus some spoil or prize to gain,
They, every one, towards that quarter hie.
"Brother, behoves us," cried young Cloridane,
"To cast away the load we bear, and fly:
For 'twere a foolish thought (might well be said)
To lose two living men, to save one dead:

CXC
And dropt the burden, weening his Medore
Had done the same by it, upon his side:

But that poor boy, who loved his master more,
His shoulders to the weight, alone, applied;
Cloridan hurrying with all haste before,
Deeming him close behind him or beside;
Who, did he know his danger, him to save
A thousand deaths, instead of one, would brave.

CXCI
Those horsemen, with intent to make the two
Yield themselves prisoners to their band, or die,
Some here, some there, disperse the champaign through,
And every pass and outlet occupy.
The captain, little distant from his crew,
Is keener than the rest the chase to ply;
And, when he sees them hurrying in such guise,
Is certain that the twain are enemies.

CXCII
Of old an ancient forest clothed that lair,
Of trees and underwood a tangled maze;
Of salvage beasts alone the wild repair,
And, like a labyrinth, full of narrow ways:
Here from the boughs such shelter hope the pair
As may conceal them well from hostile gaze.
But him I shall expect who loves the rhyme,
To listen to my tale some other time.

CANTO 19

ARGUMENT
Medoro, by Angelica's quaint hand,
Is healed, and weds, and bears her to Catay.
At length Marphisa, with the chosen band,
After long suffering, makes Laiazzi's bay.
Guido the savage, bondsman in the land,

Which impious women rule with civil sway,
With Marphisa strives in single fight,
And lodges her and hers at full of night.

I
By whom he is beloved can no one know,
Who on the top of Fortune's wheel is seated;
Since he, by true and faithless friends, with show
Of equal faith, in glad estate is greeted.
But, should felicity be changed to woe,
The flattering multitude is turned and fleeted!
While he who loves his master from his heart,
Even after death performs his faithful part.

II
Were the heart seen as is the outward cheer,
He who at court is held in sovereign grace,
And he that to his lord is little dear,
With parts reversed, would fill each other's place;
The humble man the greater would appear,
And he, now first, be hindmost in the race.
But be Medoro's faithful story said,
The youth who loved his lord, alive or dead.

III
The closest path, amid the forest gray,
To save himself, pursued the youth forlorn;
But all his schemes were marred by the delay
Of that sore weight upon his shoulders born.
The place he knew not, and mistook the way,
And hid himself again in sheltering thorn.
Secure and distant was his mate, that through
The greenwood shade with lighter shoulders flew.

IV
So far was Cloridan advanced before,
He heard the boy no longer in the wind;
But when he marked the absence of Medore,
It seemed as if his heart was left behind.
"Ah! how was I so negligent," (the Moor
Exclaimed) "so far beside myself, and blind,
That I, Medoro, should without thee fare,
Nor know when I deserted thee or where?"

V
So saying, in the wood he disappears,
Plunging into the maze with hurried pace;
And thither, whence he lately issued, steers,
And, desperate, of death returns in trace.
Cries and the tread of steeds this while he hears,
And word and the tread of foemen, as in chase:
Lastly Medoro by his voice is known,
Disarmed, on foot, 'mid many horse, alone.

VI
A hundred horsemen who the youth surround,
Zerbino leads, and bids his followers seize
The stripling: like a top, the boy turns round
And keeps him as he can: among the trees,
Behind oak, elm, beech, ash, he takes his ground,
Nor from the cherished load his shoulders frees.
Wearied, at length, the burden he bestowed
Upon the grass, and stalked about his load.

VII
As in her rocky cavern the she-bear,
With whom close warfare Alpine hunters wage,
Uncertain hangs about her shaggy care,
And growls in mingled sound of love and rage,
To unsheath her claws, and blood her tushes bare,

Would natural hate and wrath the beast engage;
Love softens her, and bids from strife retire,
And for her offspring watch, amid her ire.

VIII
Cloridan who to aid him knows not how,
And with Medoro willingly would die,
But who would not for death this being forego,
Until more foes than one should lifeless lie,
Ambushed, his sharpest arrow to his bow
Fits, and directs it with so true an eye,
The feathered weapon bores a Scotchman's brain,
And lays the warrior dead upon the plain.

IX
Together, all the others of the band
Turned thither, whence was shot the murderous reed;
Meanwhile he launched another from his stand,
That a new foe might by the weapon bleed,
Whom (while he made of this and that demand,
And loudly questioned who had done the deed)
The arrow reached — transfixed the wretch's throat,
And cut his question short in middle note.

X
Zerbino, captain of those horse, no more
Can at the piteous sight his wrath refrain;
In furious heat, he springs upon Medore,
Exclaiming, "Thou of this shalt bear the pain."
One hand he in his locks of golden ore
Enwreaths, and drags him to himself amain;
But, as his eyes that beauteous face survey,
Takes pity on the boy, and does not slay.

XI
To him the stripling turns, with suppliant cry,
And, "By thy God, sir knight," exclaims, "I pray,

Be not so passing cruel, nor deny
That I in earth my honoured king may lay:
No other grace I supplicate, nor I
This for the love of life, believe me, say.
So much, no longer, space of life I crave.
As may suffice to give my lord a grave.

XII
"And if you needs must feed the beast and bird,
Like Theban Creon, let their worst be done
Upon these limbs; so that by me interred
In earth be those of good Almontes' son."
Medoro thus his suit, with grace, preferred,
And words — to move a mountain, and so won
Upon Zerbino's mood, to kindness turned,
With love and pity he all over burned.

XIII
This while, a churlish horseman of the band,
Who little deference for his lord confest,
His lance uplifting, wounded overhand
The unhappy suppliant in his dainty breast.
Zerbino, who the cruel action scanned,
Was deeply stirred, the rather that, opprest
And livid with the blow the churl had sped,
Medoro fell as he was wholly dead.

XIV
So grieved Zerbino, with such wrath was stung,
"Not unavenged shalt thou remain," he cries;
Then full of evil will in fury sprung
Upon the author of the foul emprize.
But he his vantage marks, and, from among
The warriors, in a moment slips and flies.
Cloridan who beholds the deed, at sight
Of young Medoro's fall, springs forth to fight;

XV

And casts away his bow, and, 'mid the band
Of foemen, whirls his falchion, in desire
Rather of death, than hoping that his hand
May snatch a vengeance equal to his ire.
Amid so many blades, he views the sand
Tinged with his blood, and ready to expire,
And feeling he the sword no more can guide,
Lets himself drop by his Medoro's side.

XVI

The Scots pursue their chief, who pricks before,
Through the deep wood, inspired by high disdain,
When he has left the one and the other Moor,
This dead, that scarce alive, upon the plain.
There for a mighty space lay young Medore,
Spouting his life-blood from so large a vein,
He would have perished, but that thither made
A stranger, as it chanced, who lent him aid.

XVII

By chance arrived a damsel at the place,
Who was (though mean and rustic was her wear)
Of royal presence and of beauteous face,
And lofty manners, sagely debonair:
Her have I left unsung so long a space,
That you will hardly recognise the fair.
Angelica, in her (if known not) scan,
The lofty daughter of Catay's great khan.

XVIII

Angelica, when she had won again
The ring Brunello had from her conveyed,
So waxed in stubborn pride and haught disdain,
She seemed to scorn this ample world, and strayed
Alone, and held as cheap each living swain,

Although, amid the best, by Fame arrayed:
Nor brooked she to remember a galant
In Count Orlando or king Sacripant;

XIX
And above every other deed repented,
That good Rinaldo she had loved of yore;
And that to look so low she had consented,
(As by such choice dishonoured) grieved her sore.
Love, hearing this, such arrogance resented,
And would the damsel's pride endure no more.
Where young Medoro lay he took his stand,
And waited her, with bow and shaft in hand.

XX
When fair Angelica the stripling spies,
Nigh hurt to death in that disastrous fray,
Who for his king, that there unsheltered lies,
More sad than for his own misfortune lay,
She feels new pity in her bosom rise,
Which makes its entry in unwonted way.
Touched was her haughty heart, once hard and curst,
And more when he his piteous tale rehearsed.

XXI
And calling back to memory her art,
For she in Ind had learned chirurgery,
(Since it appears such studies in that part
Worthy of praise and fame are held to be,
And, as an heir-loom, sires to sons impart,
With little aid of books, the mystery)
Disposed herself to work with simples' juice,
Till she in him should healthier life produce;

XXII
And recollects a herb had caught her sight
In passing hither, on a pleasant plain,

What (whether dittany or pancy hight)
I know not; fraught with virtue to restrain
The crimson blood forth-welling, and of might
To sheathe each perilous and piercing pain,
She found it near, and having pulled the weed,
Returned to seek Medoro on the mead.

XXIII
Returning, she upon a swain did light,
Who was on horseback passing through the wood.
Strayed from the lowing herd, the rustic wight
A heifer, missing for two days, pursued.
Him she with her conducted, where the might
Of the faint youth was ebbing with his blood:
Which had the ground about so deeply dyed,
Life was nigh wasted with the gushing tide.

XXIV
Angelica alights upon the ground,
And he her rustic comrade, at her hest.
She hastened 'twixt two stones the herb to pound,
Then took it, and the healing juice exprest:
With this did she foment the stripling's wound,
And, even to the hips, his waist and breast;
And (with such virtue was the salve endued)
It stanched his life-blood, and his strength renewed;

XXV
And into him infused such force again,
That he could mount the horse the swain conveyed;
But good Medoro would not leave the plain
Till he in earth had seen his master laid.
He, with the monarch, buried Cloridane,
And after followed whither pleased the maid,
Who was to stay with him, by pity led,
Beneath the courteous shepherd's humble shed.

XXVI

Nor would the damsel quit the lowly pile
(So she esteemed the youth) till he was sound;
Such pity first she felt, when him erewhile
She saw outstretched and bleeding on the ground.
Touched by his mien and manners next, a file
She felt corrode her heart with secret wound;
She felt corrode her heart, and with desire,
By little and by little warmed, took fire.

XXVII

The shepherd dwelt, between two mountains hoar,
In goodly cabin, in the greenwood shade,
With wife and children; and, short time before,
The brent-new shed had builded in the glade.
Here of his griesly wound the youthful Moor
Was briefly healed by the Catayan maid;
But who in briefer space, a sorer smart
Than young Medoro's, suffered at her heart.

XXVIII

A wound far wider and which deeper lies,
Now in her heart she feels, from viewless bow;
Which from the boy's fair hair and beauteous eyes
Had the winged archer dealt: a sudden glow
She feels, and still the flames increasing rise;
Yet less she heeds her own than other's woe:
— Heeds not herself, and only to content
The author of her cruel ill is bent.

XXIX

Her ill but festered and increased the more
The stripling's wounds were seen to heal and close:
The youth grew lusty, while she suffered sore,
And, with new fever parched, now burnt, now froze:
From day to day in beauty waxed Medore:

She miserably wasted; like the snow's
Unseasonable flake, which melts away
Exposed, in sunny place, to scorching ray.

XXX
She, if of vain desire will not die,
Must help herself, nor yet delay the aid.
And she in truth, her will to satisfy,
Deemed 'twas no time to wait till she was prayed.
And next of shame renouncing every tye,
With tongue as bold as eyes, petition made,
And begged him, haply an unwitting foe,
To sheathe the suffering of that cruel blow.

XXXI
O Count Orlando, O king of Circassy,
Say what your valour has availed to you!
Say what your honour boots, what goodly fee
Remunerates ye both, for service true!
Sirs, show me but a single courtesy,
With which she ever graced ye, — old or new, —
As some poor recompense, desert, or guerdon,
For having born so long so sore a burden!

XXXII
Oh! couldst thou yet again to life return,
How hard would this appear, O Agricane!
In that she whilom thee was wont to spurn,
With sharp repulse and insolent disdain.
O Ferrau, O ye thousand more, forlorn,
Unsung, who wrought a thousand feats in vain
For this ungrateful fair, what pain 'twould be
Could you within his arms the damsel see!

XXXIII
To pluck, as yet untouched, the virgin rose,
Angelica permits the young Medore.

Was none so blest as in that garden's close
Yet to have set his venturous foot before.
They holy ceremonies interpose,
Somedeal to veil — to gild — the matter o'er.
Young Love was bridesman there the tie to bless,
And for brideswoman stood the shepherdess.

XXXIV
In the low shed, with all solemnities,
The couple made their wedding as they might;
And there above a month, in tranquil guise,
The happy lovers rested in delight.
Save for the youth the lady has no eyes,
Nor with his looks can satisfy her sight.
Nor yet of hanging on his neck can tire,
Of feel she can content her fond desire.

XXXV
The beauteous boy is with her night and day,
Does she untent herself, or keep the shed.
Morning or eve they to some meadow stray,
Now to this bank, and to that other led:
Haply, in cavern harboured, at mid-day,
Grateful as that to which Aeneas fled
With Dido, when the tempest raged above,
The faithful witness to their secret love.

XXXVI
Amid such pleasures, where, with tree o'ergrown,
Ran stream, or bubbling fountain's wave did spin,
On bark or rock, if yielding were the stone,
The knife was straight at work or ready pin.
And there, without, in thousand places lone,
And in as many places graved, within,
MEDORO and ANGELICA were traced,
In divers cyphers quaintly interlaced.

XXXVII
When she believed they had prolonged their stay
More than enow, the damsel made design
In India to revisit her Catay,
And with its crown Medoro's head entwine.
She had upon her wrist an armlet, gay
With costly gems, in witness and in sign
Of love to her by Count Orlando borne,
And which the damsel for long time had worn.

XXXVIII
On Ziliantes, hid beneath the wave,
This Morgue bestowed; and from captivity
The youth (restored to Monodantes grave,
His ancient sire, through Roland's chivalry)
To Roland in return the bracelet gave:
Roland, a lover, deigned the gorgeous fee
To wear, with the intention to convey
The present to his queen, of whom I say.

XXXIX
No love which to the paladin she bears,
But that it costly is and wrought with care,
This to Angelica so much endears,
That never more esteemed was matter rare:
This she was suffered, in THE ISLE OF TEARS,
I know not by what privilege, to wear,
When, naked, to the whale exposed for food
By that inhospitable race and rude.

XL
She, not possessing wherewithal to pay
The kindly couple's hospitality,
Served by them in their cabin, from the day
She there was lodged, with such fidelity,
Unfastened from her arm the bracelet gay,

And bade them keep it for her memory.
Departing hence the lovers climb the side
Of hills, which fertile France from Spain divide.

XLI
Within Valencia or Barcelona's town
The couple thought a little to remain,
Until some goodly ship should make her boun
To loose for the Levant: as so the twain
Journey, beneath Gerona, — coming down
Those mountains — they behold the subject main;
And keeping on their left the beach below,
By beaten track to Barcelona go.

XLII
But, ere they there arrive, a crazed wight
They find, extended on the outer shore;
Who is bedaubed like swine, in filthy plight,
And smeared with mud, face, reins, and bosom o'er'
He comes upon them, as a dog in spite
Swiftly assails the stranger at the door;
And is about to do the lovers scorn,
But to the bold Marphisa I return —

XLIII
Marphisa, Astolpho, Gryphon, Aquilant.
Of these and of the others will I tell:
Who, death before their eyes, the vext Levant
Traverse, and ill resist the boisterous swell.
While aye more passing proud and arrogant,
Waxes in rage and threat the tempest fell.
And now three days the angry gale has blown,
Nor signal of abatement yet has shown.

XLIV
Waves lifted by the waxing tempest start
Castle and flooring, and, if yet there be

Aught standing left in any other part,
'Tis cut away and cast into the sea.
Here, pricking out their course upon the chart,
One by a lantern does his ministry,
Upon a sea-chest propt; another wight
Is busied in the well by torch's light.

XLV
This one beneath the poop, beneath the prow
That other, stands to watch the ebbing sand;
And (each half-glass run out) returns to know
What way the ship has made, and towards what land.
Thence all to speak their different thoughts, below,
To midships make resort, with chart in hand;
There where the mariners, assembled all,
Are met in council, at the master's call.

XLVI
One says: "Abreast of Limisso are we
Among the shoals" — and by his reckoning, nigh
The rocks of Tripoli and bark must be,
Where shipwrecked, for the most part, vessels lie.
Another: "We are lost on Sataly,
Whose coast makes many patrons weep and sigh."
According to their judgment, all suggest
Their treasons, each with equal dread opprest.

XLVII
More spitefully the wind on the third day
Blows, and the sea more yeasty billows rears:
The fore-mast by the first is borne away,
The rudder by the last, with him who steers.
Better than steel that man will bide the assay,
— Of marble breast — who has not now his fears.
Marphisa, erst so confident 'mid harms,
Denied not but that day she felt alarms.

XLVIII
A pilgrimage is vowed to Sinai,
To Cyprus and Gallicia, and to Rome,
Ettino, and other place of sanctity,
If such is named, and to the holy tomb.
Meanwhile, above the sea and near the sky,
The bark is tost, with shattered plank and boom;
From which the crew had cut, in her distress,
The mizenmast, to make her labour less.

XLIX
They bale and chest and all their heavy lumber
Cast overboard, from poop, and prow, and side;
And every birth and cabin disencumber
Of merchandize, to feed the greedy tide.
Water to water others of the number
Rendered, by whom the spouting pumps were plied.
This in the hold bestirs himself, where'er
Planks opened by the beating sea appear.

L
They in this trouble, in this woe, remained
For full four days; and helpless was their plight,
And a full victory the sea had gained,
If yet a little had endured its spite:
But them with hope of clearer sky sustained
The wished appearance of St. Elmo's light,
Which (every spar was gone) descending glowed
Upon a boat, which in the prow was stowed.

LI
When, flaming, they the beauteous light surveyed,
All those aboard kneeled down in humble guise,
And Heaven for peace and for smooth water prayed,
With trembling voices and with watery eyes.
Nor longer waxed the storm, which had dismayed,

Till then enduring in such cruel wise.
North-wester or cross-wind no longer reigns;
But tyrant of the sea the south remains.

LII
This on the sea remained so passing strong,
And from its sable mouth so fiercely blew,
And bore with it so swift a stream and strong
Of the vext waters, that it hurried through
Their tumbling waves the shattered bark along,
Faster than gentle falcon ever flew;
And sore the patron feared, to the world's brink
It would transport his bark, or wreck or sink.

LIII
For this the master finds a remedy,
Who bids them cast out spars, and veer away
A line which holds this float, and as they flee,
So, by two-thirds, their furious course delay.
This counsel boots, and more the augury
From him whose lights upon the gunwale play.
This saves the vessel, haply else undone;
And makes her through the sea securely run.

LIV
They, driven on Syria, in Laiazzo's bay
A mighty city rise; so nigh at hand,
That they can from the vessel's deck survey
Two castles, which the port within command.
Pale turns the patron's visage with dismay,
When he perceives what is the neighbouring land,
Who will not to the port for shelter hie,
Nor yet can keep the open sea, nor fly.

LV
They cannot fly, nor yet can keep the sea;
For mast and yards are gone, and by the stroke

Of the huge billows beating frequently,
Loosened is plank, and beam and timber broke:
And certain death to make the port would be,
Or to be doomed to a perpetual yoke.
For each is made a slave, or sentenced dead,
Thither by evil Chance or Error led.

LVI
Sore dangerous 'twas to doubt; lest hostile band
Should sally from the puissant town in sight,
With armed barks, and upon theirs lay hand,
In evil case for sea, and worse for fight.
What time the patron knows not what command
To give, of him inquires the English knight
What kept his mind suspended in that sort,
And why at first he had not made the port.

LVII
To him relates the patron how a crew
Of murderous women tenanted that shore,
Which, by their ancient law, enslave or slew
All those whom Fortune to this kingdom bore;
And that he only could such for eschew
That in the lists ten champions overbore,
And having this achieved, the following night
In bed should with ten damsels take delight.

LVIII
And if he brings to end the former feat,
But afterwards the next unfinished leaves,
They kill him, and as slaves his following treat,
Condemned to delve their land or keep their beeves.
— If for the first and second labour meet —
He liberty for all his band achieves,
Not for himself; who there must stay and wed
Ten wives by him selected for his bed.

LIX
So strange a custom of the neighbouring strand
Without a laugh Astolpho cannot hear;
Sansonet and Marphisa, near at hand,
Next Aquilant, and he, his brother dear,
Arrive: to them the patron who from land
Aye keeps aloof, explains the cause of fear,
And cries: "I liefer in the sea would choke,
Than here of servitude endure the yoke."

LX
The sailors by the patron's rede abide,
And all the passengers affrighted sore;
Save that Marphisa took the other side
With hers, who deemed that safer was the shore
Than sea, which raging round them, far and wide,
Than a hundred thousand swords dismayed them more.
Them little this, or other place alarms,
So that they have but power to wield their arms.

LXI
The warriors are impatient all to land:
But boldest is of these the English peer;
Knowing how soon his horn will clear the strand,
When the scared foe its pealing sound shall hear.
To put into the neighbouring port this band
Desires, and are at strife with those who fear.
And they who are the strongest, in such sort
Compel the patron, that he makes the port.

LXII
Already when their bark was first espied
At sea, within the cruel city's view,
They had observed a galley, well supplied
With practised mariners and numerous crew
(While them uncertain counsels did divide)

Make for their wretched ship, the billows through:
Her lofty prow to their short stern and low
These lash, and into port the vessel tow.

LXIII
They thitherward were worked with warp and oar,
Rather than with assistance of the sail;
Since to lay starboard course or larboard more,
No means were left them by the cruel gale.
Again their rugged rhind the champions wore,
Girding the faithful falchion with the mail,
And with unceasing hope of comfort fed
Master and mariners opprest with dread.

LXIV
Like a half-moon, projected from the beach,
More than four miles about, the city's port;
Six hundred paces deep; and crowning each
Horn of the circling haven, was a fort;
On every side, secure from storm or breach,
(Save only from the south, a safe resort)
In guise of theatre the town extended
About it, and a hill behind ascended.

LXV
No sooner there the harboured ship was seen
(The news had spread already through the land)
Than thitherward, with martial garb and mien,
Six thousand women trooped, with bow in hand;
And, to remove all hope of flight, between
One castle and the other, drew a band;
And with strong chains and barks the port enclosed;
Which ever, for that use, they kept disposed.

LXVI
A dame, as the Cumean sybil gray,
Or Hector's ancient mother of renown,

Made call the patron out, and bade him say,
If they their lives were willing to lay down;
Or were content beneath the yoke to stay,
According to the custom of the town,
— One of two evils they must choose, — be slain,
Or captives, one and all, must there remain.

LXVII
" 'Tis true, if one so bold and of such might
Be found amid your crew," (the matron said),
"That he ten men of ours engage in fight,
And can in cruel battle lay them dead,
And, after, with ten women, in one night,
Suffice to play the husband's part in bed,
He shall remain our sovereign, and shall sway
The land, and you may homeward wend your way.

LXVIII
"And at your choice to stay shall also be,
Whether a part or all, but with this pact,
That he who here would stay and would be free,
Can with ten dames the husband's part enact.
But if your chosen warrior fall or flee,
By his ten enemies at once attacked,
Or for the second function have not breath,
To slavery you we doom, and him to death."

LXIX
At what she deemed the cavaliers would start,
The beldam found them bold; for to compete
With those they should engage, and play their part
The champions hoped alike in either feat.
Nor failed renowned Marphisa's valiant heart,
Albeit for the second dance unmeet;
Secure, where nature had her aid denied,
The want should with the falchion be supplied.

LXX

The patron is commanded their reply
Resolved in common council to unfold;
The dames at pleasure may their prowess try,
And shall in lists and bed allow them bold.
The lashings from the vessels they untie,
The skipper heaves the warp, and bids lay hold,
And lowers the bridge; o'er which, in warlike weed,
The expectant cavaliers their coursers lead.

LXXI

These through the middle of the city go,
And see the damsels, as they forward fare,
Ride through the streets, succinct, in haughty show,
And arm, in guise of warriors, in the square.
Nor to gird sword, nor fasten spur below,
Is man allowed, nor any arm to wear;
Excepting, as I said, the ten; to follow
The ancient usage which those women hallow.

LXXII

All others of the manly sex they seat,
To ply the distaff, broider, card and sow,
In female gown descending to the feet,
Which renders them effeminate and slow;
Some chained, another labour to complete,
Are tasked, to keep their cattle, or to plough.
Few are the males; and scarce the warriors ken,
Amid a thousand dames, a hundred men.

LXXIII

The knights determining by lot to try
Who in their common cause on listed ground,
Should slay the ten, with whom they were to vie,
And in the other field ten others wound,
Designed to pass the bold Marphisa by,

Believing she unfitting would be found;
And would be, in the second joust at eve,
Ill-qualified the victory to achieve.

LXXIV
But with the others she, the martial maid,
Will run her risque; and 'tis her destiny.
"I will lay down this life," the damsel said,
"Rather than you lay down your liberty.
But this" — with that she pointed to the blade
Which she had girt — "is your security,
I will all tangles in such manner loose,
As Alexander did the Gordian noose.

LXXV
"I will not henceforth stranger shall complain,
So long as the world lasts, of this repair."
So said the maid, nor could the friendly train
Take from her what had fallen to her share.
Then, — either every thing to lose, or gain
Their liberty, — to her they leave the care.
With stubborn plate and mail all over steeled,
Ready for cruel fight, she takes the field.

LXXVI
High up the spacious city is place,
With steps, which serve as seats in rising rows;
Which for nought else is used, except the chase,
Tourney, or wrestling match, or such-like shows.
Four gates of solid bronze the rabble flows
In troubled tide; and to Marphisa bold,
That she may enter, afterwards is told.

LXXVII
On pieballed horse Marphisa entered, — spread
Were circles dappling all about his hair, —
Of a bold countenance and little head,

And beauteous points, and haughty gait and air.
Out of a thousand coursers which he fed,
Him, as the best, and biggest, and most rare,
King Norandino chose, and, decked with brave
And costly trappings, to Marphisa gave.

LXXVIII
Through the south gate, from the mid-day, the plain
Marphisa entered, nor expected long,
Before she heard approaching trumpet-strain
Peal through the lists in shrilling notes and strong;
And, looking next towards the northern wain,
Saw her ten opposites appear: among
These, as their leader, pricked a cavalier,
Excelling all the rest in goodly cheer.

LXXIX
On a large courser came the leading foe,
Which was, excepting the near foot behind
And forehead, darker than was ever crow:
His foot and forehead with some white were signed.
The horseman did his horse's colours show
In his own dress; and hence might be divined,
He, as the mournful hue o'erpowered the clear,
Was less inclined to smile, than mournful tear.

LXXX
At once their spears in rest nine warriors laid,
When the trump sounded, in the hostile train,
But he in black no sign of jousting made,
As if he held such vantage in disdain:
Better he deemed the law were disobeyed,
Than that his courtesy should suffer stain.
The knight retires apart, and sits to view
What against nine one single lance can do.

LXXXI

Of smooth and balanced pace, the damsel's horse
To the encounter her with swiftness bore;
Who poised a lance so massive in the course,
It would have been an overweight for four.
She, disembarking, as of greatest force,
The boom had chosen out of many more.
At her fierce semblance when in motion, quail
A thousand hearts, a thousand looks grow pale.

LXXXII

The bosom of the first she opens so,
As might surprise, if naked were the breast:
She pierced the cuirass and the mail below;
But first a buckler, solid and well prest,
A yard behind the shoulders of the foe
Was seen the steel, so well was it addrest.
Speared on her lance she left him on the plain,
And at the others drove with flowing rein;

LXXXIII

And so she shocked the second of the crew,
And dealt the third so terrible a blow,
From sell and life, with broken spine, the two
She drove at once. So fell the overthrow,
And with such weight she charged the warriors through!
So serried was the battle of the foe! —
I have seen bombard open in such mode
The squadrons, as that band Marphisa strowed.

LXXXIV

Many good spears were broken on the dame,
Who was as little moved as solid wall,
When revellers play the chace's merry game,
Is ever moved by stroke of heavy ball.
So hard the temper of her corslet's mail,

The strokes aye harmless on the breast-plate fall,
Whose steel was heated in the fires of hell,
And in Avernus' water slaked by spell.

LXXXV
At the end of the career, she checked her steed,
Wheeled him about, and for a little stayed;
And then against the others drove at speed,
Broke them, and to the handle dyed her blade.
Here shorn of arms, and there of head, they bleed;
And other in such manner cleft the maid,
That breast, and head, and arms together fell,
Belly and legs remaining in the sell.

LXXXVI
With such just measure him she cleaves, I say,
Where the two haunches and the ribs confine:
And leaves him a half figure, in such way
As what we before images divine,
Of silver, oftener made of wax, survey;
Which supplicants from far and near enshrine,
In thanks for mercy shown, and to bestow
A pious quittance for accepted vow.

LXXXVII
Marphisa next made after one that flew,
And overtook the wretch, and cleft (before
He the mid square had won) his collar through,
So clean, no surgeon ever pieced it more.
One after other, all in fine she slew,
Or wounded every one she smote so sore,
She was secure, that never more would foe
Arise anew from earth, to work her woe.

LXXXVIII
The cavalier this while had stood aside,
Who had the ten conducted to the place,

Since, with so many against one to ride,
Had seemed to him advantage four and base;
Who, now he by a single hand espied
So speedily his whole array displaced,
Pricked forth against the martial maid, to show
'Twas courtesy, not fear, had made him slow.

LXXXIX
He, signing with his right hand, made appear
That he would speak ere their career was run,
Nor thinking that beneath such manly cheer
A gentle virgin was concealed, begun:
"I wot thou needs must be, sir cavalier,
Sore wearied with such mighty slaughter done;
And if I were disposed to weary thee
More than thou art, it were discourtesy.

XC
"To thee, to rest until to-morrow's light,
Then to renew the battle, I concede.
No honour 'twere to-day to prove my might
On thee, whom weak and overwrought I read."
— "Arms are not new to me, nor listed fight;
Nor does fatigue so short a toil succeed,"
Answered Marphisa, "and I, at my post,
Hope to prove this upon thee, to thy cost.

XCI
"I thank thee for thy offer of delay,
But need not what thy courtesy agrees;
And yet remains so large a space of day
'Twere very shame to spend it all in ease."
— "Oh! were I (he replied) so sure to appay
My heart with everything which best would please,
As thine I shall appay in this! — but see,
That ere thou thinkest, daylight fail not thee."

XCII
So said he, and obedient to his hest
Two spears, say rather heavy booms, they bear.
He to Marphisa bids consigns the best,
And the other takes himself: the martial pair
Already, with their lances in the rest,
Wait but till other blast the joust declare.
Lo! earth and air and sea the noise rebound,
As they prick forth, at the first trumpet's sound!

XCIII
No mouth was opened and no eyelid fell,
Nor breath was drawn, amid the observant crew:
So sore intent was every one to spell
Which should be conqueror of the warlike two.
Marphisa the black champion from his sell,
So to o'erthrow he shall not rise anew,
Levels her lance; and the black champion, bent
To slay Marphisa, spurs with like intent.

XCIV
Both lances, made of willow thin and dry,
Rather than stout and stubborn oak, appeared;
So splintered even to the rest, they fly:
While with such force the encountering steeds careered,
It seemed, as with a scythe-blade equally
The hams of either courser had been sheared.
Alike both fall; but voiding quick the seat,
The nimble riders start upon their feet.

XCV
Marphisa in her life, with certain wound,
A thousand cavaliers on earth had laid;
And never had herself been borne to ground;
Yet quitted now the saddle, as was said.
Not only at the accident astound,

But nigh beside herself, remained the maid.
Strange to the sable cavalier withal,
Unwont to be unhorsed, appeared his fall.

XCVI
They scarcely touch the ground before they gain
Their feet, and now the fierce assault renew,
With cut and thrust; which now with shield the twain
Or blade ward off, and now by leaps eschew.
Whether the foes strike home, or smite in vain,
Blows ring, and echo parted aether through.
More force those shields, those helms, those breast-plates show
Than anvils underneath the sounding blow.

XCVII
If heavy falls the savage damsel's blade,
That falls not lightly of her warlike foe.
Equal the measure one the other paid;
And both receive as much as they bestow.
He who would see two daring spirits weighed,
To seek two fiercer need no further go.
Nor to seek more dexterity or might;
For greater could not be in mortal wight.

XCVIII
The women who have sate long time, to view
The champions with such horrid strokes offend,
Nor sign of trouble in the warriors true
Behold, nor yet of weariness, commend
Them with just praises, as the worthiest two
That are, where'er the sea's wide arms extend.
They deem these of mere toil and labour long
Must die, save they be strongest of the strong.

XCIX
Communing with herself, Marphisa said,
"That he moved not before was well for me!

Who risqued to have been numbered with the dead,
If he at first had joined his company.
Since, as it is, I hardly can make head
Against his deadly blows." This colloquy
She with herself maintained, and while she spoke,
Ceased not to ply her sword with circling stroke.

C
" 'Twas well for me," the other cried again,
"That to repose I did not leave the knight.
I now from him defend myself with pain,
Who is o'erwearied with the former fight:
What had he been, renewed in might and main,
If he had rested till to-morrow's light?
Right fortunate was I, as man could be,
That he refused my proffered courtesy!"

CI
Till eve they strove, nor did it yet appear
Which had the vantage of the doubtful fray:
Nor, without light, could either foe see clear
Now to avoid the furious blows; when day
Was done, again the courteous cavalier
To his illustrious opposite 'gan say;
"What shall we do, since ill-timed shades descend,
While we with equal fortune thus contend?"

CII
"Meseems, at least, that till to-morrow's morn
'Twere better thou prolonged thy life: no right
Have I thy doom, sir warrior, to adjourn
Beyond the limits of one little night.
Nor will I that by me the blame be born
That thou no longer shalt enjoy the light.
With reason to the sex's charge, by whom
This place is governed, lay thy cruel doom."

CIII
"If I lament thee and thy company,
HE knows, by whom all hidden things are spied.
Thou and thy comrades may repose with me,
For whom there is no safe abode beside:
Since leagued against you in conspiracy
Are all those husbands by thy hand have died.
For every valiant warrior of the men
Slain in the tourney, consort was of ten.

CIV
"The scathe they have to-day received from thee,
Would ninety women wreak with vengeful spite;
And, save thou take my hospitality,
Except by them to be assailed this night."
— "I take thy proffer in security,"
(Replied Marphisa), "that the faith so plight,
And goodness of thy heart, will prove no less,
Than are thy corporal strength and hardiness.

CV
"But if, as having to kill me, thou grieve,
Thou well mayst grieve, for reasons opposite;
Nor hast thou cause to laugh, as I conceive,
Nor hitherto has found me worst in fight.
Whether thou wouldst defer the fray, or leave,
Or prosecute by this or other light,
Behold me prompt thy wishes to fulfil;
Where and whenever it shall be thy will!"

CVI
So by consent the combatants divided,
Till the dawn broke from Ganges' stream anew;
And so remained the question undecided,
Which was the better champion of the two,
To both the brothers and the rest who sided

Upon that part, the liberal lord did sue
With courteous prayer, that till the coming day
They would be pleased beneath his roof to stay.

CVII
They unsuspecting with the prayer complied,
And by the cheerful blaze of torches white
A royal dome ascended, with their guide,
Divided into many bowers and bright.
The combatants remain as stupified,
On lifting up their vizors, at the sight
One of the other; for (by what appears)
The warrior hardly numbers eighteen years.

CVIII
Much marvels with herself the gentle dame,
That one so young so well should do and dare.
Much marvels he (his wonderment the same)
When he her sex agnizes by her hair.
Questioning one another of their name,
As speedily reply the youthful pair.
But how was hight the youthful cavalier,
Await till the ensuing strain to hear.

CANTO 20

ARGUMENT
Guido and his from that foul haunt retire,
While all Astolpho chases with his horn,
Who to all quarters of the town sets fire,
Then roving singly round the world is borne.
Marphisa, for Gabrina's cause, in ire
Puts upon young Zerbino scathe and scorn,
And makes him guardian of Gabrina fell,
From whom he first learns news of Isabel.

I

Great fears the women of antiquity
In arms and hallowed arts as well have done,
And of their worthy works the memory
And lustre through this ample world has shone.
Praised is Camilla, with Harpalice,
For the fair course which they in battle run.
Corinna and Sappho, famous for their lore,
Shine two illustrious light, to set no more.

II

Women have reached the pinnacle of glory,
In every art by them professed, well seen;
And whosoever turns the leaf of story,
Finds record of them, neither dim nor mean.
The evil influence will be transitory,
If long deprived of such the world had been;
And envious men, and those that never knew
Their worth, have haply hid their honours due.

III

To me it plainly seems, in this our age
Of women such is the celebrity,
That it may furnish matter to the page,
Whence this dispersed to future years shall be;
And you, ye evil tongues which foully rage,
Be tied to your eternal infamy,
And women's praises so resplendent show,
They shall, by much, Marphisa's worth outgo.

IV

To her returning yet again; the dame
To him who showed to her such courteous lore,
Refused not to disclose her martial name,
Since he agreed to tell the style be bore.
She quickly satisfied the warrior's claim;

To learn his title she desired so sore.
"I am Marphisa," the virago cried:
All else was known, as bruited far and wide.

V
The other, since 'twas his to speak, begun
With longer preamble: "Amid your train,
Sirs, it is my belief that there is none
But has heard mention of my race and strain.
Not Pontus, Aethiopia, Ind alone,
With all their neighbouring realms, but France and Spain
Wot well of Clermont, from whose loins the knight
Issued who killed Almontes bold in fight,

VI
"And Chiareillo and Mambrino slew,
And sacked the realm whose royal crown they wore.
Come of this blood, where Danube's waters, through
Eight horns or ten to meet the Euxine pour,
Me to the far-renowned Duke Aymon, who
Thither a stranger roved, my mother bore.
And 'tis a twelvemonth now since her, in quest
Of my French kin, I left with grief opprest.

VII
"But reached not France, for southern tempest's spite
Impelled me hither; lodged in royal bower
Ten months or more; for — miserable wight! —
I reckon every day and every hour.
Guido the Savage I by name am hight,
Ill known and scarcely proved in warlike stower.
Here Argilon of Meliboea I
Slew with ten warriors in his company.

VIII
"Conqueror as well in other field confessed,
Ten ladies are the partners of my bed:

Selected at my choice, who are the best
And fairest damsels in this kingdom bred:
These I command, as well as all the rest,
Who of their female band have made me head;
And so would make another who in fight,
Like me, ten opposites to death would smite."

IX
Sir Guido is besought of them to say
Why there appear so few of the male race,
And to declare if women there bear sway
O'er men, as men o'er them in other place.
He: "Since my fortune has been here to stay,
I oftentimes have heard relate the case;
And now (according to the story told)
Will, since it pleases you, the cause unfold.

X
"When, after twenty years, the Grecian host
Returned from Troy (ten years hostility
The town endured, ten weary years were tost
The Greeks, detained by adverse winds at sea),
They found their women had, for comforts lost,
And pangs of absence, learned a remedy;
And, that they might not freeze alone in bed,
Chosen young lovers in their husbands' stead.

XI
"With others' children filled the Grecian crew
Their houses found, and by consent was past
A pardon to their women; for they knew
How ill they could endure so long a fast.
But the adulterous issue, as their due,
To seek their fortunes on the world were cast:
Because the husbands would not suffer more
The striplings should be nourished from their store.

XII

"Some are exposed, and others underhand
Their kindly mothers shelter and maintain:
While the adults, in many a various band,
Some here, some there dispersed, their living gain.
Arms are the trade of some, by some are scanned
Letters and arts; another tills the plain:
One serves in court, by other guided go
The herd as pleases her who rules below.

XIII

"A boy departed with they youthful peers,
Who was of cruel Clytemnestra born;
Like lily fresh (he numbered eighteen years)
Or blooming rose, new-gathered from the thorn.
He having armed a bark, his pinnace steers
In search of plunder, o'er the billows borne.
With him a hundred other youths engage,
Picked from all Greece, and of their leader's age.

XIV

"The Cretans, who had banished in that day
Idomeneus the tyrant of their land,
And their new state to strengthen and upstay,
Were gathering arms and levying martial band,
Phalantus' service by their goodly pay
Purchased (so hight the youth who sought that strand),
And all those others that his fortune run,
Who the Dictaean city garrison.

XV

"Amid the hundred cities of old Crete,
Was the Dictaean the most rich and bright;
Of fair and amorous dames the joyous seat,
Joyous with festive sports from morn to night:
And (as her townsmen aye were wont to greet

The stranger) with such hospitable rite
They welcomed these, it little lacked but they
Granted them o'er their households sovereign sway.

XVI
"Youthful and passing fair were all the crew,
The flower of Greece, who bold Phalantus led;
So that with those fair ladies at first view,
Stealing their hearts, full well the striplings sped.
Since, fair in deed as show, they good and true
Lovers evinced themselves and bold in bed.
And in few days to them so grateful proved,
Above all dearest things they were beloved.

XVII
"After the war was ended on accord,
For which were hired Phalantus and his train,
And pay withdrawn, nor longer by the sword
Was aught which the adventurous youth can gain,
And they, for this, anew would go aboard,
The unhappy Cretan women more complain,
And fuller tears on this occasion shed,
That if their fathers lay before them dead.

XVIII
"Long time and sorely all the striplings bold
Were, each apart, by them implored to stay:
Who since the fleeting youths they cannot hold,
Leave brother, sire, and son, with these to stray,
Of jewels and of weighty sums of gold
Spoiling their households ere they wend their way,
For so well was the plot concealed, no wight
Throughout all Crete was privy to their flight.

XIX
"So happy was the hour, so fair the wind,
When young Phalantus chose his time to flee,

They many miles had left the isle behind,
Ere Crete lamented her calamity.
Next, uninhabited by human kind,
This shore received them wandering o'er the sea.
'Twas here they settled, with the plunder reft,
And better weighed the issue of their theft.

XX
"With amorous pleasures teemed this place of rest,
For ten days, to that roving company:
But, as oft happens that in youthful breast
Abundance brings with it satiety,
To quit their women, with one wish possest,
The band resolved to win their liberty;
For never burden does so sore oppress
As woman, when her love breeds weariness.

XXI
"They, who are covetous of spoil and gain,
And ill-bested withal in stipend, know
That better means are wanted to maintain
So many paramours, than shaft and bow;
And leaving thus alone the wretched train,
Thence, with their riches charged the adventurers go
For Puglia's pleasant land: there founded near
The sea, Tarentum's city, as I hear.

XXII
"The women when they find themselves betrayed
Of lovers by whose faith they set most store,
For many days remain so sore dismayed,
That they seem lifeless statues on the shore.
But seeing lamentations nothing aid,
And fruitless are the many tears they pour,
Begin to meditate, amid their pains,
What remedy for such an ill remains.

XXIII

"Some laying their opinions now before
The others, deem that to return to Crete
Is in their sad estate the wiser lore,
Throwing themselves at sire and husband's feet,
Than in those wilds, and on that desert shore,
To pine of want. Another troop repeat,
They should esteem it were a worthier notion
To cast themselves into the neighbouring ocean;

XXIV

"And lighter ill, if they as harlots went
About the world, — beggars or slaves to be,
Than offer up themselves for punishment,
Well merited by their iniquity.
Such and like schemes the unhappy dames present,
Each harder than the other. Finally,
One Orontea amid these upstood,
Who drew her origin from Minos' blood.

XXV

"Youngest and fairest of the crew betrayed
She was, and wariest, and who least had erred,
Who to Phalantus' arms had come a maid,
And left for him her father: she in word,
As well as in a kindling face, displayed
How much with generous wrath her heart was stirred;
Then, reprobating all advised before,
Spake; and adopted saw her better lore.

XXVI

"She would not leave the land they were upon,
Whose soil was fruitful, and whose air was sane,
Throughout which many limpid rivers ran,
Shaded with woods, and for the most part plain;
With creek and port, where stranger bark could shun

Foul wind or storm, which vexed the neighbouring main,
That might from Afric or from Egypt bring
Victual or other necessary thing.

XXVII
"For vengeance (she opined) they there should stay
Upon man's sex, which had so sore offended.
She willed each bark and crew which to that bay
For shelter from the angry tempest wended,
They should, without remorse, burn, sack, and slay,
Nor mercy be to any one extended.
Such was the lady's motion, such the course
Adopted; and the statute put in force.

XXVIII
"The women, when they see the changing heaven
Turbid with tempest, hurry to the strand,
With savage Orontea, by whom given
Was the fell law, the ruler of the land;
And of all barks into their haven driven
Make havoc dread with fire and murderous brand,
Leaving no man alive, who may diffuse
Upon this side or that the dismal news.

XXIX
" 'Twas thus with the male sex at enmity,
Some years the lonely women lived forlorn:
Then found that hurtful to themselves would be
The scheme, save changed; for if from them were born
None to perpetuate their empery,
The idle law would soon be held in scorn,
And fail together with the fruitful reign,
Which they had hoped eternal should remain.

XXX
"So that some deal its rigour they allay,
And in four years, of all who made repair

Thither, by chance conducted to this bay,
Chose out ten vigorous cavaliers and fair;
That for endurance in the amorous play
Against those hundred dames good champions were:
A hundred they; and, of the chosen men,
A husband was assigned to every ten.

XXXI
"Ere this, too feeble to abide the test,
Many a one on scaffold lost his head.
Now these ten warriors so approved the best,
Were made partakers of their rule and bed;
First swearing at the sovereign ladies' hest,
That they, if others to that port are led,
No mercy shall to any one afford,
But one and all will put them to the sword.

XXXII
"To swell, and next to child, and thence to fear
The women turned to teeming wives began
Lest they in time so many males should bear
As might invade the sovereignty they plan,
And that the government they hold so dear
Might finally from them revert to man.
And so, while these are children yet, take measure,
They never shall rebel against their pleasure.

XXXIII
"That the male sex may not usurp the sway,
It is enacted by the statute fell,
Each mother should one boy preserve, and slay
The others, or abroad exchange or sell.
For this, they these to various parts convey,
And to the bearers of the children tell,
To truck the girls for boys in foreign lands,
Or not, at least, return with empty hands.

XXXIV

"Nor by the women one preserved would be,
If they without them could the race maintain.
Such all their mercy, all the clemency
The law accords for theirs, not others' gain.
The dames all others sentence equally;
And temper but in this their statute's pain,
That, not as was their former practice, they
All in their rage promiscuously slay.

XXXV

"Did ten or twenty persons, or yet more,
Arrive, they were imprisoned and put by;
And every day one only from the store
Of victims was brought out by lot to die,
In fane by Orontea built, before
An altar raised to Vengeance; and to ply
As headsman, and dispatched the unhappy men,
One was by lot selected from the ten.

XXXVI

"To that foul murderous shore by chance did fare,
After long years elapsed, a youthful wight,
Whose fathers sprung from good Alcides were,
And he, of proof in arms, Elbanio hight;
There was he seized, of peril scarce aware,
As unsuspecting such a foul despite:
And, closely guarded, into prison flung,
Kept for like cruel use the rest among.

XXXVII

"Adorned with every fair accomplishment,
Of pleasing face and manners was the peer,
And of a speech so sweet and eloquent,
Him the deaf adder might have stopt to hear;
So that of him to Alexandria went

Tidings as of a precious thing and rare.
She was the daughter of that matron bold,
Queen Orontea, that yet lived, though old.

XXXVIII
"Yet Orontea lived, while of that shore
The other settlers all were dead and gone;
And now ten times as many such or more
Had into strength and greater credit grown.
Nor for ten forges, often closed, in store
Have the ill-furnished band more files than one;
And the ten champions have as well the care
To welcome shrewdly all who thither fare.

XXXIX
"Young Alexandria, who the blooming peer
Burned to behold so praised on every part,
The special pleasure him to see and hear,
Won from her mother; and, about to part
From him, discovers that the cavalier
Remains the master of her tortured heart;
Finds herself bound, and that 'tis vain to stir,
— A captive made by her own prisoner.

XL
" `I pity,' (said Elbanio) 'lady fair,
Was in this cruel region known, as through
All other countries near or distant, where
The wandering sun sheds light and colouring hue,
I by your beauty's kindly charms should dare
(Which make each gentle spirit bound to you)
To beg my life; which always, at your will,
Should I be ready for your love to spill.

XLI
" `But since deprived of all humanity
Are human bosoms in this cruel land,

I shall not now request my life of thee,
(For fruitless would, I know, be the demand)
But, whether a good knight or bad I be,
Ask but like such to die with arms in hand,
And not as one condemned to penal pain;
Or like brute beast in sacrifice be slain.'

XLII
"The gentle maid, her eye bedimmed with tear,
In pity for the hapless youth, replied:
`Though this land be more cruel and severe
Than any other country, far and wide,
Each woman is not a Medaea here
As thou wouldst make her; and, if all beside
Were of such evil kind, in me alone
Should an exception to the rest be known.

XLIII
" `And though I, like so many here, of yore
Was full of evil deeds and cruelty,
I can well say, I never had before
A fitting subject for my clemency.
But fiercer were I than a tiger, more
Hard were my heart than diamonds, if in me
All hardness did not vanish and give place
Before your courage, gentleness, and grace.

XLIV
" `Ah! were the cruel statute less severe
Against the stranger to these shores conveyed!
So should I not esteem my death too dear
A ransom for thy worthier life were paid.
But none is here so great, sir cavalier,
Nor of such puissance as to lend thee aid;
And what thou askest, though a scanty grace,
Were difficult to compass in this place.

XLV

" `And yet will I endeavour to obtain
For thee, before thou perish, this content;
Though much, I fear, 'twill but augment thy pain.
And thee protracted death but more torment.'
`So I the ten encounter,' (said again
Elbanio), `I at heart, am confident
Myself to save, and enemies to slay;
Though made of iron were the whole array.'

XLVI

"To this the youthful Alexandria nought
Made answer, saving with a piteous sigh;
And from the conference a bosom brought,
Gored with deep wounds, beyond all remedy.
To Orontea she repaired, and wrought
On her to will the stripling should not die,
Should he display such courage and such skill
As with his single hand the ten to kill.

XLVII

"Queen Orontea straightway bade unite
Her council, and bespoke the assembled band:
`It still behoves us place the prowest wight
Whom we can find, to guard our ports and strand.
And, to discover whom to take or slight,
'Tis fitting that we prove the warrior's hand;
Lest, to our loss, the election made be wrong,
And we enthrone the weak and slay the strong.

XLVIII

" `I deem it fit, if you the counsel shown
Deem fit as well, in future to ordain,
That each upon our coast by Fortune thrown,
Before he in the temple shall be slain,
Shall have the choice, instead of this, alone

Battle against ten others to maintain;
And if he conquer, shall the port defend
With other comrades, pardoned to that end.

XLIX
" `I say this, since to strive against our ten,
It seems, that one imprisoned here will dare:
Who, if he stands against so many men,
By Heaven, deserves that we should hear his prayer;
But if he rashly boasts himself, again
As worthily due the punishment should bear.'
Here Orontea ceased; on the other side,
To her the oldest of the dames replied.

L
" `The leading cause, for which to entertain
This intercourse with men we first agreed,
Was not because we, to defend this reign,
Of their assistance stood in any need;
For we have skill and courage to maintain
This of ourselves, and force, withal, to speed.
Would that we could in all as well avail
Without their succour, nor succession fail!

LI
" `But since this may not be, we some have made
(These few) partakers of our company;
That, ten to one, we be not overlaid;
Nor they possess them of the sovereignty.
Not that we for protection need their aid,
But simply to increase and multiply.
Than be their powers to this sole fear addressed,
And be they sluggards, idle for the rest.

LII
" `To keep among us such a puissant wight
Our first design would render wholly vain.

If one can singly slay ten men in fight,
How many women can he not restrain?
If our ten champions had possessed such might,
They the first day would have usurped the reign.
To arm a hand more powerful than your own
Is an ill method to maintain the throne.

LIII
" `Reflect withal, that if your prisoner speed
So that he kill ten champions in the fray,
A hundred women's cry, whose lords will bleed
Beneath his falchion, shall your ears dismay.
Let him not 'scape by such a murderous deed;
But, if he would, propound some other way.
— Yet if he of those ten supply the place,
And please a hundred women, grant him grace.'

LIV
"This was severe Artemia's sentiment,
(So was she named) and had her counsel weighed,
Elbanio to the temple had been sent,
To perish by the sacrificial blade.
But Orontea, willing to content
Her daughter, to the matron answer made;
And urged so many reasons, and so wrought,
The yielding senate granted what she ought.

LV
"Elbanio's beauty (for so fair to view
Never was any cavalier beside)
So strongly works upon the youthful crew,
Which in that council sit the state to guide,
That the opinion of the older few
That like Artemia think, is set aside;
And little lacks but that the assembled race
Absolve Elbanio by especial grace.

LVI

"To pardon him in fine the dames agreed:
But, after slaying his half-score, and when
He in the next assault as well should speech,
Not with a hundred women, but with ten;
And, furnished to his wish with arms and steed,
Next day he was released from dungeon-den,
And singly with ten warriors matched in plain,
Who by his arm successively were slain.

LVII

"He to new proof was put the following night,
Against ten damsels naked and alone;
When so successful was the stripling's might,
He took the 'say of all the troop, and won
Such grace with Orontea, that the knight
Was by the dame adopted for her son;
And from her Alexandria had to wife,
With those whom he had proved in amorous strife.

LVIII

"And him she left with Alexandria, heir
To this famed city, which from her was hight,
So he and all who his successors were,
Should guard the law which willed, whatever wight,
Conducted hither by his cruel star,
Upon this miserable land did light,
Should have his choice to perish by the knife,
Or singly with ten foes contend to strife.

LIX

"And if he should dispatch the men by day,
At night should prove him with the female crew;
And if so fortunate that in this play
He proved again the conqueror, he, as due,
The female band, as prince and guide, should sway,

And his ten consorts at his choice renew:
And reign with them, till other should arrive
Of stouter hand, and him of life deprive.

LX
"They for two thousand years nigh past away
This usage have maintained, and yet maintain
The impious rite; and rarely passes day
But stranger wight is slaughtered in the fane.
If he, Elbanio-like, ten foes assay,
(And such sometimes is found) he oft is slain
In the first charge: nor, in a thousand, one
The other feat, of which I spake, has done,

LXI
"Yet some there are have done it, though so few,
They may be numbered on the fingers; one
Of the victorious cavaliers, but who
Reigned with his ten short time, was Argilon:
For, smote by me, whom ill wind hither blew,
The knight to his eternal rest is gone.
Would I with him that day had filled a grave,
Rather than in such scorn survive a slave!

LXII
"For amorous pleasures, laughter, game, and play,
Which evermore delight the youthful breast;
The gem, the purple garment, rich array,
And in his city place before the rest.
Little, by Heaven, the wretched man appay
Who of his liberty is dispossest:
And not to have the power to leave this shore
To me seems shameful servitude and sore.

LXIII
"To know I wear away life's glorious spring
In such effeminate and slothful leisure

Is to my troubled heart a constant sting,
And takes away the taste of every pleasure.
Fame bears my kindred's praise on outstretched wing,
Even to the skies; and haply equal measure
I of the glories of my blood might share
If I united with my brethren were.

LXIV
"Methinks my fate does such injurious deed
By me, condemned to servitude so base,
As he who turns to grass the generous steed
To run amid the herd of meaner race,
Because unfit for war or worthier meed,
Through blemish, or disease of sight or pace.
Nor hoping but by death, alas! to fly
So vile a service, I desire to die."

LXV
Here Guido ceased to address the martial peers,
And cursed withal the day, in high disdain,
That he achieved o'er dames and cavaliers
The double victory which bestowed that reign.
Astolpho hides his name, and silent hears,
Until to him by many a sign is plain
That this Sir Guido is, as he had said,
The issue of his kinsman Aymon's bed.

LXVI
Then cried: "The English duke, Astolpho, I
Thy cousin am," and clipt him round the waist,
And in a kindly act of courtesy,
Not without weeping, kist him and embraced.
Then, "Kinsman dear, thy birth to certify
No better sign thy mother could have placed
About thy neck. Enough! that sword of thine,
And courage, vouch thee of our valiant line."

LXVII

Guido, who gladly would in other place
So near a kin have welcomed, in dismay
Beholds him here and with a mournful face;
Knowing, if he himself survives the fray,
Astolpho will be doomed to slavery base,
His fate deferred but till the following day;
And he shall perish, if the duke is free:
So that one's good the other's ill shall be.

LXVIII

He grieves, as well, the other cavaliers
Should through his means for ever captive be;
Nor, that he should, if slain, those martial peers
Deliver by his death from slavery.
Since if Marphisa from one quicksand clears
The troop, yet these from other fails to free,
She will have won the victory in vain;
For they will be enslaved, and she be slain.

LXIX

On the other hand, the stripling's age, in May
Of youth, with courtesy and valour fraught,
Upon the maid and comrades with such sway,
Touching their breasts with love and pity, wrought
That they of freedom, for which he must pay
The forfeit of his life, nigh loathed the thought;
And if Marphisa him perforce must kill,
She is resolved as well herself to spill.

LXX

"Join thou with us," she to Sir Guido cried,
"And we from hence will sally." — "From within
These walls to sally" — Guido on his side
Answered, "Ne'er hope: With me you lose or win."
"— I fear not, I," the martial maid replied,

"To execute whatever I begin;
Nor know what can securer path afford
Than that which I shall open with my sword.

LXXI
"Such proof of thy fair prowess have I made,
With thee I every enterprise would dare.
To-morrow when about the palisade
The crowds assembled in the circus are,
Let us on every side the mob invade,
Whether they fly or for defence prepare;
Then give the town to fire, and on their bed
Of earth to wolf and vulture leave the dead."

LXXII
He: "Ready shalt thou find me in the strife
To follow thee or perish at thy side:
But let us hope not to escape with life.
Enough, is vengeance somedeal satisfied
Ere death; for oft ten thousand, maid and wife,
I in the place have witnessed; and, outside,
As many castle, wall and port, defend.
Nor know I certain way from hence to wend."

LXXIII
"And were there more (Marphisa made reply)
Than Xerxes led, our squadrons to oppose,
More than those rebel spirits from the sky
Cast out to dwell amid perpetual woes,
All in one day should by this weapon die,
Wert thou with me, at least, not with my foes."
To her again, "No project but must fail,
(Sir Guido said) I know, save this avail."

LXXIV
"This only us can save, should it succeed;
This, which but now remembered I shall teach.

To dames alone our laws the right concede
To sally, or set foot upon the beach,
And hence to one of mine in this our need
Must I commit myself, and aid beseech;
Whose love for me, by perfect friendship tied,
Has oft by better proof than this been tried.

LXXV
"No less than me would she desire that I
Should 'scape from slavery, so she went with me;
And that, without her rival's company,
She of my lot should sole partaker be.
She bark or pinnace, in the harbour nigh,
Shall bid, while yet 'tis dark, prepare for sea;
Which shall await your sailors, rigged and yare
For sailing, when they thither shall repair.

LXXVI
"Behind me, in a solid band comprest,
Ye merchants, mariners and warriors, who,
Driven to this city, have set up your rest
Beneath this roof (for which my thanks are due)
— You have to force your way with stedfast breast,
If adversaries interrupt our crew.
'Tis thus I hope, by succour of the sword,
To clear a passage through the cruel horde."

LXXVII
"Do as thou wilt," Marphisa made reply,
"I of escape am confident withal:
And likelier 'twere that by my hand should die
The martial race, encompassed by this wall,
Than any one should ever see me fly,
Or guess by other sign that fears appall.
I would my passage force in open day,
And shameful in my sight were other way.

LXXVIII
"I wot if I were for a woman known,
Honour and place from women I might claim,
Here gladly entertained, and classed as one
Haply among their chiefs of highest fame:
But privilege or favour will I none
Unshared by those with whom I hither came.
Too base it were, did I depart or free
Remain, to leave the rest in slavery."

LXXIX
These speeches by Marphisa made, and more,
Showed that what only had restrained her arm
Was the respect she to the safety bore
Of the companions whom her wrath might harm;
By this alone withheld form taking sore
And signal vengeance on the female swarm.
And hence she left in Guido's care to shape
What seemed the fittest means for their escape.

LXXX
Sir Guido speaks that night with Alery
(So the most faithful of his wives was hight)
Nor needs long prayer to make the dame agree,
Disposed already to obey the knight.
She takes a ship and arms the bark for sea,
Stowed with her richest chattels for their flight;
Feigning design, as soon as dawn ensues,
To sail with her companions on a cruise.

LXXXI
She into Guido's palace had before
Bid sword and spear and shield and cuirass bear;
With the intent to furnish from this store,
Merchants and sailors that half naked were.
Some watch, and some repose upon the floor,

And rest and guard among each other share;
Oft marking, still with harness on their backs,
If ruddy yet with light the orient wax.

LXXXII
Not yet from earth's hard visage has the sun
Lifted her veil of dim and dingy dye;
Scarcely Lycaon's child, her furrow done,
Has turned about her ploughshare in the sky;
When to the theatre the women run
Who would the fearful battle's end espy,
As swarming bees upon their threshold cluster,
Who bent on change of realm in springtide muster.

LXXXIII
With warlike trumpet, drum, and sound of horn,
The people make the land and welkin roar;
Summoning thus their chieftain to return,
And end of unfinished warfare. Covered o'er
With arms stand Aquilant and Gryphon stern,
And the redoubted duke from England's shore.
Marphisa, Dudo, Sansonet, and all
The knights or footmen harboured in that hall.

LXXXIV
Hence to descend towards the sea or port
The way across the place of combat lies;
Nor was there other passage, long or short.
Sir Guido so to his companions cries:
And having ceased his comrades to exhort,
To do their best set forth in silent wise,
And in the place appeared, amid the throng,
Head of a squad above a hundred strong.

LXXXV
Toward the other gate Sir Guido went,
Hurrying his band, but, gathered far and nigh

The mighty multitude, for aye intent
To smite, and clad in arms, when they descry
The comrades whom he leads, perceive his bent,
And truly deem he is about to fly.
All in a thought betake them to their bows,
And at the portal part the knight oppose.

LXXXVI
Sir Guido and the cavaliers who go
Beneath that champion's guidance, and before
The others bold Marphisa, were not slow
To strike, and laboured hard to force the door.
But such a storm of darts from ready bow,
Dealing on all sides death or wounding sore,
Was rained in fury on the troop forlorn,
They feared at last to encounter skaith and scorn.

LXXXVII
Of proof the corslet was each warrior wore,
Who without this would have had worse to fear:
Sansonnet's horse was slain, and that which bore
Marphisa: to himself the English peer
Exclaimed, "Why wait I longer? As if more
My horn could ever succour me than here.
Since the sword steads not, I will make assay
If with my bugle I can clear the way."

LXXXVIII
As he was customed in extremity,
He to his mouth applied the bugle's round;
The wide world seemed to tremble, earth and sky,
As he in air discharged the horrid sound.
Such terror smote the dames, that bent to fly,
When in their ears the deafening horn was wound,
Not only they the gate unguarded left,
But from the circus reeled, of wit bereft.

LXXXIX
As family, awaked in sudden wise,
Leaps from the windows and from lofty height,
Periling life and limb, when in surprise
They see, now near, the fire's encircling light,
Which had, while slumber sealed their heavy eyes,
By little and by little waxed at night:
Reckless of life, thus each, impelled by dread,
At sound of that appalling bugle fled.

XC
Above, below, and here and there, the rout
Rise in confusion and attempt to fly.
At once, above a thousand swarm about
Each entrance, to each other's lett, and lie
In heaps: from window these, or stage without,
Leap headlong; in the press these smothered die.
Broken is many an arm, and many a head;
And one lies crippled, and another dead.

XCI
Amid the mighty ruin which ensued,
Cries pierce the very heavens on every part.
Where'er the sound is heard, the multitude,
In panic at the deafening echo, start.
When you are told that without hardihood
Appear the rabble, and of feeble heart,
This need not more your marvel; for by nature
The hare is evermore a timid creature.

XCII
But of Marphisa what will be your thought,
And Guido late so furious? — of the two
Young sons of Olivier, that lately wrought
Such deeds in honour of their lineage? who
Lately a hundred thousand held as nought,

And now, deprived of courage, basely flew,
As ring-doves flutter and as coneys fly,
Who hear some mighty noise resounding nigh.

XCIII
For so to friend as stranger, noxious are
The powers that in the enchanted horn reside.
Sansonet, Guido, follow, with the pair
Or brethren bold, Marphisa terrified.
Nor flying, can they to such distance fare,
But that their ears are dinned. On every side
Astolpho, on his foaming courser borne,
Lends louder breath to his enchanted horn.

XCIV
One sought the sea, and one the mountain-top,
One fled the hide herself in forest hoar;
And this, who turned not once nor made a stop,
Not for ten days her headlong flight forbore:
These from the bridge in that dread moment drop,
Never to climb the river's margin more.
So temple, house and square and street were drained,
That nigh unpeopled the wide town remained.

XCV
Marphisa, Guido, and the brethren two,
With Sansonetto, pale and trembling, hie
Towards the sea, and behind these the crew
Of frighted mariners and merchants fly;
And 'twixt the forts, in bark, prepared with view
To their escape, discover Alery;
Who in sore haste receives the warriors pale,
And bids them ply their oars and make all sail.

XCVI
The duke within and out the town had bear
From the surrounding hills to the sea-side,

And of its people emptied every street.
All fly before the deafening sound, and hide:
Many in panic, seeking a retreat,
Lurk, in some place obscure and filthy stied;
Many, not knowing whither to repair,
Plunge in the neighbouring sea, and perish there.

XCVII

The duke arrives, seeking the friendly band,
Whom he had hoped to find upon the quay;
He turns and gazes round the desert strand,
And none is there — directs along the bay
His eyes, and now, far distant from the land,
Beholds the parting frigate under way.
So that the paladin, for his escape —
The vessel gone — must other project shape.

XCVIII

Let him depart! nor let it trouble you
That he so long a road must beat alone;
Where, never without fear, man journeys through
Wild paynim countries: danger is there none,
But what he with his bugle may eschew,
Whose dread effect the English duke has shown;
And let his late companions be our care,
Who trembling to the beach had made repair.

XCIX

They from that cruel and ensanguined ground
To seaward, under all their canvas, bore;
And having gained such offing, that the sound
Of that alarming horn was heard no more,
Unwonted shame inflicted such a wound,
That all a face of burning crimson wore.
One dares not eye the other, and they stand
With downcast looks, a mute and mournful band.

C

Fixed on his course, the pilot passes by
Cyprus and Rhodes, and ploughs the Aegean sea:
Beholds a hundred islands from him fly,
And Malea's fearful headland; fanned by free
And constant wind, sees vanish from the eye
The Greek Morea; rounding Sicily,
Into the Tuscan sea his frigate veers,
And, coasting Italy's fair region, steers:

CI

Last rises Luna, where his family
Is waiting his return, the patron hoar
Gives thanks to God at having passed the sea
Without more harm, and makes the well-known shore.
Here, offering passage to their company,
They find a master, ready to unmoor
For France, and that same day his pinnace climb;
Thence wafted to Marseilles in little time.

CII

There was not Bradamant, who used to sway
The land, and had that city in her care,
And who (if present there) to make some stay
Would have compelled them by her courteous prayer.
They disembarked; and that same hour away
Did bold Marphisa at a venture fare;
Bidding adieu to salvage Guido's wife,
And to the four, her comrades in the strife:

CIII

Saying she deems unfitting for a knight
To fare in like great fellowship; that so
The starlings and the doves in flock unite,
And every beast who fears — the stag and doe;
But hawk and eagle, that in other's might

Put not their trust, for ever singly go;
And lion, bear, and tyger, roam alone,
Who fear no prowess greater than their own.

CIV
But none with her opine, and, in the lack
Of a companion, singly must she fare,
So then, alone and friendless, she a track
Uncouth pursues, and through a wooded lair.
Gryphon the white and Aquilant the black
Take road more beaten with the other pair;
And on the following day a castle see,
Within which they are harboured courteously.

CV
Courteously I, in outward show, would say;
For soon the contrary was made appear.
Since he, the castellain, who with display
Of kindness sheltered them and courteous cheer,
The night ensuing took them as they lay
Couched in their beds, secure and void of fear.
Nor from the snare would he his prisoners loose,
Till they had sworn to observe an evil use.

CVI
But I will first pursue the martial maid,
Ere more of these, fair sir, I shall proclaim.
Beyond the Durence, Rhone, and Saone she strayed,
And to the foot of sunny mountain came;
And there approaching in black gown arrayed,
Beside a torrent, saw an ancient dame;
Who with long journey weak, and wearied sore,
Appeared, but pined by melancholy more.

CVII
This was the beldam who had wont to ply
Serving the robbers in the caverned mount;

Whither stern Justice sent (that they might die
By that good paladin) Anglante's count.
The aged harridan, for cause which I
To you shall in another place recount,
Now many days by path obscure had flown,
Still fearing lest her visage should be known.

CVIII
The semblance now of foreign cavalier
She in Marphisa saw, in arms and vest;
And hence she flies not her, though wont to fear,
(As being natives of that land) the rest;
— Nay, with security and open cheer,
Stops at the ford the damsel to arrest:
Stops at the ford — where that old beldam meets
Marphisa, and with fair encounter greets.

CIX
And next implored the maid, she of her grace
Would bear her on the croupe to the other shore.
Marphisa, who was come of gentle race,
The hag with her across the torrent bore;
And is content to bear, till she can place
In a securer road the beldam hoar,
Clear of a spacious marish: as its end
They see a cavalier towards them wend.

CX
In shining armour and in fair array,
The warrior rode on saddle richly wrought
Towards the river, and upon his way
With him a single squire and damsel brought.
Of passing beauty was the lady gay,
But little pleasing was her semblance haught;
All overblown with insolence and pride,
Worthy the cavalier who was her guide.

CXI

He of Maganza was a count, who bore
The lady with him (Pinabello hight):
The same who Bradamant, some months before,
Had plunged into a hollow cave in spite.
Those many sobs, those burning sighs and sore,
Those tears which had nigh quenched the warrior's sight, —
All for the damsel were, now at his side;
And then by that false necromancer stied.

CXII

But when the magic tower upon the hill
Was razed, the dwelling of Atlantes hoar,
And every one was free to rove at will,
Through Bradamant's good deed and virtuous lore,
The damsel, who had been compliant still
With the desires of Pinabel before,
Rejoined him, and now journeying in a round
With him, from castle was to castle bound.

CXIII

As wanton and ill-customed, when she spies
Marphisa's aged charge approaching near,
She cannot rein her saucy tongue, but plies
Here, in her petulance, with laugh and jeer.
Marphisa haught, unwont in any wise
Outrage from whatsoever part to hear,
Makes answer to the dame, in angry tone,
That handsomer than her she deems the crone.

CXIV

And that she this would prove upon her knight
With pact that she might strip the bonnibell
Of gown and palfrey, if, o'erthrown in fight,
Her champion from his goodly courser fell.
— In silence to have overpast the slight

Would have been sin and shame in Pinabel,
Who for short answer seized his shield and spear,
And wheeled, and drove at her in fierce career.

CXV
Marphisa grasped a mighty lance, and thrust,
Encountering him, at Pinabello's eyes;
And stretched him so astounded in the dust,
That motionless an hour the warrior lies.
Marphisa, now victorious in the just,
Gave orders to strip off the glorious guise
And ornaments wherewith the maid was drest,
And with the spoils her ancient crone invest;

CXVI
And willed that she should don the youthful weed,
Bedizened at the haughty damsel's cost;
And took away as well the goodly steed
Which her had thither borne, and — bent to post
On her old track — with her the hag will speed,
Who seems most hideous when adorned the most.
Three days the tedious road the couple beat,
Without adventure needful to repeat.

CXVII
On the fourth day they met a cavalier,
Who came in fury galloping alone.
If you the stranger's name desire to hear,
I tell you 'twas Zerbino, a king's son,
Of beauty and of worth example rare,
Now grieved and angered, as unvenged of one,
Who a great act of courtesy, which fain
The warrior would have done, had rendered vain.

CXVIII
Vainly the young Zerbino, through the glade,
Had chased that man of his, who this despite

Had done him, who himself so well conveyed
Away and took such 'vantage in his flight,
So hid by wood and mist, which overlaid
The horizon and bedimmed the morning-light,
That he escaped Zerbino's grasp, and lay
Concealed until his wrath was past away.

CXIX
Zerbino laughed parforce, when he descried
That beldam's face, though he was full of rage;
For too ill-sorted seemed her vest of pride
With her foul visage, more deformed by age;
And to the proud Marphisa, at her side
The prince, exclaimed, "Sir warrior, you are sage,
In having chosen damsel of a sort,
Whom none, I ween, will grudge you should escort."

CXX
Older than Sibyl seemed the beldam hoar,
(As far as from her wrinkles one might guess),
And in the youthful ornaments she wore,
Looked like an ape which men in mockery dress;
And now appears more foul, as angered sore,
While rage and wrath her kindled eyes express.
For none can do a woman worse despite
Than to proclaim her old and foul to sight.

CXXI
To have sport of him — as she had — an air
Of wrath the maid assumed upon her part,
And to the prince, "By Heaven, more passing fair
Is this my lady than thou courteous art,"
Exclaimed in answer; "though I am aware
What thou hast uttered comes not from thy heart.
Thou wilt not own her beauty; a device
Put on to masque thy sovereign cowardice.

CXXII
"And of what stamp would be that cavalier
Who found such fair and youthful dame alone,
Without protection, in the forest drear,
Nor sought to make the lovely weft his own?"
— "So well she sorts with thee," replied the peer,
" `Twere ill that she were claimed by any one:
Nor I of her would thee in any wise
Deprive; God rest thee merry with thy prize!

CXXIII
"But would thou prove what is my chivalry,
On other ground I to thy wish incline;
Yet deem me not of such perversity
As to tilt with thee for this prize of thine.
Or fair or foul, let her remain thy fee;
I would not, I, such amity disjoin.
Well are ye paired, and safely would I swear
That thou as valiant art as she is fair."

CXXIV
To him Marphisa, "Thou in thy despite
Shalt try to bear from me the dame away.
I will not suffer that so fair a sight
Thou shouldst behold, nor seek to gain the prey."
To her the prince, "I know not wherefore wight
Should suffer pain and peril in affray,
Striving for victory, where, for his pains,
The victor losses, and the vanquished gains."

CXXV
"If this condition please not, other course
Which ill thou canst refuse, I offer thee,"
(Marphisa cried): "If thou shalt me unhorse
In this our tourney, she remains with me:
But if I win, I give her thee parforce.

Then prove we now who shall without her be.
Premised, if loser, thou shalt be her guide,
Wherever it may please the dame to ride."

CXXVI
"And be it so," Zerbino cried, and wheeled
Swiftly his foaming courser for the shock,
And rising in his stirrups scowered the field,
Firm in his seat, and smote, with levelled stock,
For surer aim, the damsel in mid-shield;
But she sate stedfast as a metal rock,
And at the warrior's morion thrust so well,
She clean out-bore him senseless from the sell.

CXXVII
Much grieved the prince, to whom in other fray
The like misfortune had not chanced before,
Who had unhorsed some thousands in his day:
Now shamed, he thought for ever. Troubled sore,
And mute long space upon the ground he lay,
And, when 'twas recollected, grieved the more,
That he had promised, and that he was bound,
To accompany the hag where'er she wound.

CXXVIII
Turning about to him the victoress cried,
Laughing, "This lady I to thee present,
And the more beauty is in her descried,
The more that she is thine I am content,
Now in my place her champion and her guide.
But do not thou thy plighted faith repent,
So that thou fail, as promised, to attend
The dame, wherever she may please to wend."

CXXIX
Without awaiting answer, to career
She spurred her horse, and vanished in the wood.

Zerbino, deeming her a cavalier,
Cried to the crone, "By whom am I subdued?"
And, knowing 'twould be poison to his ear,
And that it would inflame his angered blood,
She in reply, "It was a damsel's blow
Which from thy lofty saddle laid thee low.

CXXX
"She, for her matchless force, deservedly
Usurps from cavalier the sword and lance;
And even from the east is come to try
Her strength against the paladins of France."
Not only was his cheek of crimson dye,
Such shame Zerbino felt as his mischance,
Little was wanting (so his blushes spread)
But all the arms he wore had glowed as red.

CXXXI
He mounts, and blames himself in angry wise,
In that he had no better kept his seat.
Within herself the beldam laughs, and tries
The Scottish warrior more to sting and heat.
To him for promised convoy she applies;
And he, who knows that there is no retreat,
Stands like tired courser, who in pensive fit,
Hangs down his ears, controlled by spur and bit.

CXXXII
And, sighing deeply, cries, in his despair,
"Fell Fortune, with what change dost thou repay
My loss! she who was fairest of the fair,
Who should be mine, by thee is snatched away!
And thinkest thou the evil to repair
With her whom thou hast given to me this day?
Rather than make like ill exchange, less cross
It were to undergo a total loss.

CXXXIII

"Her, who for virtue and for beauteous form
Was never equalled, nor will ever be,
Thou on the rocks hast wrecked, in wintry storm,
As food for fowls and fishes of the sea;
And her who should have fed the earth-bred worm
Preserved beyond her date, some ten or score
Of years, to harass and torment me more."

CXXXIV

So spake Zerbino, and like grief displaid,
In his despairing words and woful mien,
For such an odious acquisition made,
As he had suffered when he lost his queen.
The aged woman now, from what he said,
Though she before Zerbino had not seen,
Perceived 'twas him of whom, in the thieves' hold,
Isabel of Gallicia erst had told.

CXXXV

If you remember what was said before,
This was the hag who 'scaped out of the cave,
Where Isabella, who had wounded sore
Zerbino's heart, was long detained a slave;
Who oft had told how she her native shore
Had left, and, launching upon ocean's wave
Her frigate, had been wrecked by wind and swell
Upon the rocky shallows near Rochelle.

CXXXVI

And she to her Zerbino's goodly cheer
And gentle features had pourtrayed so well,
That the hag hearing him, and now more near,
Letter her eyes upon his visage dwell,
Discerned it was the youth for whom, whilere,

Had grieved at heart the prisoned Isabel;
Whose loss she in the cavern more deplored,
Than being captive to the murderous horde.

CXXXVII
The beldam, hearing what in rage and grief
Zerbino vents, perceives the youth to be
Deceived, and cheated by the false belief
That Isabel had perished in the sea;
And though she might have given the prince relief,
Knowing the truth, in her perversity
What would have made him joyful she concealed,
And only what would cause him grief revealed.

CXXXVIII
"Hear, you that are so proud," (the hag pursues)
"And flout me with such insolence and scorn,
You would entreat me fair to have the news
I know of her whose timeless death you mourn;
But to be strangled would I rather choose,
And be into a thousand pieces torn.
Whereas if you had made me kinder cheer,
Haply from me the secret might you hear."

CXXXIX
As the dog's rage is quickly overblown,
Who flies the approaching robber to arrest,
If the thief proffer piece of bread or bone,
Of offer other lure which likes him best;
As readily Zerbino to the crone
Humbled himself, and burned to know the rest;
Who, in the hints of the old woman, read
That she had news of her he mourned as dead.

CXL
And with more winning mien to her applied,
And her did supplicate, entreat, conjure,

By men and gods, the truth no more to hide,
Did she benign or evil lot endure.
The hard and pertinacious crone replied,
"Nought shalt thou hear, thy comfort to assure.
Isabel has not yielded up her breath,
But lives a life she would exchange for death.

CXLI
"She, since thou heardest of her destiny,
Within few days, has fallen into the power
Of more than twenty. If restored to thee,
Think now, if thou hast hope to crop her flower."
— "Curst hag, how well thou shapest thy history,
Yet knowest it is false! Her virgin dower
Secure from brutal wrong, would none invade,
Though in the power of twenty were the maid."

CXLII
Questioning of the maid, he when and where
She saw her, vainly asked the beldam hoar,
Who, ever restive to Zerbino's prayer,
To what she had rehearsed would add no more.
The prince in the beginning spoke her fair,
And next to cut her throat in fury swore.
But prayers and menaces alike were weak;
Nor could he make the hideous beldam speak.

CXLIII
At length Zerbino to his tongue gave rest,
Since speaking to the woman booted nought;
Scarcely his heart found room within his breast,
Such dread suspicion had her story wrought.
He to find Isabella was so pressed,
Her in the midst of fire he would have sought;
But could not hurry more than was allowed
By her his convoy, since he so had vowed.

CXLIV
They hence, by strange and solitary way,
Rove, as the beldam does her will betoken,
Nor climbing, nor descending hill, survey
Each other's face, nor any word is spoken.
But when the sun upon the middle day
Had turned his back, their silence first was broken
By cavalier encountered in their way:
What followed the ensuing strain will say.

CANTO 21

ARGUMENT
Zerbino for Gabrina, who a heart
Of asp appears to bear, contends. O'erthrown,
The Fleming falls upon the other part,
Through cause of that despised and odious crone,
He wounded sore, and writhing with the smart,
The beldam's treason to the prince makes known,
Whose scorn and hatred hence derive new force.
Towards loud cries Zerbino spurs his horse.

I
No cord I well believe is wound so tight
Round chest, nor nails the plank so fastly hold,
As Faith enwraps an honourable sprite
In its secure, inextricable, fold;
Nor holy Faith, it seems, except in white
Was mantled over in the days of old;
So by the ancient limner ever painted,
As by one speck, one single blemish tainted.

II
Faith should be kept unbroken evermore,
With one or with a thousand men united;

As well if given in grot or forest hoar,
Remote from town and hamlet, as if plighted
Amid a crowd of witnesses, before
Tribunal, and in act and deed recited:
Nor needs the solemn sanction of an oath:
It is sufficient that we pledge our troth.

III
And this maintains as it maintained should be,
In each emprize the Scottish cavalier,
And gives good proof of his fidelity,
Quitting his road with that old crone to steer;
Although this breeds the youth such misery,
As 'twould to have Disease itself as near,
Or even Death; but with him heavier weighed
That his desire the promise he had made.

IV
Of him I told who felt at heart such load,
Reflecting she beneath his charge must go,
He spake no word; and thus in silent mode
Both fared: so sullen was Zerbino's woe.
I said how vexed their silence, as they rode,
Was broke, when Sol his hindmost wheels did show,
By an adventurous errant cavalier,
Who in mid pathway met the crone and peer.

V
The hag, who the approaching warrior knew,
(Hermonides of Holland he was hight)
That bore upon a field of sable hue
A bar of vermeil tint, transversely dight,
Did humbly now to good Zerbino sue,
— Her pride abased, and look of haught despite —
And him reminded of the promise made,
When her Marphisa to his care conveyed.

VI

Because as foe to her and hers she knew
The knight they were encountering, who had slain
Her only brother and her father true;
And was advised, the traitor would be fain
By her, the remnant of her race, to do
What he had perpetrated on the twain.
"Woman, while guarded by my arm (he said)
I will not thou shouldst any danger dread."

VII

As nearer now, the stranger knight espied
That face, which was so hateful in his sight,
With menacing and savage voice he cried,
"Either with me prepare thyself to fight,
Or arm thee not on that old woman's side,
Who by my hand shall perish, as is right.
If thou contendest for her, thou art slain;
For such their portion is who wrong maintain."

VIII

Him young Zerbino answered courteously,
Twas sign of evil and ungenerous will,
And corresponded not with chivalry,
That he a woman should desire to kill;
Yet if the knight persists, he will not flee —
But bids him well consider first how ill
'Twould sound, that he, a gentle knight and good,
Should wish to dip his hand in woman's blood.

IX

This and yet more he vainly says; nor stand
They idle long; from word they pass to deed;
And having compassed on the level land
Enough of ground, encounter on the mead.
Not fired in some rejoicing, from the hand

Discharged, so fast the whistling rockets speed,
As the two coursers bear the cavaliers
To hurtle in mid space with rested spears.

X
Hermonides of Holland levelled low,
And for the youth's left flank the stroke intended;
But his weak lance was shivered by the blow,
And little the opposing Scot offended:
But vain was not the spear-thrust of his foe,
Who bored his opposite's good shield, and rended
His shoulder, by the lance pierced through and through,
And good Hermonides on earth o'erthrew.

XI
Thinking him slain who only lay amazed,
By pity prest, Zerbino leapt to ground,
And from his deathlike face the vizor raised;
And he, as wakened out of sleep profound,
In silence, hard upon Zerbino gazed;
Then cried, "It does not me, in truth, confound,
To think that I am overthrown by thee,
Who seem'st the flower of errant chivalry.

XII
"But it with reason grieves me this is done
Upon account of a false woman's spite;
Whose wicked cause I know not why you own,
An office ill according with your might:
And when to you the occasion shall be known
Which urges me her wickedness to quite,
Whene'er you think on it, you will repent
How she by you was saved, and I was shent.

XIII
"And if enough of breath, although I fear
The contrary, is left me to expound

Her evil actions, I shall make appear
She in all guilt transgresses every bound.
I had a brother once: the youthful peer
Set out from Holland's isle, our natal ground,
To serve Heraclius, 'mid his knights arrayed,
Who then the Grecian empire's sceptre swayed.

XIV
"Brother in arms and bosom-friend installed
Here was he by a baron of that court,
Who, in a pleasant site, and strongly walled,
On Servia's distant frontier had a fort.
Argaeus he of whom I tell was called,
Husband of that ill hag, whom in such sort
He loved, as passed all mean, and misbecame
One of his worth and honourable fame.

XV
"But she, more volatile than leaf, when breeze
Of autumn most its natural moisture dries,
And strips the fluttering foliage from the trees,
Which, blown about, before its fury flies,
Changes her humour, and her husband sees,
Whom she some time had loved, with other eyes,
And in her every wish and every thought
Schemes how my brother's love may best be bought.

XVI
"But not Acroceraunus fronts the brine,
— Ill-famed — against whose base the billow heaves,
Nor against Boreas stands the mountain pine,
That has a hundred times renewed its leaves,
And towering high on Alp or Apennine,
With its fast root the rock as deeply cleaves,
So firmly as the youth resists the will
Of that foul woman, sink of every ill.

XVII

"Now, as it oft befalls a cavalier
Who seeks and finds adventure, high and low,
It happened that my gentle brother near
His comrade's fort was wounded by a foe;
Where often, uninvited by the peer,
He guested, was his host with him or no;
And thither he resorted from the field,
There to repose until his wounds were healed.

XVIII

"While there he wounded lay, upon some need
It chanced Argaeus was compelled to ride.
Quickly that wanton, from his presence freed,
As was her use, my brother's fealty tried.
But he, as one unstained in thought and deed,
So fell a goad no longer would abide;
And to preserve his faith, as lures increased,
Of many evils chose what seemed the least.

XIX

"To break communion with the cavalier,
To him — of many — seemed the lightest ill,
And go so far, that wanton should not hear
More of his name: this purpose to fulfil
Was honester (though quitting one so dear
Was hard) than to content her evil will,
Of her foul wishes to her lord impart,
Who cherished her as fondly as his heart.

XX

"And though yet smarting with his wounds and pined,
He dons his arms, and from the tower departs;
And wanders thence with firm and constant mind,
Ne'er to return again into those parts.
But nought availed the purpose he designed;

His projects Fortune baffled with new arts.
This while, behold! the castellain returned,
And bathed in bitter tears the wife discerned.

XXI
"And with flushed face, and hair in disarray,
He asks of her what had disturbed her mood;
Who, ere she in reply a word will say,
Is vainly more than once to answer wooed;
And all the while is thinking in what way
The knight can best with vengeance be pursued.
And well it suited with her fickle vein,
Lightly to change her love into disdain.

XXII
" `Ah! why should I conceal (in fine she cried)
The fault committed while you were away?
For though I it from all the world should hide,
This would my conscience to myself bewray.
The soul, which is with secret evil dyed,
Does with such penitence its fault appay,
As every corporal sufferance exceeds
That thou couldst deal me for my evil deeds;

XXIII
" `If evil be the deed, when done parforce.
But, be it what it may, the mischief know;
Then, with my sword from this polluted corse,
Delivered, let my spotless spirit go;
And quench these wretched eyes, which in remorse,
I, if I lived, on earth must ever throw,
As the least penance of so foul a blame,
And, look on whom they may, must blush for shame.

XXIV
" `My honour has been ruined by thy mate,
Who to this body violence has done,

And fearing lest I all to thee relate,
Without farewell the graceless churl is gone.'
She by this story made her husband hate
The youth, than whom before was dearer none.
Argaeus credits all, without delay
Arms him, and, breathing vengeance, posts away.

XXV
"In knowledge of that country not to seek,
He overtook the knight in little space;
For my poor brother, yet diseased and weak,
Rode, unsuspicious, at an easy pace;
Argaeus, eager his revenge to wreak,
Assailed him straight in a sequestered place.
My brother would excuse him if he might,
But his indignant host insists on fight.

XXVI
"This one was sound and full of new disdain,
That weak and friendly, as aye wont to be:
My brother was ill fitted to sustain
His altered comrade's new-born enmity.
Philander, then unmeriting such pain,
(So was the stripling named, described by me)
Not gifted with the power to undergo
Such fierce assault, was taken by the foe.

XXVII
" `Forbid it, Heaven! I should be led astray
So by just wrath and thy iniquity,
(To him Argaeus cried) as thee to slay,
Who loved thee once, and certes thou lovedst me,
Though in the end thou ill didst this display,
I yet desire this ample world may see
That, measured by my deeds, I rank above
Thyself in hate as highly as in love.

XXVIII

" `In other mode shall I chastise the deed,
Than spilling more of thine ill blood.' The peer,
This said, commands his followers, on a steed,
Of verdant boughs composed to place a bier,
And with the knight half-lifeless homeward speed,
And in a tower enclose the cavalier;
There dooms the guiltless stripling to remain,
And suffer prisonment's perpetual pain.

XXIX

"Yet nothing but his former liberty
Thence to depart was wanting to the knight;
In all the rest, as one at large and free,
He ordered, and was still obeyed aright.
But that ill dame her former phantasy
Pursuing ever with unwearied sprite,
Having the keys, repaired nigh every day
To the close turret where the prisoner lay.

XXX

"And evermore my brother she assailed,
And with more boldness prest her former suit.
`Mark what to thee fidelity availed!'
(She cries) `which all mere perfidy repute.
With what triumphant joy shalt thou be hailed!
What noble spoils are thine, what happy fruit!
Oh what a worthy guerdon is thy meed!
Branded by all men for a traitor's deed!

XXXI

" `How well thou mightst have given, and without stain
Of thine own honour, what I sought of thee!
Now of so rigorous mood the worthy gain
Have and enjoy. In close captivity
Thou art; nor ever hope to break thy chain,

Unless thou soften thy obduracy.
But, if compliant, I a mean can frame
To render thee thy liberty and fame.'

XXXII
" `No, no; have thou no hope,' (replied the knight,)
`That my true faith shall ever change, although
It thus should happen that, against all right,
I should so hard a sentence undergo.
Let the world blame. Enough that in HIS sight
— Who sees and judges every thing below,
And in HIS grace divine my fame can clear —
My innocence unsullied shall appear.

XXXIII
" `Does not Argaeus deem enough to sty
Me in his prison, let him take away
This noisome life. Nor yet may Heaven deny
Its meed, though ill the world my work appay.
And yet he who condemns me may, when I
Am parted from this tenement of clay,
Perceive that he has wronged me in the end,
And shall bewail when dead his faithful friend.'

XXXIV
"Thus oftentimes that shameless woman prest
The good Philander, but obtained no fruit.
Nursing her blind desires, which knew not rest
In seeking what her wicked love may boot,
She her old vices, in her inmost breast,
Ransacks for what may best the occasion suit,
And sifts them all: then, having overrun
A thousand evil thoughts, resolved on one.

XXXV
"Six months she waited ere again she sought
The prisoner's tower, as she was wont before:

From which the sad Philander hoped and thought
That love to him the dame no longer bore.
Lo! Fortune for her an occasion wrought,
(To evil deed propitious evermore)
To give effect, with memorable ill,
To her irrational and evil will.

XXXVI
"The husband had an ancient feud with one
Who was by name Morando hight the fair;
Who even within the fort would often run
In its lord's absence; but the knight's repair
At the wide distance of ten miles would shun,
Was he assured the castellain was there:
Who now, to lure him thither, bruited how
He for Jerusalem was bound by vow.

XXXVII
"Said he would go; and went. Thus each who spies
His outset, of his journey spreads the fame:
Nor he, who only on his wife relies,
Trusts any with his purpose but the dame,
And home returned when dusky waxed the skies;
Nor ever, save at evening, thither came;
And with changed ensigns, at the dawn of day,
Unseen of any, always went his way.

XXXVIII
"He now on this side, now on the other side,
Roved round his castle but to ascertain
If credulous Morando, who to ride
Thither was wonted, would return again.
All day he in the forest used to hide,
And, when he saw the sun beneath the main,
Came to the tower, and, through a secret gate,
Was there admitted by his faithless mate.

XXXIX

"Thus every one, except his consort ill,
Argaeus many miles away suppose:
She, when 'tis time her errand to fulfil,
Hatching new mischief, to my brother goes.
Of tears she has a ready shower at will,
Which from her eyes into her bosom flows,
` — Where shall I succour find, now needed most,
So that my honour be not wholly lost,

XL

" `And, with my own, my wedded lord's?' (she cries;)
`I should feel no alarm, if he were here.
Thou knowst Morando, know if deities
Or men he in Argaeus' absence fear.
He at this time tries all extremities;
Nor servant have I but by threat or prayer
He him to further his desire has swayed;
Nor know I whither to recur for aid.

XLI

" `Of my lord's absence hearing the report,
And that he would not quickly homeward fare,
He had the insolence within my court,
Upon no other pretext to repair;
Who, were my absent lord within his fort,
So bold a deer not only would not dare,
But would not deem himself secure withal,
By Heaven! at three miles' distance from his wall.

XLII

" `And what he erst by messenger had sought,
From me to-day has sued for face to face;
And in such manner that long time I thought
Dishonour must have followed and disgrace;
And if I had not humbly him besought,

And feigned to yield to him with ready grace,
He haply would have ravished that by force,
Which he expects to win by milder course.

XLIII
" `I promise, not designing to comply,
For void is contract made in fear; alone
From his ill purpose would I put him by,
And what he then parforce would else have done.
So stands the case: the single remedy
Lies in yourself: my honour else is gone,
And that of my Argaeus; which as dear,
Or more so, than your own you vowed whilere.

XLIV
" `If you refuse me, I shall say, you show
That you have not the faith which you pretended,
But that in cruelty you said me no,
When vainly were my tears on you expended,
And no wise for Argaeus' sake, although
With this pretext you have yourself defended.
Our loves bad been concealed and free from blame;
But here I stand exposed to certain shame.'

XLV
" `To me such preface needs not (said anew
The good Philander), bound by amity
To my Argaeus still; thy pleasure shew:
I what I ever was will be, and I,
Although from him I bear such ill undue,
Accuse him not; for him would I defy
Even death itself; and let the world, allied
With my ill destiny, against me side!'

XLVI
"The impious woman answered, ` 'Tis my will
Thou slay him who would do us foul despite;

Nor apprehend to encounter any ill:
For I the certain mean will tell aright.
He will return, his purpose to fulfil,
At the third hour, when darkest is the night;
And, at a preconcerted signal made,
Be without noise by me within conveyed.

XLVII
" `Let it not irk thee to await the peer
Within my chamber, where no light will be;
Till I shall make him doff his warlike gear,
And, almost naked, yield him up to thee.'
So did his wife into that quicksand steer
Her hapless husband (it appears to me)
If wife she rightly could be called; more fell
And cruel than a fury sprung from hell.

XLVIII
"She drew my brother forth, that guilty night,
With his good arms in hand, and him again
Secreted in the chamber without light,
Till thither came the wretched castellain.
As it was ordered, all fell out aright,
For seldom ill design is schemed in vain.
So fell Argaeus by Philander's sword,
Who for Morando took the castle's lord.

XLIX
"One blow divided head and neck; for nought
Was there of helm, the warrior to defend.
Without a struggle was Argaeus brought
To his unhappy life's disastrous end,
And he who slew him never had such thought,
Nor this would have believed: to aid his friend
Intent, (strange chance!) he wrought him in that blow
The worst that could be done by mortal foe.

L

"When now, unknown, on earth Argaeus lay,
My brother to Gabrina gave the blade,
(So was she named) who lived but to betray.
She, who discovery had till then delayed,
Wills that Philander with a light survey
The man whom he on earth has lifeless laid,
And she, with the assistance of the light,
Shows him Argaeus in the murdered wight.

LI

"And threatens, save he with desires comply
To which her bosom had been long a prey,
What he would be unable to deny
She to the assembled household will display,
And he like traitor and assassin die,
Upon her tale, in ignominious way:
And minds him fame is not to be despised,
Albeit so little life by him be prized.

LII

"Philander stood oppressed with grief and fear,
When his mistake to him the woman showed,
And to have slain her in his wrath went near,
And long be doubted, so his choler glowed;
And, but that Reason whispered in his ear
That he was in an enemy's abode,
For lack of faulchion in his empty sheath,
He would have torn her piece-meal with his teeth.

LIII

"As sometimes vessel by two winds which blow
From different points is vext upon the main,
And now one speeds the bark an-end, and now
Another squall impels her back again;
Still on her poop assailed, or on her prow,

Till she before the strongest flies amain:
Philander, so distraught by two designs,
Takes what he pregnant with least ill opines.

LIV
"Reason demonstrates with what peril fraught
His case, not more with death than lasting stain,
If in the castle were that murder taught;
Nor any time has he to sift his brain.
Will he or nill he, in conclusion nought
Is left him but the bitter cup to drain.
Thus in his troubled heart prevailing more,
His fear his resolution overbore.

LV
"The fear of shameful punishment's pursuit
Made him with many protestations swear
To grant in every thing Gabrina's suit,
If from the fortilage they safely fare.
So plucks that impious dame, parforce, the fruit
Of her desires, and thence retreat the pair.
Thus home again the young Philander came,
Leaving behind him a polluted name;

LVI
"And deeply graven in his bosom bore
The image of his friend so rashly slain;
By this to purchase, to his torment sore,
A Progne, a Medea; impious gain!
— And but his knightly faith, and oaths he swore,
Were to his fury as a curbing rein,
From him when safe she would have met her fate;
But lived subjected to his bitterest hate.

LVII
"Thenceforth he nevermore was seen to smile:
All his discourse was sad, and still ensued

Sobs from his breast; afflicted in the style
Of vext Orestes, when he in his mood
Had slain his mother and Aegysthus vile;
By vengeful furies for the deed pursued.
Till broken by the ceaseless grief he fed,
He sickened and betook himself to bed.

LVIII
"Now in the harlot, when she had discerned
This other set by her so little store,
The former amorous flame was quickly turned
Into despiteous rage and hatred sore;
Nor with less wrath she towards my brother burned
Than for Argaeus she had felt before;
And she disposed herself, in treasons versed,
To slay her second husband like the first.

LIX
"Of a deceitful leech she made assay,
Well fitted for the work she had in hand,
Who better knew what deadly poisons slay
Than he the force of healing syrup scanned;
And promised him his service to repay
With a reward exceeding his demand,
When he should, with some drink of deadly might,
Of her detested husband rid her sight.

LX
"In presence of myself and more beside,
The wicked elder, with his deadly dole,
Approaching my unhappy brother, cried,
`It was a sovereign drink to make him whole.'
But here a new device Gabrina tried,
And, ere the sickly man could taste the bowl,
To rid her of accomplice in the deed,
Or to defraud him of his promised meed;

LXI
"Seized on his hand, the instant he presented
The poison to my brother. `Ill my fear,
(Exclaimed the dame) by you would be resented,
Excited for a spouse I hold so dear.
I, that the beverage has not been fermented
With evil drug and poisonous, will be clear;
Nor deem it meet that you to him convey
The proffered bowl, unless you take the say.'

LXII
"In what condition think you, sir, remained
The wretched elder by his fears opprest?
Thus by the woman's suddenness constrained,
He had no time for thinking what were best.
He, lest more doubt of him be entertained,
Tastes of the chalice, at Gabrina's hest;
And the sick man, emboldened so, drinks up
All the remainder of the poisoned cup.

LXIII
"As the trained hawk of crooked talon who
Clutches the partridge, when about to eat,
Is by the dog, she deems her comrade true,
O'ertaken and defrauded of the meat;
So on ill gain intent, the leech, in lieu
Of the expected aid, received defeat.
Hear, thus, what sovereign wickedness will dare,
And be like fate each greedy miscreant's share!

LXIV
"This past and done, the leech would homeward speed,
That he, to counteract the pest he bore
Within his bowels, in this fearful need,
Might use some secret of his cunning lore;
But this the wicked dame would not concede,

Forbidding him to issue thence before
His patient's stomach should the juice digest,
And its restoring power be manifest.

LXV
"No prayer will move, nor offered price will buy
The woman's leave to let him thence depart.
The desperate man who saw that death was nigh,
And sure to follow, quickly changed his part;
And told the story to the standers-by;
Nor could she cover it with all her art.
Thus what he wont to do by many a one,
That goodly doctor by himself has done;

LXVI
"And follows with his soul my brother true,
That hence, already freed, was gone before.
We, the assistants, that the matter knew
From the old man who lingered little more,
Took that abominable monster, who
More cruel was than beast in forest hoar,
And, prisoned in a darksome place, reserved
To perish in the fire, as she deserved."

LXVII
So said Hermonides, and had pursued
His tale, and told how she from prison fled;
But suffered from his wound a pang so shrewd,
He fell reversed upon his grassy bed.
Meanwhile two squires, who served him in the wood,
A rustic bier of sturdy branches spread.
Their master upon this the servants lay,
Who could not thence be borne in other way.

LXVIII
Zerbino, in excuse, assured the peer,
He grieved so good a knight to have offended;

But, as was still the use of cavalier,
Had guarded her who in his guidance wended;
Nor had he else preserved his honour clear:
For when the dame was to his care commended,
Her to defend his promise he had plight
From all men, to the utmost of his might.

LXIX
He, if he might, is any thing beside,
Would readily assist him in his need.
— His only wish, (the cavalier replied,)
Was, he might be from ill Gabrina freed,
Ere him some mighty mischief should betide,
Of future penitence the bitter seed.
Gabrina keeps on earth her downcast eye;
For ill the simple truth admits reply.

LXX
Zerbino thence, upon the promised way,
With the old woman in his escort, went,
And inly cursed her all the livelong day,
That in her cause that baron he had shent.
And having heard the knight her guilt display,
Who was instructed in her evil bent,
He — if before he had her at despite —
So loathed her, she was poison to his sight.

LXXI
Well read in young Zerbino's hate, the dame
Would not by him in malice be outdone,
Nor bated him an inch, but in that game
Of deadly hatred set him two for one.
Her face was with the venom in a flame
Wherewith her swelling bosom overrun.
'Twas thus in such concord as I say,
These through the ancient wood pursued their way.

LXXII
When, lo! as it is now nigh eventide,
They a mixt sound of blows and outcries hear,
Which seem a sign of battle fiercely plied,
And (as the deafening noise demonstrates) near.
To mark what this might be, towards that side
Whence came the tumult, moved the Scottish peer;
Nor is in following him Gabrina slow:
What chanced in other canto you shall know.

CANTO 22

ARGUMENT
Atlantes' magic towers Astolpho wight
Destroys, and frees his thralls from prison-cell.
Bradamant finds Rogero, who in fight
O'erthrows four barons from the warlike sell,
When on their way to save an errant knight
Doomed to devouring fire: the four who fell
For impious Pinnabel maintained the strife,
Whom, after, Bradamant deprives of life.

I
Ye courteous dames, and to your lovers dear,
You that are with one single love content;
Though, 'mid so many and many, it is clear
Right few of you are of such constant bent;
Be not displeased at what I said whilere,
When I so bitterly Gabrina shent,
Nor if I yet expend some other verse
In censure of the beldam's mind perverse.

II
Such was she; and I hide not what is true;
So was enjoined me for a task by one

Whose will is law; therefore is honour due
To constant heart throughout my story done.
He who betrayed his master to the Jew
For thirty pence, nor Peter wronged, nor John,
Nor less renowned is Hypermnestra's fame,
For her so many wicked sisters' shame.

III
For one I dare to censure in my lays,
For so the story wills which I recite,
On the other hand, a hundred will I praise,
And make their virtue dim the sun's fair light;
But turning to the various pile I raise,
(Gramercy! dear to many) of the knight
Of Scotland I was telling, who hard-by
Had heard, as was rehearsed, a piercing cry.

IV
He entered, 'twixt two hills, a narrow way,
From whence was heard the cry; nor far had hied,
Ere to a vale he came shut out from day,
Where he before him a dead knight espied.
Who I shall tell; but first I must away
From France, in the Levant to wander wide,
Till I the paladin Astolpho find,
Who westward had his course from thence inclined.

V
I in the cruel city left the peer,
Whence, with the formidable bugle's roar,
He had chased the unfaithful people in their fear,
And has preserved himself from peril sore;
And with the sound had made his comrades rear
Then sail, and fly with noted scorn that shore.
Now following him, I say, the warrior took
The Armenian road, and so that land forsook.

VI

He, after some few days, in Natoly
Finds himself, and towards Brusa goes his ways;
Hence wending, on the hither side o' the sea,
Makes Thrace; through Hungary by the Danube lays
His course, and as his horse had wings to flee,
Traverses in less time than twenty days
Both the Moravian and Bohemian line;
Threaded Franconia next, and crost the Rhine.

VII

To Aix-la-Chapelle thence, through Arden's wood,
Came and embarked upon the Flemish strand.
To sea, with southern breeze his vessel stood;
And, so the favouring wind her canvas fanned,
That he, at little distance, Albion viewed
By noon, and disembarked upon her land.
He backed his horse, and so the rowels plied,
In London he arrived by even-tide.

VIII

Here, learning afterwards that Otho old
Has lain for many months in Paris-town,
And that anew nigh every baron bold
Has after his renowned example done,
He straightway does for France his sails unfold,
And to the mouth of Thames again is gone.
Whence issuing forth, with all his canvas spread,
For Calais he directs the galley's head.

IX

A breeze which, from the starboard blowing light,
Had tempted forth Astolpho's bark to sea,
By little and by little, waxed in might,
And so at last obtains the mastery,
The pilot is constrained to veer outright,

Lest by the billows swampt his frigate be,
And he, departing from his first design,
Keeps the bark straight before the cresting brine.

X
Now to the right, now to the other hand,
Sped by the tempest, through the foaming main,
The vessel ran; she took the happy land
At last nigh Rouen; and forthwith, in chain
And plate Astolpho cased, and girt with brand,
Bade put the saddle upon Rabicane;
Departed thence, and (what availed him more
Than thousands armed) with him his bugle bore;

XI
And traversing a forest, at the feet
Of a fair hill, arrived beside a font,
What time the sheep foregoes his grassy meat,
Penned in the cabin or the hollow mount;
And, overcome by feverish thirst and heat,
Lifted the weighty morion from his front;
Tethered his courser in the thickest wood,
And, with intent to drink, approached the flood.

XII
His lips he had not wetted in its bed
Before a youthful rustic, ambushed near,
Sprang from a copse, backed Rabican, and fled
With the good courser of the cavalier.
Astolpho hears the noise and lifts his head,
And, when he sees his mighty loss so clear,
Satiate, although he had not drunk, upstarts,
And after the young churl in fury darts.

XIII
That robber did not let the courser strain
At speed, or he had from the warrior shot;

But loosening now and tightening now the rein,
Fled at a gallop or a steady trot.
From the deep forest issued forth the twain,
After long round, and reached in fine the spot
Where so many illustrious lords were shent:
Worse prisoners they than if in prison pent!

XIV
On Rabican, who with the wind might race,
The villain sped, within the enchanter's won.
Impeded by his shield and iron case,
Parforce Astolpho far behind him run;
Yet there arrives as well, but every trace
Of what the warrior had pursued is gone.
He neither Rabican nor thief can meet,
And vainly rolls his eyes and plies his feet.

XV
He plies his feet, and searches still in vain
Throughout the house, hall, bower, or galleried rows:
Yet labours evermore, with fruitless pain
And care, to find the treacherous churl; nor knows
Where he can have secreted Rabicane,
Who every other animal outgoes:
And vainly searches all day the dome about,
Above, below, within it, and without.

XVI
He, wearied and confused with wandering wide,
Perceived the place was by enchantment wrought,
And of the book he carried at his side,
By Logistilla given in India, thought;
Bestowed, should new enchantment him betide,
That needful succour might therein be sought.
He to the index turns, and quickly sees
What pages show the proper remedies.

XVII

I' the book, of that enchanted house at large
Was written, and in this was taught the way
To foil the enchanter, and to set at large
The different prisoners, subject to his sway.
Of these illusions and these frauds in charge,
A spirit pent beneath the threshold lay;
And the stone raised which kept him fast below,
With him the palace into smoke would go.

XVIII

Astolpho with desire to bring to end
An enterprise so passing fair, delays
No more, but to the task his force does bend,
And prove how much the heavy marble weighs.
As old Atlantes sees the knight intend
To bring to scorn his art and evil ways,
Suspicious of the ill which may ensue,
He moves to assail him with enchantments new.

XIX

He, with his spells and shapes of devilish kind,
Makes the duke different from his wont appear;
To one a giant, and to one a hind,
To other an ill-visaged cavalier;
Each, in the form which in the thicket blind
The false enchanter wore, beholds the peer.
So that they all, with purpose to have back
What the magician took, the duke attack.

XX

The Child, Gradasso, Iroldo, Bradamant,
Prasildo, Brandimart, and many more,
All, cheated by this new illusion, pant
To slay the English baron, angered sore;
But he abased their pride and haughty vaunt,

Who straight bethought him of the horn be bore.
But for the succour of its echo dread,
They, without fail, had laid Astolpho dead.

XXI
But he no sooner has the bugle wound
And poured a horrid larum, than in guise
Of pigeons at the musquet's scaring sound,
The troop of cavaliers affrighted flies.
No less the necromancer starts astound,
No less he from his den in panic hies;
Troubled and pale, and hurrying evermore
Till out of hearing of the horrid roar

XXII
The warder fled; with him his prisoned train,
And many steeds as well are fled and gone;
(These more than rope is needed to restrain)
Who after their astounded masters run,
Scared by the sound; nor cat nor mouse remain,
Who seem to hear in it, "Lay on, lay on."
Rabican with the rest had broke his bands,
But that he fell into Astolpho's hands.

XXIII
He, having chased the enchanter Moor away,
Upraised the heavy threshold from the ground;
Beneath which, figures and more matters lay,
That I omit; desirous to confound
The spell which did the magic dome upstay,
The duke made havock of whate'er he found,
As him the book he carried taught to do:
And into mist and smoke all past from view.

XXIV
There he found fastened by a golden chain
Rogero's famous courser, him I say

Given by the wizard, that to the domain
Of false Alcina him he might convey:
On which, equipt with Logistilla's rein,
To France Rogero had retraced his way,
And had from Ind to England rounded all
The right-hand side of the terrestrial ball.

XXV

I know not if you recollect how tied
To a tree Rogero left his rein, the day
Galaphron's naked daughter from his side
Vanished, and him did with that scorn appay.
The courser, to his wonder who espied,
Returned to him whom he was used to obey;
Beneath the old enchanter's care to dwell,
And stayed with him till broken was the spell.

XXVI

At nought Astolpho could more joyous be
Than this; of all things fortunate the best:
In that the hippogryph so happily
Offered himself; that he might scower the rest,
(As much he coveted) of land and sea,
And in few days the ample world invest.
Him well he knew, how fit for his behoof;
For of his feats he had elsewhere made proof.

XXVII

Him he that day in India proved, when sped
He was by sage Melissa, from the reign
Of that ill woman who him, sore bested,
Had changed from man to myrtle on the plain;
Had marked and noted how his giddy head
Was formed by Logistilla to the rein;
And saw how well instructed by her care
Rogero was, to guide him every where.

XXVIII
Minded to take the hippogryph, he flung
The saddle on him, which lay near, and bitted
The steed, by choosing, all the reins among,
This part or that, until his mouth was fitted:
For in that place were many bridles hung,
Belonging to the coursers which flitted.
And now alone, intent upon his flight,
The thought of Rabicane detained the knight.

XXIX
Good cause he had to love that Rabicane,
For better horse was not to run with lance,
And him had he from the remotest reign
Of India ridden even into France:
After much thought, he to some friend would fain
Present him, rather than so, left to chance,
Abandon there the courser, as a prey,
To the first stranger who should pass that way.

XXX
He stood upon the watch if he could view
Some hunter in the forest, or some hind,
To whom he might commit the charge, and who
Might to some city lead the horse behind.
He waited all that day and till the new
Had dawned, when, while the twilight yet was blind,
He thought he saw, as he expecting stood,
A cavalier approaching through the wood.

XXXI
But it behoves that, ere the rest I say,
I Bradamant and good Rogero find.
After the horn had ceased, and, far away,
The beauteous pair had left the dome behind,
Rogero looked, and knew what till that day

He had seen not, by Atlantes rendered blind.
Atlantes had effected by his power,
They should not know each other till that hour.

XXXII
Rogero looks on Bradamant, and she
Looks on Rogero in profound surprise
That for so many days that witchery
Had so obscurred her altered mind and eyes.
Rejoiced, Rogero clasps his lady free,
Crimsoning with deeper than the rose's dyes,
And his fair love's first blossoms, while he clips
The gentle damsel, gathers from her lips.

XXXIII
A thousand times they their embrace renew,
And closely each is by the other prest;
While so delighted are those lovers two,
Their joys are ill contained within their breast.
Deluded by enchantments, much they rue
That while they were within the wizard's rest,
They should not e'er have one another known,
And have so many happy days foregone.

XXXIV
The gentle Bradamant, who was i' the vein
To grant whatever prudent virgin might,
To solace her desiring lover's pain,
So that her honour should receive no slight;
— If the last fruits he of her love would gain,
Nor find her ever stubborn, bade the knight,
Her of Duke Aymon through fair mean demand;
But be baptized before he claimed her hand.

XXXV
Rogero good, who not alone to be
A Christian for the love of her were fain,

As his good sire had been, and anciently
His grandsire and his whole illustrious strain,
But for her pleasure would immediately
Resign whatever did of life remain,
Says, "I not only, if 'tis thy desire,
Will be baptized by water, but by fire."

XXXVI

Then on his way to be baptized he hied,
That he might next espouse the martial may,
With Bradamant; who served him as a guide
To Vallombrosa's fane, an abbey gray,
Rich, fair, nor less religious, and beside,
Courteous to whosoever passed that way;
And they encountered, issuing from the chase,
A woman, with a passing woful face.

XXXVII

Rogero, as still courteous, still humane
To all, but woman most, when he discerned
Her dainty visage furrowed by a rain
Of lovely tears, sore pitied her, and burned
With the desire to know her grievous pain;
And having to the mournful lady turned,
Besought her, after fair salute, to show
What cause had made her eyes thus overflow.

XXXVIII

And she, uplifting their moist rays and bright,
Most kindly to the inquiring Child replied;
And of the cause of her unhappy plight,
Him, since he sought it, fully satisfied.
"Thou hast to understand, O gentle knight,
My visage is so bathed with tears," she cried,
"In pity to a youth condemned to die
This very day, within a town hard by.

XXXIX

"Loving a gentle lady and a gay,
The daughter of Marsilius, king of Spain,
And feigning, veiled in feminine array,
The modest roll of eye and girlish strain,
With her each night the amorous stripling lay,
Nor any had suspicion of the twain:
But nought so hidden is, but searching eye
In the long run the secret will espy.

XL

"One first perceived it, and then spoke with two,
Those two with more, till to the king 'twas said;
Of whom but yesterday a follower true
Gave order to surprise the pair in bed,
And in the citadel the prisoners new,
To separate dungeons in that fortress led;
Nor think I that enough of day remains
To save the lover from his cruel pains.

XLI

"I fled, not to behold such cruelty,
For they alive the wretched youth will burn;
Nor think I aught could more afflicting be
Than such fair stripling's torment to discern,
Or that hereafter thing can pleasure me
So much, but that it will to trouble turn,
If memory retrace the cruel flame
Which preyed upon his fair and dainty frame."

XLII

Touched deeply, Bradamant his danger hears,
In heart sore troubled at the story shown;
As anxious for the lover, it appears,
As if he were a brother of her own:
Nor certes wholly causeless are her fears,

As in an after verse will be made known,
Then, to Rogero: "Him to keep from harms,
Meseems we worthily should turn our arms."

XLIII
And to that melancholy damsel said:
"Place us but once within the walls, and I,
So that the youth be not already dead,
Will be your warrant that he shall not die."
Rogero, who the kindly bosom read
Of Bradamant, still full of piety,
Felt himself but all over with desire
To snatch the unhappy stripling from the fire.

XLIV
And to the maid, whose troubled face apears
Bathed with a briny flood, "Why wait we? — need
Is here of speedy succour, not of tears.
Do you but where the youth is prisoned lead;
Him from a thousand swords, a thousand spears,
We vow to save; so it be done with speed.
But haste you, lest too tardy be our aid,
And he be burnt, which succour is delayed."

XLV
The haughty semblance and the lofty say
Of these, who with such wondrous daring glowed,
That hope, which long had ceased to be her stay,
Again upon the grieving dame bestowed:
But, for she less the distance of the way
Dreaded, than interruption of the road,
Lest they, through this, should take that path in vain,
The damsel stood suspended and in pain.

XLVI
Then said: "If to the place our journey lay
By the highroad, which is both straight and plain,

That we in time might reach it, I should say,
Before the fire was lit; but we must strain
By path so foul and crooked, that a day
To reach the city would suffice with pain;
And when, alas! we thither shall have sped,
I fear that we shall find the stripling dead."

XLVII
"And wherefore take we not the way most near?"
Rogero answers; and the dame replies,
"Because fast by where we our course should steer,
A castle of the Count of Poictiers lies:
Where Pinnabel for dame and cavalier
Did, three days past, a shameful law devise;
Than whom more worthless living wight is none,
The Count Anselmo d'Altaripa's son.

XLVIII
"No cavalier or lady by that rest
Without some noted scorn and injury goes;
Both of their coursers here are dispossest,
And knight his arms and dame her gown foregoes.
No better cavaliers lay lance in rest,
Nor have for years in France against their foes,
Than four, who for Sir Pinnabel have plight
Their promise to maintain the castle's right.

XLIX
"Whence first arose the usage, which began
But three days since, you now, sir knight, shall hear;
And shall the cause, if right or evil, scan,
Which moved the banded cavaliers to swear.
So ill a lady has the Castellan,
So wayward, that she is without a peer:
Who, on a day, as with the count she went,
I know not whither, by a knight was shent.

L

"This knight, as flouted by that bonnibel,
For carrying on his croup an ancient dame,
Encountered with her champion Pinnabel,
Of overweening pride and little fame:
Him he o'erturned, made alight as well,
And put her to the proof, if sound or lame;
— Left her on foot, and had that woman old
In the dismounted damsel's garment stoled.

LI

"She, who remained on foot, in fell despite,
Greedy of vengeance, and athirst for ill,
Leagued with the faithless Pinnabel, a wight
All evil prompt to further and fulfil,
Says she shall never rest by day nor night,
Nor ever know a happy hour, until
A thousand knights and dames are dispossest
Of courser, and of armour, and of vest.

LII

"Four puissant knights arrived that very day
It happened, at a place of his, and who
Had all of them from regions far away
Come lately to those parts: so many true
And valiant warriors, skilled in martial play,
Our age has seen not. These the goodly crew:
Guido the savage, but a stripling yet,
Gryphon, and Aquilant, and Sansonet!

LIII

"Them at the fortilage, of which I told,
Sir Pinnabel received with semblance fair,
Next seized the ensuing night the warriors bold
In bed, nor loosed, till he had made them swear
That (he such period fixt) they in his hold

Should be his faithful champions for a year
And month; and of his horse and arms deprive
Whatever cavalier should there arrive.

LIV
"And any damsel whom the stranger bore
With him, dismount, and strip her of her vest.
So, thus surprised, the warlike prisoners swore;
So were constrained to observe the cruel hest,
Though grieved and troubled: nor against the four,
It seems, can any joust, but vails his crest.
Knight infinite have come, but one and all,
Afoot and without arms have left that Hall.

LV
"Their order is, who from the castle hies,
The first by lot, shall meet the foe alone,
But if he find a champion of such guise
As keeps the sell, while he himself is thrown,
The rest must undertake the enterprise,
Even to the death, against that single one,
Ranged in a band. If such each single knight,
Imagine the assembled warriors' might!

LVI
"Nor stands it with our haste, which all delay,
All let forbids, that you beside that tower
Be forced to stop and mingle in the fray:
For grant that you be conquerors in the stower,
(And as your presence warrants well, you may,)
'Tis not a thing concluded in an hour.
And if all day he wait our succour, I
Much fear the stripling in the fire will die."

LVII
"Regard we not this hindrance of our quest,"
Rogero cried, "But do we what we may!

Let HIM who rules the heavens ordain the rest,
Or Fortune, if he leave it in her sway;
To you shall by this joust be manifest
If we can aid the youth; for whom to-day
They on a ground so causeless and so slight,
As you to us rehearsed, the fire will light."

LVIII
Rogero ceased; and in the nearest way
The damsel put the pair without reply:
Nor these beyond three miles had fared, when they
Reached bridge and gate, the place of forfeitry,
Of horse and arms and feminine array,
With peril sore of life. On turret high,
Upon first sight of them, a sentinel
Beat twice upon the castle's larum-bell.

LIX
And lo, in eager hurry from the gate
An elder trotting on hackney made!
And he approaching cried, "Await, await!
— Hola! halt, sirs, for here a fine is paid:
And I to you the usage shall relate,
If this has not to you before been said."
And to the three forthwith began to tell
The use established there by Pinnabel.

LX
He next proceeds, as he had wont before
To counsel other errant cavalier.
"Unrobe the lady," (said the elder hoar,)
"My sons, and leave your steeds and martial geer;
Nor put yourselves in peril, and with four
Such matchless champions hazard the career.
Clothes, arms, and coursers every where are rife;
But not to be repaired is loss of life."

LXI
" — No more!" (Rogero said) "No more! for I
Am well informed of all, and hither speed
With the intention, here by proof to try
If, what my heart has vouched, I am in deed.
For sign or threat I yield not panoply,
If nought beside I hear, nor vest nor steed.
And this my comrade, I as surely know,
These for mere words as little will forego.

LXII
"But let me face to face, by Heaven, espy
Those who would take my horse and arms away;
For we have yet beyond that hill to hie,
And little time can here afford to stay."
"Behold the man," that ancient made reply,
"Clear of the bridge!" — Nor did in this missay;
For thence a warrior pricked, who, powdered o'er
With snowy flowers, a crimson surcoat wore.

LXIII
Bradamant for long time with earnest prayer,
For courtesy the good Rogero prest,
To let her from his sell the warrior bear,
Who with white flowers had purfled o'er his vest.
But moved him not; and to Rogero's share
Must leave, and do herself, what liked him best.
He willed the whole emprize his own should be,
And Bradamant should stand apart to see.

LXIV
The Child demanded of that elder, who
Was he that from the gate first took his way,
And he, " 'Tis Sansonet; of crimson hue,
I know his surcoat, with white flowers gay."
Without a word exchanged, the warlike two

Divide the ground, and short is the delay.
For they against each other, levelling low
Their spears, and hurrying sore their coursers, go.

LXV
This while had issued from the fortress near,
With many footmen girt, Sir Pinnabel,
All ready to despoil the cavalier,
Who in the warlike joust should void is sell.
At one another spurred in bold career
The knights, with their huge lances rested well.
Up to the points nigh equal was each stick,
Of stubborn native oak, and two palms thick.

LXVI
Sansonet, of such staves, above five pair
Had made them sever from the living stock,
In neighboring wood, and bade his followers bear
Two of them hither, destined for that shock:
Such truncheons to withstand, well needed-were
A shield and cuirass of the diamond rock.
One he had made them give his foe, and one
He kept himself, the present course to run.

LXVII
With these which might the solid anvil bore,
(So well their ends were pointed) there and here,
Each aiming at the shield his foeman wore,
The puissant warriors shocked in mid career.
That of Rogero, wrought with magic lore,
By fiends, had little from the stroke to fear:
I of the buckler speak Atlantes made,
Of whose rare virtues I whilere have said.

LXVIII
I have already said, the enchanted light
Strikes with such force on the beholder's eyes,

That, at the shield's discovery, every wight
Is blinded, or on earth half lifeless lies.
Wherefore, well mantled with a veil, the knight
Keeps it, unless some passing need surprise:
Impassive is the shield as well believed,
Since it no damage in the shock received.

LXIX
The other by less skilful artist wrought,
Did not so well that weightless blow abide,
But, as if smit by thunder, in a thought,
Gave way before the steel, and opened wide;
Gave way before the griding steel, which sought
The arm beneath, by this ill fortified:
So that Sir Sansonet was smote, and reeled,
In his departure, unhorsed upon the field.

LXX
And this was the first comrade of the train
That of the tower maintained the usage fell,
Who there had failed another's spoil to gain,
And voided in the joust his knightly sell.
Who laughs, as well will sometimes have to plain,
And find that Fortune will by fits rebel.
Anew the warder on his larum beats,
And to the other knights the sign repeats.

LXXI
This while Sir Pinnabello had drawn near
To Bradamant, and prayed that she would shew
What warrior had his knight in the career
Smith with such prowess. That the guerdon due
To his ill deeds might wait the cavalier,
God's justice that ill-doer thither drew
On the same courser, which before the Cheat
From Bradamant had taken by deceit.

LXXII

'Twas now exactly the eighth month was ended,
Since, if you recollect, upon his way,
The faithless Maganzese, with whom she wended,
Cast into Merlin's tomb the martial may;
When her a bough, which fell with her, defended
From death, or her good Fortune, rather say;
And Pinnabel bore off her courser brave,
Deeming the damsel buried in the cave.

LXXIII

The courser, and, through him, the cavalier,
Bradamant knew to be the wicked Count,
And, having heard him, and perused him near,
With more attentive eye and front to front —
"This is the man," (the damsel said) " 'tis clear,
Who erst designed me outrage and affront.
Lo! him the traitor's sin doth hither speed,
Of all his treasons to receive the meed."

LXXIV

To threaten him with vengeance, and to lay
Hands on her sword and charge him now, was done
All in a thought; but first she barred the way
By which he might his fortilage have won.
To earth himself like fox, in his dismay,
Sir Pinnabel has every hope foregone.
He screaming loud, nor ever making head
Against the damsel, through the forest fled.

LXXV

Pale and dismayed his spurs the caitiff plied
Whose last hope of escape in flight was found;
While with her ready sword, Dordona's pride
Was at his flank, and prest him in his round,
Hunting him close and ever fast beside:

Loud is the uproar, and the woods resound.
Nothing of this is at the castle kenned,
For only to Rogero all attend.

LXXVI
The other three, who from the fortress came,
This while had issued forth upon their way,
And brought with them the ill-accustomed dame,
Who made wayfarers that ill use obey.
In all (who rather than prolong with blame
Their life, would choose to perish in the fray),
The kindling visage burns, and heart is woe,
That to assail one man so many go.

LXXVII
The cruel courtezan by whom was made,
And by whose hest maintained, that evil rite,
Reminds the warriors that they are arrayed
By oath and pact, to avenge her in the fight.
"If with this lance alone thy foes are laid
On earth, why should I band with other knight?"
(Guido the savage said) "and, if I lie,
Off with my head, for I consent to die."

LXXVIII
So Aquilant, so Gryphon. For the twain
Singly against a single foe would run;
And rather would be taken, rather slain,
Than he should be assailed by more than one.
To them exclaimed the woman: "Why in vain
Waste you so many words, where fruit is none?
I brought you here that champion's arms to take,
Not other laws and other pacts to make.

LXXIX
"You should have offered, when in prison-cell,
This your excuse; which now too late is made.

'Tis yours the law's observance to compel,
And not with lying tongue your oath evade."
" — Behold! the arms; behold, with a new sell
And cloth, the goodly steed!" Rogero said,
"Behold with these, as well, the damsel's vest!
If these you covet, why your course arrest?"

LXXX
She of the castle presses on this side,
On that Rogero rates, and calls them on;
Till they parforce, t'wards him, together hied:
But red with shame, are to the encounter gone.
Foremost appeared 'mid those three knights of pride,
Of Burgundy's good marquis either son.
But Guido, who was borne on heavier steed,
Came at some interval, with tardier speed.

LXXXI
With the same lance with which he overbore
Sir Sansonet, Rogero came to fight;
Well-covered with the shield which heretofore
Atlantes used on Pyrenean height;
I say the enchanted buckler, which, too sore
For human sufferance, dazed the astonished sight:
To which Rogero, as a last resource,
In the most pressing peril had recourse.

LXXXII
Although three times alone the Child was fain
(And, certes sore bested) this to display;
Twice when he from the wanton Fairy's reign
Was to that soberer region on his way!
Last, when the unsated Orc upon the main,
By this astounded, 'mid the sea-foam lay;
Which would have fed upon the naked maid,
So cruel to the Child who brought her aid.

LXXXIII

Save these three times, he has preserved the shield
Beneath its veil, but covered in such wise
That it may quickly be to sight revealed,
If he in need of its good succour lies.
With this, as said before, he came a-field
As boldly, as if those three enemies,
Who were arrayed before him, had appeared
Yet less than little children to be feared.

LXXXIV

Rogero shocked the valiant Gryphon, where
The border of the buckler joined the sight,
Who seemed as he would fall, now here, now there,
And, from his courser far, last fell outright.
He at the shield had aimed, but smote not fair
The mark; and (for Rogero's orb was bright
And smooth) the hissing weapon slipt, and wrought
Other effect than was in Gryphon's thought.

LXXXV

It rent and tore the veil which served to hide
The lightning's fearful and enchanted rays;
Which, without blinded eyes, can none abide
Upright, nor refuge is for them who gaze.
Aquilant, who was at his brother's side,
Tore off the rest, and made the buckler blaze:
The splendour struck the valiant brothers blind,
And Guido in their rear, who spurred behind.

LXXXVI

These here, or there, to earth astonished reel;
Nor eyes alone are dazzled by the light,
But every sense astounds the flaming steel.
Unconscious of the issue of the fight,
Rogero turned his horse, and, in the wheel,

Handled his sword, so good to thrust and smite;
And none descried his fury to oppose;
For in the charge dismounted were his foes.

LXXXVII
The knights, together with the footmen all,
And women, who had from the castle hied,
Nor less the coursers panting with their fall,
As if about to die, the warrior spied.
He wondered first, and next perceived the pall
Of silk was handing down on the left side;
I say the pall, in which he used to lap
His shield, the evil cause of that mishap.

LXXXVIII
He quickly turns, and, turning, rolls his eyes,
In hopes to view his well-loved martial maid;
And thitherward, without delay, he hies
Where, when the joust began, the damsel stayed.
Not finding her, it is the Child's surmise
That she is gone to bear the stripling aid;
Fearing he may be burnt, while they their journey
So long delay, retarded by that tourney.

LXXXIX
He saw the damsel, stretched among the rest
Who him had thither guided: as she lay,
He took and placed her, yet with sleep opprest,
Before him, and, sore troubled, rode away.
He with a mantle, which above her vest
She wore, concealed the enchanted buckler's ray:
And to the maid restored, when 'twas concealed,
Her senses, which were ravished by the shield.

XC
Away Rogero posted with the dame,
And did not date his crimsoned visage raise;

Since every one, it seemed to him, might blame
With right that victory, worthy little praise.
"By what amends can I of such a shame
(The blushing warrior said) the stain eraze?
For 'twill be bruited, all my deeds by sleight
Of magic have been done, and not by might."

XCI
As, thinking thus, he journeyed on his way,
Rogero stumbled upon what he sought;
For, in the middle of the track, there lay
A well, within the ground profoundly wrought:
Whither the thirsty herd, at noon of day,
Repaired, their paunches with green forage fraught.
Rogero said, " 'Tis now, must I provide,
I shame from thee, O shield, no more abide.

XCII
"Thee will I keep no more, and this shall be
Even the last shame which so on me is thrown:"
The Child, so ending his self-colloquy,
Dismounting, takes a large and heavy stone;
Which to the shield he ties, and bodily
Both to the bottom of the well are gone.
"Lie buried there for ever, from all eyes,
And with thee hidden be my shame!" he cries.

XCIII
Filled to the brim with water was the well;
Heavy the stone, and heavy was the shield;
Nor stopt they till they to the bottom fell,
By the light, liquid element concealed.
Fame was not slow the noble act to swell,
But, wandering wide, the deed in brief revealed,
And voicing it abroad, with trumpet-sound,
Told France and Spain and all the countries round.

XCIV
When that so strange adventure to the rest
Of the wide world, from mouth to mouth was blown,
Knights out of number undertook the quest,
From neighbouring parts and distant; but unknown
To all remained the forest which possessed
The spring wherein the virtuous shield was thrown:
For she who told the action, would not say
Where was the well, nor in what land it lay.

XCV
Upon Rogero's parting thence, where fell
The four good champions of that evil law,
Made by the castle's lord Sir Pinnabel,
By him discomfited like men of straw,
— The shield withdrawn — he had removed as well
The light, which quelled their sight and minds who saw;
And those, who, like dead men, on earth had lain,
Had risen, full of wonderment, again.

XCVI
Nor any thing throughout that livelong day
They 'mid themselves but that strange case relate;
And how it was in that disastrous fray
Each by the horrid light was quelled, debate.
While these, discoursing, of the adventure say,
Tidings are brought of Pinnabello's fate.
That Pinnabel is dead the warriors hear,
But learn not who had slain the cavalier.

XCVII
Bradamant in close pass, this while, had staid
The faithless Pinnabel, and sorely prest;
And many times had buried half her blade
Within bleeding flanks and heaving breast.
When of his crimes the forfeit had been paid

By him, the infected country's curse and pest,
She from the conscious forest turned away
With that good steed the thief had made his prey.

XCVIII
She would return where she had left the knight,
But never could make out the road anew;
And now by valley, now by mountain-height,
Wandered well-nigh the ample country through.
Yet could she never (such her fortune's spite)
Find out the way to join Rogero true.
Him in another canto I attend
Who loves the tale, to hear my story's end.

CANTO 23

ARGUMENT
Astolpho soars in air. Upon account
Of Pinnabel is prisoned Scotland's heir:
By Roland freed, Frontino Rodomont
Takes from Hippalca, trusted to her care.
With Mandricardo strives Anglantes' count:
Who, next, offended by his lady fair,
Into the fury falls, so strange and fell,
Which in the world has not a parallel.

I
Let each assist the other in his need;
Seldom good actions go without their due;
And if their just reward should not succeed,
At least, nor death, nor shame, nor loss ensue.
Who wrongs another, the remembered meed
As well shall have, and soon or later rue.
That mountains never meet, but that men may,
And oft encounter, is an ancient say.

II
Now mark what chanced to Pinnabel, the event
Of having borne himself so wickedly:
He at the last received due punishment,
Due and deserved by his iniquity.
And God, who for the most is ill content
To see the righteous suffer wrongfully,
Secured the maid from harm, and will secure
All who from every wickedness are pure.

III
Pinnabel deemed he to an end had brought,
And buried deep in earth, the martial maid;
Nor weening to behold her more, less thought
To her his treason's forfeit to have paid.
Nor profits it the wily traitor ought
To be among the forts his father swayed.
For Altaripa here its summit rears,
Amid rude hills, confining on Poictiers.

IV
Anselm in Altaripa held command,
The count from whom was sprung this evil seed:
Who, to escape from angry Clermont's hand,
Of friends and of assistance stood in need.
At a hill's foot, with her avenging brand,
Bradamant made the worthless traitor bleed;
Who found no better succour in the strife
Than piteous cry and fruitless prayer for life.

V
When she has put to death the treacherous peer,
Who to put her to death had erst intent,
To seek Rogero she again would steer,
But that her cruel fate would not consent;
Which, where the wood was loneliest and most drear,

To wander by close path the lady sent,
Until the western sun withdrew his light,
Abandoning the world above to night.

VI
Nor knowing where for shelter she should rove,
Bradamant in that place resolves to stay,
Couched on the verdant herbage of the grove;
And, sleeping, now awaits the dawn of day,
Now watching Saturn, Venus, Mars, and Jove,
And the other wandering gods upon their way:
But, whether waking or to sleep resigned,
Has aye Rogero present to her mind.

VII
With sorrow and repentance oft assailed,
She from her inmost heart profoundly sighed,
That Anger over Love should have prevailed.
"Anger has torn me from my love," (she cried,)
"Oh! had I made some note, which had availed,
Thither, whence I set out, my steps to guide,
When I departed on my ill emprize!
Sure I was lorn of memory and of eyes!"

VIII
These words and others she in mournful strain
Utters, and broods within her heart on more.
Meanwhile a wind of sighs, and plenteous rain
Of tears, are tokens of her anguish sore.
In the east, at last, expected long in vain,
The wished for twilight streaked the horizon o'er;
And she her courser took, which on the ley
Was feeding, and rode forth to meet the day.

IX
Nor far had rode, ere from the greenwood-trees
She issued, where the dome was erst displayed;

And many days her with such witcheries
The evil-minded wizard had delayed.
Here she Astolpho found, who at full ease
A bridle for the Hippogryph had made,
And here was standing, thoughtful and in pain
To whom he should deliver Rabicane.

X

By chance she found him, as the cavalier
Had from the helm uncased his head to view;
So that when of the dingy forest clear,
Fair Bradamant her gentle cousin knew.
Him from afar she hailed with joyful cheer,
And now more nigh, to embrace the warrior flew;
And named herself, and raised her vizor high,
And let him plainly who she was espy.

XI

None could Astolpho have found any where
With whom to leave his horse with more content,
As knowing she would guard the steed with care,
And to his lord on his return present;
And he believed that Heaven had, in its care,
Duke Aymon's daughter for this pleasure sent.
Her was he wont with pleasure aye to see,
But now with more in his necessity.

XII

Embracing twice or thrice the cousins stand,
Fraternally, each other's neck, and they
Had of each other's welfare made demand
With much affection, ere the duke 'gan say;
"Would I now see the winged people's land,
Here upon earth I make too long delay."
And opening to the dame the thought he brewed,
To her the flying horse Astolpho shewed.

XIII

But she scarce marvelled when above the plain
She saw the rising steed his wings unfold;
Since upon former time, with mastering rein.
On him had charged the dame that wizard old;
And made her eye and eyelid sorely strain,
So hard she gazed, his movements to behold;
The day that he bore off, with wonderous range,
Rogero on his journey, long and strange.

XIV

Astolpho says on her he will bestow
His Rabican; so passing swift of kind,
That, if the courser started when a bow
Was drawn, he left the feathered shaft behind;
And will as well his panoply forego,
That it may to Mount Alban be consigned:
And she for him preserve the martial weed;
Since of his arms he has no present need.

XV

Bent, since a course in air was to be flown,
That he, as best he can, will make him light.
Yet keeps the sword and horn; although alone
The horn from every risque might shield the knight:
But he the lance abandons, which the son
Of Galaphron was wont to bear in flight;
The lance, by which whoever in the course
Was touched, fell headlong hurtling from his horse.

XVI

Backed by Astolpho, and ascending slow,
The hippogryph through yielding aether flew;
And next the rider stirred the courser so,
That in a thought he vanished out of view.
Thus with his pilot does the patron go,

Fearing the gale and rock, till he is through
The reefs; then, having left the shore behind,
Hoists every sail, and shoots before the wind.

XVII
Bradamant, when departed was the peer,
Remained distressed in mind; since in what way
She knew not her good kinsman's warlike gear
And courser to Mount Alban to convey.
For on her heart, which they inflame and tear,
The warm desire and greedy will yet prey
To see the Child; whom she to find once more
At Vallombrosa thought, if not before.

XVIII
Here standing in suspense, by chance she spied
A churl, that came towards her on the plain,
Who, at her best, Astolpho's armour tied,
As best he might, and laid on Rabicane;
She next behind her bade the peasant guide
(One courser loaded and one loose) the twain.
Two were the steeds; for she had that before,
On which his horse from Pinnabel she bore.

XIX
To Vallombrosa to direct her way
She thought, in hopes to find Rogero there:
But, fearing evermore to go astray,
Knew not how thither she might best repair.
The churl had of the country small assay,
And, sure to be bewildered, wend the pair:
Yet at a venture thitherward she hies,
Where she believes the place of meeting lies.

XX
She here and there, as she her way pursued,
Turned, but found none to question of the road;

She saw at mid-day, issuing from the wood,
A fort, nor far removed was the abode,
Which on the summit of a mountain stood,
And to the lady like Mount Alban showed;
And was Mount Alban sure; in which repair
One of her brothers and her mother were.

XXI
She, when she recognized the place, became
Sadder at heart than I have power to say.
If she delays, discovered is the dame,
Nor thence will be allowed to wend her way:
If thence she wends not, of the amorous flame
Which so consumes her, she will be the prey,
Nor see Rogero more, nor compass aught
Which was at Vallombrosa to be wrought.

XXII
Some deal she doubted: then to turn her steed,
Resolved upon Mount Alban's castle near;
And, for she thence her way could deftly read,
Her course anew towards the abbey steer.
But Fortune, good or evil, had decreed
The maid, before she of the vale was clear,
Of one of her good brethren should be spied,
Alardo named, ere she had time to hide.

XXIII
He came from billeting the bands which lay
Dispersed about that province, foot and horse;
For the surrounding district, to obey
King Charlemagne, had raised another force.
Embraces brotherly and friendly say,
Salutes and kindly cheer, ensue of course;
And next into Mount Alban, side by side,
They, communing of many matters, ride.

XXIV

Bradamant enters Montalbano's seat,
Whom Beatrice had mourned, and vainly sought
Through spacious France: 'Tis here all welcome sweet,
The kiss and clasp of hand, she holds at nought,
While her a mother and a brother greet,
As the enamoured maid compares in thought
These with the loved Rogero's fond embrace;
Which time will never from her mind efface.

XXV

Because she could not go, one in her stead
To send to Vallombrosa she devised,
Who thither in the damsel's name should speed;
By whom should young Rogero be apprised
What kept her thence; and prayed, if prayer should need,
That there he for love would be baptised;
And next, as was concerned, would intend
What might their bridal bring to happy end.

XXVI

She purposed the same messenger should bear
As well to her Rogero his good steed;
Which he was ever wonted to hold dear,
Worthily dear; for sure so stout at need
And beauteous was no courser, far or near,
In land of Christian or of Paynim creed,
In occupation of the Gaul or Moor;
Except Baiardo good and Brigliador.

XXVII

Valiant Rogero, when too bold of sprite
He backed the hippogryph and soared in air,
Frontino left (Frontino he was hight),
Whom Bradamant then took into her care,
And to Mount Alban sent; and had him dight,

And nourished, at large cost, with plenteous fare;
Nor let be rode except at easy pace,
Hence was he ne'er so sleek or well in case.

XXVIII
Each damsel and each dame who her obeyed,
She tasked, together with herself, to sew,
With subtle toil; and with fine gold o'erlaid
A piece of silk of white and sable hue:
With this she trapt the horse; then chose a maid,
Old Callitrephia's daughter, from the crew;
Whose mother whilom Bradamant had nursed;
A damsel she in all her secrets versed.

XXIX
How graven in her heart Rogero lies,
A thousand times to her she had confessed;
And had extolled above the deities
The manners, worth, and beauty be possessed.
"No better messenger could I devise,"
(She said, and called the damsel from the rest,)
"Nor have I one, Hippalca mine, more sage
And sure than three, to do my embassage."

XXX
Hippalca was the attendant damsel hight.
"Go," (says her lady, and describes the way)
And afterwards informs the maid aright
Of all which to Rogero she should say;
And why she at the abbey failed the knight,
Who must not to bad faith ascribe her stay,
But this to Fortune charge, that so decides,
Who, more than we ourselves, our conduct guides.

XXXI
She made the damsel mount upon a pad,
And put into her hand Frontino's rein;

And, if she met with one so rude or mad,
Who to deprive her of the steed were fain,
Her to proclaim who was his owner, bade,
As that which might suffice to make him sane.
For she believed there was no cavalier,
But that Rogero's name would make him fear.

XXXII
Of many and many things, whereof to treat
With good Rogero, in her stead, she showed;
Of which instructed well, her palfrey fleet
Hippalca stirred, nor longer there abode.
Through highway, field, and wood, a gloomy beat,
More than ten weary miles the damsel rode,
Ere any crossed her path on mischief bent,
Or even questioned witherward she went.

XXXIII
At noon of day, descending from a mount,
She in a streight and ill declivity,
Led by a dwarf, encountered Rodomont,
Who was afoot and harnessed cap-a-pee.
The Moor towards her raised his haughty front,
And straight blasphemed the eternal Hierarchy,
That horse, so richly trapped and passing fair,
He had not found in a knight-errant's care.

XXXIV
On the first courser he should find, the knight
Had sworn a solemn oath his hands to lay:
This was the first, nor he on steed could light
Fairer or fitter; yet to take away
The charger from a maid were foul despite.
Doubtful he stands, but covets sore the prey;
Eyes and surveys him, and says often, "Why
Is not as well the courser's master by?"

XXXV

"Ah! would be were!" to him the maid replied,
"For haply he would make thee change thy thought.
A better knight than thee the horse doth ride,
And vainly would his match on earth be sought."
— "Who tramples thus on other's fame?" — he cried;
And she — "Rogero" — said, as she was taught.
Then Rodomont — "The steed I may my own;
Since him a champion rides of such renown.

XXXVI

"If he, as you relate, be of such force,
That he surprises all beside in might,
I needs must pay the hire as well as horse;
And be this at the pleasure of the knight!
That I am Rodomont, to him discourse;
And, if indeed with me he lists to fight,
Me shall to find; in that I shine confest,
By my own light, in motion or at rest.

XXXVII

"I leave such vestige wheresoe'er I tread,
The volleyed thunder leaves not worse below."
He had thrown back, over Frontino's head,
The courser's gilded reins, in saying so,
Backed him, and left Hippalca sore bested;
Who, bathed in tears, and goaded by her woe,
Cries shame on him, and threats the king with ill:
Rodomont hearkens not, and climbs the hill:

XXXVIII

Whither the dwarf conducts him on the trace
Of Doralice and Mandricardo bold.
Behind, Hippalca him in ceaseless chase,
Pursues with taunt and curses manifold.
What came of this is said in other place.

Turpin, by whom this history is told,
Here makes digression, and returns again
Thither, where faithless Pinnabel was slain.

XXXIX
Duke Aymon's daughter scarce had turned away
From thence, who on her track in haste had gone,
Ere thither by another path, astray,
Zerbino came, with that deceitful crone,
And saw the bleeding body where it lay:
And, though the warrior was to him unknown,
As good and courteous, felt his bosom swell,
With pity at that cruel sight and fell.

XL
Dead lay Sir Pinnabel, and bathed in gore;
From whom such streams of blood profusely flow,
As were a cause for wonderment, had more
Swords than a hundred joined to lay him low.
A print of recent footsteps to explore
The cavalier of Scotland was not slow;
Who took the adventure, in the hope to read
Who was the doer of the murderous deed.

XLI
The hag to wait was ordered by the peer,
Who would return to her in little space.
She to the body of the count drew near,
And with fixt eye examined every place;
Who willed not aught, that in her sight was dear,
The body of the dead should vainly grace;
As one who, soiled with every other vice,
Surpassed all womankind in avarice.

XLII
If she in any manner could have thought,
Or hoped to have concealed the intended theft,

The bleeding warrior's surcoat, richly wrought,
She would, together with his arms, have reft;
But at what might be safely hidden, caught,
And, grieved at heart, forewent the glorious weft.
Him of a beauteous girdle she undrest,
And this secured between a double vest.

XLIII
Zerbino after some short space came back,
Who vainly Bradamant had thence pursued
Through the green holt; because the beaten track
Was lost in many others in the wood;
And he (for daylight now began to lack)
Feared night should catch him 'mid those mountains rude,
And with the impious woman thence, in quest
Of inn, from the disastrous valley prest.

XLIV
A spacious town, which Altaripa hight,
Journeying the twain, at two miles' distance spy:
There stopt the pair, and halted for the night,
Which, at full soar, even now went up the sky:
Nor long had rested there ere, left and right,
They from the people heard a mournful cry;
And saw fast tears from every eyelid fall,
As if some cause of sorrow touched them all.

XLV
Zerbino asked the occasion, and 'twas said
Tidings had been to Count Anselmo brought,
That Pinnabel, his son, was lying dead
In a streight way between two mountains wrought.
Zerbino feigned surprise, and hung his head,
In fear lest he the assassin should be thought;
But well divined this was the wight he found
Upon his journey, lifeless on the ground.

XLVI

After some little time, the funeral bier
Arrives, 'mid torch and flambeau, where the cries
Are yet more thick, and to the starry sphere
Lament and noise of smitten hands arise;
And faster and from fuller vein the tear
Waters all cheeks, descending from the eyes;
But in a cloud more dismal than the rest,
Is the unhappy father's visage drest.

XLVII

While solemn preparation so was made
For the grand obsequies, with reverence due,
According to old use and honours paid,
In former age, corrupted by each new;
A proclamation of their lord allayed
Quickly the noise of the lamenting crew;
Promising any one a mighty gain
That should denounce by whom his son was slain.

XLVIII

From voice to voice, from one to other ear,
The loud proclaim they through the town declare;
Till this the wicked woman chanced to hear,
Who past in rage the tyger or the bear;
And hence the ruin of the Scottish peer,
Either in hatred, would the crone prepare,
Or were it she alone might boast to be,
In human form, without humanity;

XLIX

Or were it but to gain the promised prize; —
She to seek out the grieving county flew,
And, prefacing her tale in likely wise,
Said that Zerbino did the deed; and drew
The girdle forth, to witness to her lies;

Which straight the miserable father knew;
And on the woman's tale and token built
A clear assurance of Zerbino's guilt.

L
And, weeping, with raised hands, was heard to say,
He for his murdered son would have amends.
To block the hostel where Zerbino lay,
For all the town is risen, the father sends.
The prince, who deems his enemies away,
And no such injury as this attends,
In his first sleep is seized by Anselm's throng,
Who thinks he has endured so foul a wrong.

LI
That night in prison, fettered with a pair
Of heavy letters, is Zerbino chained.
For before yet the skies illuminated are,
The wrongful execution is ordained;
And in the place will he be quartered, where
The deed was done for which he is arraigned.
No other inquest is on this received;
It is enough that so their lord believed.

LII
When, the next morn, Aurora stains with dye
Red, white, and yellow, the clear horizon,
The people rise, to punish ("Death!" their cry)
Zerbino for the crime he has not done:
They without order him accompany,
A lawless multitude, some ride, some run.
I' the midst the Scottish prince, with drooping head,
Is, bound upon a little hackney, led.

LIII
But HE who with the innocent oft sides,
Nor those abandons who make him their stay,

For prince Zerbino such defence provides,
There is no fear that he will die to-day;
God thitherward renowned Orlando guides;
Whose coming for his safety paves the way:
Orlando sees beneath him on a plain
The youth to death conducted by the train.

LIV
With him was wended she, that in the cell,
Prisoned, Orlando found; that royal maid,
Child of Gallicia's king, fair Isabel,
Whom chance into the ruffians' power conveyed,
What time her ship she quitted, by the swell
Of the wild sea and tempest overlaid:
The damsel, who, yet nearer her heart-core
Than her own vital being, Zerbino wore.

LV
She had beneath Orlando's convoy strayed,
Since rescued from the cave. When on the plain
The damsel saw the motley troop arrayed,
She asked Orlando what might be the train?
"I know not," said the Count; and left the maid
Upon the height, and hurried towards the plain.
He marked Zerbino, and at the first sight
A baron of high worth esteemed the knight,

LVI
And asked him why and wherefore him they led
Thus captive, to Zerbino drawing near:
At this the doleful prince upraised his head,
And, having better heard the cavalier,
Rehearsed the truth; and this so well he said,
That he deserved the succour of the peer.
Well Sir Orlando him, by his reply,
Deemed innocent, and wrongly doomed to die.

LVII
And, after he had heard 'twas at the hest
Of Anselm, Count of Altaripa, done,
Was certain 'twas and outrage manifest,
Since nought but ill could spring from him; and one,
Moreover, was the other's foe profest,
From ancient hate and enmity, which run
In Clermont and Maganza's blood; a feud
With injuries, and death and shame pursued.

LVIII
Orlando to the rabble cried, "Untie
The cavalier, unless you would be slain."
— "Who deals such mighty blows?" — one made reply,
That would be thought the truest of the train;
"Were he of fire who makes such bold defy,
We wax or straw, too haughty were the strain":
And charged with that the paladin of France.
Orlando at the losel couched his lance.

LIX
The shining armour which the chief had rent
From young Zerbino but the night before,
And clothed himself withal, poor succour lent
Against Orlando in that combat sore.
Against the churl's right cheek the weapon went:
It failed indeed his tempered helm to bore,
But such a shock he suffered in the strife,
As broke his neck, and stretched him void of life.

LX
All at one course, of other of the band,
With lance unmoved, he pierced the bosom through;
Left it; on Durindana laid his hand,
And broke into the thicket of the crew:
One head in twain he severed with the brand,

(While, from the shoulders lopt, another flew)
Of many pierced the throat; and in a breath
Above a hundred broke and put to death.

LXI
Above a third he killed, and chased the rest,
And smote, and pierced, and cleft, as he pursued.
Himself of helm or shield one dispossest;
One with spontoon or bill the champaign strewed
This one along the road, across it prest
A fourth; this squats in cavern or in wood.
Orlando, without pity, on that day
Lets none escape whom he has power to slay.

LXII
Of a hundred men and twenty, in that crew,
(So Turpin sums them) eighty died at least.
Thither Orlando finally withdrew,
Where, with a heart sore trembling in his breast,
Zerbino sat; how he at Roland's view
Rejoiced, in verse can hardly be exprest:
Who, but that he was on the hackney bound,
Would at his feet have cast himself to ground.

LXIII
While Roland, after he had loosed the knight,
Helped him to don his shining arms again;
Stript from those serjeants' captain, who had dight
Himself with the good harness, to his pain;
The prince on Isabella turned his sight,
Who had halted on the hill above the plain:
And, after she perceived the strife was o'er,
Nearer the field of fight her beauties bore.

LXIV
When young Zerbino at his side surveyed
The lady, who by him was held so dear;

The beauteous lady, whom false tongue had said
Was drowned, so often wept with many a tear,
As if ice at his heart-core had been laid,
Waxed cold, and some deal shook the cavalier;
But the chill quickly past, and he, instead,
Was flushed with amorous fire, from foot to head.

LXV
From quickly clipping her in his embrace,
Him reverence for Anglantes' sovereign stayed;
Because he thought, and held for certain case,
That Roland was a lover of the maid;
So past from pain to pain; and little space
Endured the joy which he at first assayed.
And worse he bore she should another's be,
Than hearing that the maid was drowned at sea.

LXVI
And worse he grieved, that she was with a knight
To whom he owed so much: because to wrest
The lady from his hand, was neither right,
Nor yet perhaps would prove an easy quest.
He, without quarrel, had no other wight
Suffered to part, of such a prize possest;
But would endure, Orlando (such his debt)
A foot upon his prostrate neck should set.

LXVII
The three in silence journey to a font,
Where they alight, and halt beside the well;
His helmet here undid the weary Count,
And made the prince too quit the iron shell.
The youth unhelmed, she sees her lover's front,
And pale with sudden joy grows Isabel:
Then, changing, brightened like a humid flower,
When the warm sun succeeds to drenching shower.

LXVIII
And without more delay or scruple, prest
To cast her arms about her lover dear;
And not a word could draw-forth from her breast,
But bathed his neck and face with briny tear.
Orlando, who remarked the love exprest,
Needing no more to make the matter clear,
Could not but, by these certain tokens, see
The could no other but Zerbino be.

LXIX
When speech returned, ere yet the maiden well
Had dried her cheeks from the descending tear,
She only of the courtesy could tell
Late shown her by Anglantes' cavalier.
The prince, who in one scale weighed Isabel,
Together with his life, esteemed as dear, —
Fell at Orlando's feet and him adored,
As to two lives at once by him restored.

LXX
Proffers and thanks had followed, with a round
Of courtesies between the warlike pair,
Had they not heard the covered paths resound,
Which overgrown with gloomy foliage were.
Upon their heads the helmet, late unbound,
They quickly place, and to their steeds repair;
And, lo! a knight and maid arrive, ere well
The cavaliers are seated in the sell.

LXXI
This was the Tartar Mandricardo, who
In haste behind the paladin had sped,
To venge Alzirdo and Manilard, the two
Whom good Orlando's valour had laid dead:
Though afterwards less eager to pursue,

Since he with him fair Doralice had led;
Whom from a hundred men, in plate and chain,
He, with a single staff of oak, had ta'en.

LXXII
Yet knew not that it was Anglantes' peer
This while, of whom he had pursued the beat;
Though that he was a puissant cavalier
By certain signals was he taught to weet.
More than Zerbino him he eyed, and, near,
Perused the paladin from head to feet;
Then finding all the tokens coincide,
"Thou art the man I seek," the paynim cried.

LXXIII
" 'Tis now ten days," to him the Tartar said,
"That thee I still have followed; so the fame
Had stung me, and in me such longing bred,
Which of thee to our camp of Paris came:
When, amid thousands by thy hand laid dead,
Scarce one alive fled thither, to proclaim
The mighty havoc made by thy good hand,
'Mid Tremisena's and Noritia's band.

LXXIV
"I was not, as I knew, in following slow
Both to behold thee, and to prove thy might;
And by the surcoat o'er thine arms I know,
(Instructed of thy vest) thou art the knight:
And if such cognizance thou didst not show,
And, 'mid a hundred, wert concealed from sight,
For what thou art thou plainly wouldst appear,
Thy worth conspicuous in thy haughty cheer."

LXXV
"No one can say," to him Orlando cried,
"But that a valiant cavalier thou art:

For such a brave desire can ill reside,
'Tis my assurance, in a humble heart.
Since thou wouldst see me, would that thou inside,
Couldst as without, behold me! I apart
Will lay me helm, that in all points thy will
And purpose of thy quest I may fulfil.

LXXVI
"But when thou well hast scanned me with thine eye,
To that thine other wish as well attend:
It yet remains for thee to satisfy
The want, which leads thee after me to wend;
That thou mayest mark if, in my valour, I
Agree with that bold cheer thou so commend."
— "And now," (exclaimed the Tartar), "for the rest!
For my first want is thoroughly redrest."

LXXVII
Orlando, all this while, from head to feet,
Searches the paynim with inquiring eyes:
Both sides, and next the pommel of his seat
Surveys, yet neither mace nor tuck espies;
And asks how he the combat will repeat,
If his good lance at the encounter flies.
— "Take thou no care for that," replied the peer;
"Thus into many have I stricken fear.

LXXVIII
"I have an oath in Heaven to gird no blade,
Till Durindana from the count be won.
Pursuing whom, I through each road here strayed,
With him to reckon for more posts than one.
If thou wilt please to hear, my oath I made
When on my head I placed this morion:
Which casque, with all the other arms I bear,
A thousand years ago great Hector's were.

LXXIX

"To these good arms nought lacks beside the sword;
How it was stolen, to you I cannot say:
This now, it seems, is borne by Brava's lord,
And hence is he so daring in affray.
Yet well I trust, if I the warrior board,
To make him render his ill-gotten prey.
Yet more; I seek the champion with desire
To avenge the famous Agrican, my sire.

LXXX

"Him this Orlando slew by treachery,
I wot, nor could have slain in other wise."
The count could bear no more, and, " 'Tis a lie!"
(Exclaims), "and whosoever says so, lies:
Him fairly did I slay; Orlando, I.
But what thou seekest Fortune here supplies;
And this the faulchion is, which thou has sought,
Which shall be thine if by thy valour bought.

LXXXI

"Although mine is the faulchion, rightfully,
Let us for it in courtesy contend;
Nor will I in this battle, that it be
More mine than thine, but to a tree suspend:
Bear off the weapon freely hence, if me
Thou kill or conquer." As he made an end,
He Durindana from his belt unslung,
And in mid-field upon a sapling hung.

LXXXII

Already distant half the range of bow
Is from his opposite each puissant knight,
And pricks against the other, nothing slow
To slack the reins or ply the rowels bright.
Already dealt is either mighty blow,

Where the helm yields a passage to the sight.
As if of ice, the shattered lances fly,
Broke in a thousand pieces, to the sky.

LXXXIII
One and the other lance parforce must split,
In that the cavaliers refuse to bend;
The cavaliers, who in the saddle sit,
Returning with the staff's unbroken end.
The warriors, who with steed had ever smit,
Now, as a pair of hinds in rage contend
For the mead's boundary or river's right,
Armed with two clubs, maintain a cruel fight.

LXXXIV
The truncheons which the valiant champions bear,
Fail in the combat, and few blows resist;
Both rage with mightier fury, here and there,
Left without other weapon than the fist;
With this the desperate foes engage, and, where
The hand can grapple, plate and mail untwist.
Let none desire, to guard himself from wrongs,
A heavier hammer or more holding tongs.

LXXXV
How can the Saracen conclude the fray
With honour, which he haughtily had sought?
'Twere forty to waste time in an assay
Where to himself more harm the smiter wrought
Than to the smitten: in conclusion, they
Closed, and the paynim king Orlando caught,
And strained against his bosom; what Jove's son
Did by Antaeus, thinking to have done.

LXXXVI
Him griped athwart, he, in impetuous mood,
Would now push from him, now would closely strain;

And waxed so wroth that, in his heat of blood,
The Tartar little thought about his rein.
Firm in his stirrups self-collected stood
Roland, and watched his vantage to obtain;
He to the other courser's forehead slipt
His wary hand, and thence the bridle stript.

LXXXVII
The Saracen assays with all his might
To choak, and from the sell his foeman tear:
With either knee Orlando grasps it tight,
Nor can the Tartar more him, here or there.
But with the straining of the paynim knight,
The girts which hold his saddle broken are.
Scarce conscious of his fall, Orlando lies,
With feet i' the stirrups, tightening yet his thighs.

LXXXVIII
As falls a sack of armour, with such sound
Tumbled Orlando, when he prest the plain.
King Mandricardo's courser, when he found
His head delivered from the guiding rein,
Made off with him, unheeding what the ground,
Stumbling through woodland, or by pathway plain,
Hither and tither, blinded by his fear;
And bore with him the Tartar cavalier.

LXXXIX
The beauteous Doralice, who sees her guide
So quit the field, — dismayed at his retreat,
And wonted in his succour to confide,
Her hackney drives behind his courser fleet:
The paynim rates the charger, in his pride,
And smites him oftentimes with hands and feet;
Threatening, as if he understood his lore;
And where he'd stop the courser, chafes him more.

XC

Not looking to his feet, by high or low,
The beast of craven kind, with headlong force
Three miles in rings had gone, and more would go,
But that into a fosse which stopt their course,
Not lined with featherbed or quilt below,
Tumble, reversed, the rider and his horse.
On the hard ground was Mandricardo thrown,
Yet neither spoiled himself, nor broke a bone:

XCI

Here stopt the horse; but him he could not guide,
Left without bit his motions to restrain.
Brimfull of rage and choler, at his side,
The Tartar held him, grappled by the mane.
"Put upon him" (to Mandricardo cried
His lady, Doralice) "my hackney's rein,
Since for the bridle I have little use;
For gentle is my palfrey, reined or loose."

XCII

The paynim deems it were discourtesy
To accept the proffer by the damsel made.
But his through other means a rein will be;
Since Fortune, who his wishes well appaid,
Made thitherward the false Gabrina flee,
After she young Zerbino had betrayed:
Who like a she-wolf fled, which, as she hies,
At distance hears the hounds and hunters' cries.

XCIII

She had upon her back the gallant gear,
And the same youthful ornaments and vest,
Stript from the ill-taught damsel for her jeer,
That in her spoils the beldam might be drest,
And rode the horse that damsel backed whilere;

Who was among the choicest and the best.
Ere yet aware of her, the ancient dame
On Doralice and Mandricardo came.

XCIV
Stordilane's daughter and the Tartar king
Laugh at the vest of youthful show and shape,
Upon that ancient woman, figuring
Like monkey, rather say, like grandam ape.
From her the Saracen designs to wring
The rein, and does the deed: upon the rape
Of the crone's bridle, he, with angry cry,
Threatens and scares her horse, and makes him fly.

XCV
He flies and hurries through the forest gray
That ancient woman, almost dead with fear,
By hill and dale, by straight and crooked way,
By fosse and cliff, at hazard, there and here.
But it imports me not so much to say
Of her, that I should leave Anglantes' peer;
Who, from annoyance of a foe released,
The broken saddle at his ease re-pieced.

XCVI
He mounts his horse, and watches long, before
Departing, if the foe will re-appear;
Nor seeing puissant Mandricardo more,
At last resolves in search of him to steer.
But, as one nurtured well in courtly lore,
From thence departed not the cavalier,
Till he with kind salutes, in friendly strain,
Fair leaves had taken of the loving twain.

XCVII
At his departure waxed Zerbino woe,
And Isabella wept for sorrow: they

Had wended with him, but the count, although
Their company was fair and good, said nay;
Urging for reason, nought so ill could show
In cavalier, as, when upon his way
To seek his foeman out, to take a friend,
Who him with arms might succour or defend.

XCVIII
Next, if they met the Saracen, before
They should encounter him, besought them say,
That he, Orlando, would for three days more.
Waiting him, in that territory stay:
But, after that, would seek the flags which bore
The golden lilies, and King Charles' array.
That Mandricardo through their means might know,
If such his pleasure, where to find his foe.

XCIX
The lovers promised willingly to do
This, and whatever else he should command.
By different ways the cavaliers withdrew,
One on the right, and one on the left hand.
The count, ere other path he would pursue,
Took from the sapling, and replaced, his brand.
And, where he weened he might the paynim best
Encounter, thitherward his steed addrest.

C
The course in pathless woods, which, without rein,
The Tartar's charger had pursued astray,
Made Roland for two days, with fruitless pain,
Follow him, without tidings of his way.
Orlando reached a rill of crystal vein,
On either bank of which a meadow lay;
Which, stained with native hues and rich, he sees,
And dotted o'er with fair and many trees.

CI

The mid-day fervour made the shelter sweet
To hardy herd as well as naked swain;
So that Orlando, well beneath the heat
Some deal might wince, opprest with plate and chain.
He entered, for repose, the cool retreat,
And found it the abode of grief and pain;
And place of sojourn more accursed and fell,
On that unhappy day, than tongue can tell.

CII

Turning him round, he there, on many a tree,
Beheld engraved, upon the woody shore,
What as the writing of his deity
He knew, as soon as he had marked the lore.
This was a place of those described by me,
Whither ofttimes, attended by Medore,
From the near shepherd's cot had wont to stray
The beauteous lady, sovereign of Catay.

CIII

In a hundred knots, amid those green abodes,
In a hundred parts, their cyphered names are dight;
Whose many letters are so many goads,
Which Love has in his bleeding hear-core pight.
He would discredit in a thousand modes,
That which he credits in his own despite;
And would parforce persuade himself, that rhind
Other Angelica than his had signed.

CIV

"And yet I know these characters," he cried,
"Of which I have so many read and seen;
By her may this Medoro be belied,
And me, she, figured in the name, may mean."
Feeding on such like phantasies, beside

The real truth, did sad Orlando lean
Upon the empty hope, though ill contented,
Which he by self-illusions had fomented.

CV
But stirred and aye rekindled it, the more
That he to quench the ill suspicion wrought,
Like the incautious bird, by fowler's lore,
Hampered in net or line; which, in the thought
To free its tangled pinions and to soar,
By struggling, is but more securely caught.
Orlando passes thither, where a mountain
O'erhangs in guise of arch the crystal fountain.

CVI
Splay-footed ivy, with its mantling spray,
And gadding vine, the cavern's entry case;
Where often in the hottest noon of day
The pair had rested, locked in fond embrace.
Within the grotto, and without it, they
Had oftener than in any other place
With charcoal or with chalk their names pourtrayed,
Or flourished with the knife's indenting blade.

CVII
Here from his horse the sorrowing County lit,
And at the entrance of the grot surveyed
A cloud of words, which seemed but newly writ,
And which the young Medoro's hand had made.
On the great pleasure he had known in it,
The sentence he in verses had arrayed;
Which in his tongue, I deem, might make pretence
To polished phrase; and such in ours the sense.

CVIII
"Gay plants, green herbage, rill of limpid vein,
And, grateful with cool shade, thou gloomy cave,

Where oft, by many wooed with fruitless pain,
Beauteous Angelica, the child of grave
King Galaphron, within my arms has lain;
For the convenient harbourage you gave,
I, poor Medoro, can but in my lays,
As recompence, for ever sing your praise.

CIX
"And any loving lord devoutly pray,
Damsel and cavalier, and every one,
Whom choice or fortune hither shall convey,
Stranger or native, — to this crystal run,
Shade, caverned rock, and grass, and plants, to say,
Benignant be to you the fostering sun
And moon, and may the choir of nymphs provide,
That never swain his flock may hither guide!"

CX
In Arabic was writ the blessing said,
Known to Orlando like the Latin tongue,
Who, versed in many languages, best read
Was in this speech; which oftentimes from wrong,
And injury, and shame, had saved his head,
What time he roved the Saracens among.
But let him boast not of its former boot,
O'erbalanced by the present bitter fruit.

CXI
Three times, and four, and six, the lines imprest
Upon the stone that wretch perused, in vain
Seeking another sense than was exprest,
And ever saw the thing more clear and plain;
And all the while, within his troubled breast,
He felt an icy hand his heart-core strain.
With mind and eyes close fastened on the block,
At length he stood, not differing from the rock.

CXII

Then well-nigh lost all feeling; so a prey
Wholly was he to that o'ermastering woe.
This is a pang, believe the experienced say
Of him who speaks, which does all griefs outgo.
His pride had from his forehead passed away,
His chin had fallen upon his breast below;
Nor found he, so grief barred each natural vent,
Moisture for tears, or utterance for lament.

CXIII

Stiffed within, the impetuous sorrow stays,
Which would too quickly issue; so to abide
Water is seen, imprisoned in the vase,
Whose neck is narrow and whose swell is wide;
What time, when one turns up the inverted base,
Towards the mouth, so hastes the hurrying tide,
And in the streight encounters such a stop,
It scarcely works a passage, drop by drop.

CXIV

He somewhat to himself returned, and thought
How possibly the thing might be untrue:
The some one (so he hoped, desired, and sought
To think) his lady would with shame pursue;
Or with such weight of jealously had wrought
To whelm his reason, as should him undo;
And that he, whosoe'er the thing had planned,
Had counterfeited passing well her hand.

CXV

With such vain hope he sought himself to cheat,
And manned some deal his spirits and awoke;
Then prest the faithful Brigliadoro's seat,
As on the sun's retreat his sister broke.
Nor far the warrior had pursued his beat,

Ere eddying from a roof he saw the smoke;
Heard noise of dog and kine, a farm espied,
And thitherward in quest of lodging hied.

CXVI
Languid, he lit, and left his Brigliador
To a discreet attendant: one undrest
His limbs, one doffed the golden spurs he wore,
And one bore off, to clean, his iron vest.
This was the homestead where the young Medore
Lay wounded, and was here supremely blest.
Orlando here, with other food unfed,
Having supt full of sorrow, sought his bed.

CXVII
The more the wretched sufferer seeks for ease,
He finds but so much more distress and pain;
Who every where the loathed hand-writing sees,
On wall, and door, and window: he would fain
Question his host of this, but holds his peace,
Because, in sooth, he dreads too clear, too plain
To make the thing, and this would rather shrowd,
That it may less offend him, with a cloud.

CXVIII
Little availed the count his self-deceit;
For there was one who spake of it unsought;
The sheperd-swain, who to allay the heat,
With which he saw his guest so troubled, thought:
The tale which he was wonted to repeat
— Of the two lovers — to each listener taught,
A history which many loved to hear,
He now, without reserve, 'gan tell the peer.

CXIX
How at Angelica's persuasive prayer,
He to his farm had carried young Medore,

Grievously wounded with an arrow; where,
In little space she healed the angry sore.
But while she exercised this pious care,
Love in her heart the lady wounded more,
And kindled from small spark so fierce a fire,
She burnt all over, restless with desire:

CXX

Nor thinking she of mightiest king was born,
Who ruled in the east, nor of her heritage,
Forced by too puissant love, had thought no scorn
To be the consort of a poor foot-page.
— His story done, to them in proof was borne
The gem, which, in reward for harbourage,
To her extended in that kind abode,
Angelica, at parting, had bestowed.

CXXI

A deadly axe was this unhappy close,
Which, at a single stroke, lopt off the head;
When, satiate with innumerable blows,
That cruel hangman Love his hate had fed.
Orlando studied to conceal his woes;
And yet the mischief gathered force and spread,
And would break out parforce in tears and sighs,
Would he, or would be not, from mouth and eyes.

CXXII

When he can give the rein to raging woe,
Alone, by other's presence unreprest,
From his full eyes the tears descending flow,
In a wide stream, and flood his troubled breast.
'Mid sob and groan, he tosses to and fro
About his weary bed, in search of rest;
And vainly shifting, harder than a rock
And sharper than a nettle found its flock.

CXXIII
Amid the pressure of such cruel pain,
It past into the wretched sufferer's head,
That oft the ungrateful lady must have lain,
Together with her leman, on that bed:
Nor less he loathed the couch in his disdain,
Nor from the down upstarted with less dread,
Than churl, who, when about to close his eyes,
Springs from the turf, if he a serpent spies.

CXXIV
In him, forthwith, such deadly hatred breed
That bed, that house, that swain, he will not stay
Till the morn break, or till the dawn succeed,
Whose twilight goes before approaching day.
In haste, Orlando takes his arms and steed,
And to the deepest greenwood wends his way.
And, when assured that he is there alone,
Gives utterance to his grief in shriek and groan.

CXXV
Never from tears, never from sorrowing,
He paused; nor found he peace by night and day:
He fled from town, in forest harbouring,
And in the open air on hard earth lay.
He marvelled at himself, how such a spring
Of water from his eyes could stream away,
And breath was for so many sobs supplied;
And thus ofttimes, amid his mourning, cried.

CXXVI
"These are no longer real tears which rise,
And which I scatter from so full a vein.
Of tears my ceaseless sorrow lacked supplies;
They stopt when to mid-height scarce rose my pain.
The vital moisture rushing to my eyes,

Driven by the fire within me, now would gain
A vent; and it is this which I expend,
And which my sorrows and my life will end.

CXXVII
"No; these, which are the index of my woes,
These are not sighs, nor sighs are such; they fail
At times, and have their season of repose:
I feel, my breast can never less exhale
Its sorrow: Love, who with his pinions blows
The fire about my heart, creates this gale.
Love, by what miracle does thou contrive,
It wastes not in the fire thou keep'st alive?

CXXVIII
"I am not — am not what I seem to sight:
What Roland was is dead and under ground,
Slain by that most ungrateful lady's spite,
Whose faithlessness inflicted such a wound.
Divided from the flesh, I am his sprite,
Which in this hell, tormented, walks its round,
To be, but in its shadow left above,
A warning to all such as thrust in love."

CXXIX
All night about the forest roved the count,
And, at the break of daily light, was brought
By his unhappy fortune to the fount,
Where his inscription young Medoro wrought.
To see his wrongs inscribed upon that mount,
Inflamed his fury so, in him was nought
But turned to hatred, phrensy, rage, and spite;
Nor paused he more, but bared his faulchion bright;

CXXX
Cleft through the writing; and the solid block,
Into the sky, in tiny fragments sped.

Wo worth each sapling and the caverned rock,
Where Medore and Angelica were read!
So scathed, that they to shepherd or to flock
Thenceforth shall never furnish shade or bed.
And that sweet fountain, late so clear and pure,
From such tempestuous wrath was ill secure.

CXXXI

For he turf, stone, and trunk, and shoot, and lop,
Cast without cease into the beauteous source;
Till, turbid from the bottom to the top,
Never again was clear the troubled course.
At length, for lack of breath, compelled to stop,
(When he is bathed in sweat, and wasted force,
Serves not his fury more) he falls, and lies
Upon the mead, and, gazing upward, sighs.

CXXXII

Wearied and woe-begone, he fell to ground,
And turned his eyes toward heaven; nor spake he aught.
Nor ate, nor slept, till in his daily round
The golden sun had broken thrice, and sought
His rest anew; nor ever ceased his wound
To rankle, till it marred his sober thought.
At length, impelled by phrensy, the fourth day,
He from his limbs tore plate and mail away.

CXXXIII

Here was his helmet, there his shield bestowed;
His arms far off; and, farther than the rest,
His cuirass; through the greenwood wide was strowed
All his good gear, in fine; and next his vest
He rent; and, in his fury, naked showed
His shaggy paunch, and all his back and breast.
And 'gan that phrensy act, so passing dread,
Of stranger folly never shall be said.

CXXXIV
So fierce his rage, so fierce his fury grew,
That all obscured remained the warrior's sprite;
Nor, for forgetfulness, his sword he drew,
Or wonderous deeds, I trow, had wrought the knight:
But neither this, nor bill, nor axe to hew,
Was needed by Orlando's peerless might.
He of his prowess gave high proofs and full,
Who a tall pine uprooted at a pull.

CXXXV
He many others, with as little let
As fennel, wall-wort-stem, or dill, up-tore;
And ilex, knotted oak, and fir upset,
And beech, and mountain-ash, and elm-tree hoar.
He did what fowler, ere he spreads his net,
Does, to prepare the champaigne for his lore,
By stubble, rush, and nettle-stalk; and broke,
Like these, old sturdy trees and stems of oak.

CXXXVI
The shepherd swains, who hear the tumult nigh,
Leaving their flocks beneath the greenwood tree,
Some here some there across the forest hie,
And hurry thither, all, the cause to see.
— But I have reached such point, my history,
If I o'erpass this bound, may irksome be;
And I my story will delay to end,
Rather than by my tediousness offend.

CANTO 24

ARGUMENT
Odorico's and Gabrina's guilt repaid,
Youthful Zerbino sets at large the train;
He in defence of good Orlando's blade,

Is afterwards by Mandricardo slain.
Isabel weeps; by Rodomont is made
War on the Tartar king, and truce again,
To succour Agramant and his array;
Who to the lilies are well-nigh a prey.

I

Let him make haste his feet to disengage,
Nor lime his wings, whom Love has made a prize;
For love, in fine, is nought but phrensied rage,
By universal suffrage of the wise:
And albeit some may show themselves more sage
Than Roland, they but sin in other guise.
For, what proves folly more than on this shelf,
Thus, for another, to destroy oneself?

II

Various are love's effects; but from one source
All issue, though they lead a different way.
He is, as 'twere, a forest, where parforce
Who enter its recess go astray;
And here and there pursue their devious course:
In sum, to you I, for conclusion, say;
He who grows old in love, besides all pain
Which waits such passion, well deserves a chain.

III

One here may well reproach me: "Brother, thou
Seest not thy faults, while thou dost others fit."
— I answer that I see mine plain enow,
In this my lucid interval of wit;
And strive and hope withal I shall forego
This dance of folly; but yet cannot quit,
As quickly as I would, the faults I own;
For my disease has reached the very bone.

IV

I in the other canto said before,
Orlando, furious and insensate wight,
Having torn off the arms and vest he wore,
And cast away from him his faulchion bright,
And up-torn trees, and made the forest hoar
And hollow cave resound, and rocky height,
Towards the noise some shepherds, on that side,
Their heavy sins or evil planets guide.

V

Viewing the madman's wonderous feats more near,
The frighted band of rustics turned and fled;
But they, in their disorder, knew not where,
As happens oftentimes in sudden dread.
The madman in a thought is in their rear,
Seizes a shepherd, and plucks off his head;
And this as easily as one might take
Apple from tree, or blossom from the brake.

VI

He by one leg the heavy trunk in air
Upheaved, and made a mace the rest to bray.
Astounded, upon earth he stretched one pair,
Who haply may awake at the last day.
The rest, who well awake at the last day.
The rest, who well advised and nimble are,
At once desert the field and scour away:
Nor had the madman their pursuit deferred,
Had he not turned already on their herd.

VII

By such examples warned, the rustic crew
Abandoned in the fields pick, scythe, and plough,
And to the roof of house and temple flew,
(For ill secure was elm or willow's bough,)
From hence the maniac's horrid rage they view;

Who, dealing kick, and bite, and scratch, and blow,
Horses and oxen slew, his helpless prey;
And well the courser ran who 'scaped that day.

VIII
Already might'st thou hear how loudly ring
The hubbub and the din, from neighbouring farms,
Outcry and horn, and rustic trumpeting;
And faster sound of bells; with various arms
By thousands, with spontoon, bow, spit, and sling.
Lo! from the hills the rough militia swarms.
As many peasants from the vale below,
To make rude war upon the madman go,

IX
As beats the wave upon the salt-sea shore,
Sportive at first, which southern wind has stirred,
When the next, bigger than what went before,
And bigger than the second, breaks the third;
And the vext water waxes evermore,
And louder on the beach the surf is heard:
The crowd, increasing so, the count assail,
And drop from mountain and ascend from dale.

X
Twice he ten peasants slaughtered in his mood,
Who, charging him in disarray, were slain;
And this experiment right clearly showed
To stand aloof was safest for the train.
Was none who from his body could draw blood;
For iron smote the impassive skin in vain.
So had heaven's King preserved the count from scathe,
To make him guardian of his holy faith.

XI
He would have been in peril on that day,
Had he been made of vulnerable mould;

And might have learned was 'twas to cast away
His sword, and, weaponless, so play the bold.
The rustic troop retreated from the fray,
Seeing no stroke upon the madman told.
Since him no other enemy attends,
Orlando to a neighbouring township wends.

XII
Since every one had left the place for dread,
No wight he found within it, small or great:
But here was homely food in plenty spread,
Victual, well sorting with the pastoral state.
Here, acorns undistinguishing from bread,
By tedious fast and fury driven to sate
His hunger, he employed his hand and jaw
On what he first discovered, cooked or raw.

XIII
Thence, repossest with the desire to rove,
He, through the land, did man and beast pursue;
And scowering, in his phrensy, wood and grove,
Took sometimes goat or doe of dappled hue:
Often with bear and with wild boar he strove,
And with his naked hand the brutes o'erthrew;
And gorging oftentimes the savage fare,
Swallowed the prey with all its skin and hair.

XIV
Now right, now left, he wandered, far and wide,
Throughout all France, and reached a bridge one day;
Beneath which ran an ample water's tide,
Of steep and broken banks: a turret gray
Was builded by the spacious river's side,
Discerned, from far and near, and every way.
What here he did I shall relate elsewhere,
Who first must make the Scottish prince my care.

XV

When Roland had departed on his quest,
Zerbino paused some deal; then, in his rear,
Slowly his steed by the same path addrest,
Which had been taken by Anglantes' peer;
Nor two miles on his way, I think, had prest,
When he beheld a captive cavalier,
Upon a sorry, little, hackney tied,
And by armed horseman watched on either side.

XVI

Zerbino speedily the prisoner knew,
And Isabel, as soon, when nigh surveyed.
This was Sir Odoric, the Biscayan, who,
Like wolf, the guardian of a lamb was made:
To whom, of all his friends esteemed most true,
Zerbino Isabella had conveyed;
Hoping, one hitherto by him found just,
Would now, as ever, have approved his trust.

XVII

Even then how all had chanced, with punctual lore,
Was Isabel relating to the knight;
How in the pinnace she was saved, before
The broken vessel sank at sea outright;
Odoric's assault; and next, how bandits bore
Her to the cavern, in a mountain dight.
Nor Isabella yet her tale has told,
When bound the malefactor they behold.

XVIII

The two that had Sir Odoric in their ward,
The royal damsel Isabella knew;
And deemed he was her lover and her lord,
That pricked beside the lady, fair of hue.
More; that the bearings on his shield record

The honours of the stem from which he grew;
And found, as better they observed his cheer,
They had judged rightly of the cavalier.

XIX
Lighting, with open arms and hurried pace,
They make towards Zerbino eagerly,
And, kneeling, with bare head, the prince embrace,
Where lord is clipt by one of less degree.
Zerbino, looking either in the face,
Knows one Corebo of Biscay to be,
And Sir Almonio, his co-mate; the pair
Charged, under Odoric, with the galley's care.

XX
Almonio cried, "Since God is pleased in the end,
Grammercy! Isabel should be with you;
My lord, I very clearly comprehend
I should deliver tidings, nothing new,
If I should now inform you why I wend
With this offender, whom with me you view.
Since she, who at his hands has suffered worst,
The story of his crimes will have rehearsed.

XXI
"How me that traitour duped thou hast not to learn,
What time he rid himself of me, nor how
Corebo, who would have avenged the scorn,
Intended to the damsel, was laid low;
But that which followed, upon my return,
By her unseen or heard, she cannot know,
So as to thee the story to have told;
The sequel of it then will I unfold.

XXII
"I seaward from the city, with a store
Of nags, collected in a hurry, fare;

Aye watchful, if the trace I can explore
Of those left far behind me; I repair
Thitherward; I arrive upon the shore,
The place where they were left; look everywhere;
Nor sign of them perceive upon that strand,
Except some steps, new-printed on the sand.

XXIII
"The steps I traced into the forest drear;
Nor far within the greenwood had I wound,
When guided by a noise which smote my ear,
I saw my comrade bleeding on the ground:
Of Isabel I asked the cavalier,
Of Odoric, and what hand had dealt his wound;
And thence departed, when the thing I knew,
Seeking the wretch these precipices through.

XXIV
"Wide circling still I go, and through that day
I find no other sign of him that fled;
At length return to where Corebo lay,
Who had the ground about him dyed so red,
That he, had I made little more delay,
A grave would have required, and, more than bed
And succour of the leech, to make him sound,
Craved priest and friar to lay him in the ground.

XXV
"I had him to the neighbouring city brought,
And boarded with a friendly host; and there
Corebo's cure in little time was wrought,
Beneath an old chirurgeon's skilful care.
This finished, having arms and horses brought,
We thence together to the court repair
Of King Alphonso of Biscay; where I
Find out the traitor, and to fight defy.

XXVI

"The monarch's justice, who fair field and free
Allowed us for the duel, and my right,
And Destiny to boot (for Destiny
Oftener makes conquest where she listeth, light)
So backed my arms, that felon was by me
Worsted, and made a prisoner in the fight.
Alphonso, having heard his guilt confessed,
Bade me dispose of him as liked me best.

XXVII

"Him would I neither loose, nor yet have slain,
But, as thou seest, in bonds to thee convey:
That whether he should be condemned to pain,
Or death, it should be thine his doom to say.
I, hearing thou wert with King Charlemagne,
Thither, in hope to find thee, took my way.
I thank my God, that thee upon this ground,
Where I least hoped to meet thee, I have found.

XXVIII

"As well I render thanks, that Isabel
I see restored to thee, I know not how,
Of whom, by reason of that traitor fell,
I deemed thou never more should'st tidings know."
In silence prince Zerbino hears him tell
His story, gazing upon Odoric's brow,
In pity, more than hate, as he perpends
How foully such a goodly friendship ends.

XXIX

After Almonio had his tale suspended,
Astounded for a while the prince stood by;
Wondering, that he who least should have offended,
Had him requited with such treachery:
But, his long fit of admiration ended,

Waking from his amazement with a sigh,
Questioned the prisoner in the horsemen's hold,
It that was true the cavalier had told.

XXX
The faithless man alighted, and down fell
Upon his bended knees, and answered: "Sir,
All people that on middle earth do dwell,
Through weakness of their nature, sin and err.
One thing alone distinguishes the well
And evil doer; this, at every stir
Of least desire, submits, without a blow;
That arms, but yields as well to stronger foe.

XXXI
"Had I been charged some castle to maintain,
And, without contest, on the first assault,
Hoisted the banners of the hostile train,
— For cowardice, or treason, fouler fault —
Upon my eyes (a well deserved pain)
Thou might'st have justly closed the darksome vault;
But, yielding to superior force, I read
I should not merit blame, but praise and meed.

XXXII
"The stronger is the enemy, the more
Easily is the vanquished side excused:
I could but faith maintain as, girded sore,
The leaguered fort to keep her faith is used;
Even so, with all the sense, with all the lore
By sovereign wisdom into me infused,
This I essayed to keep; but in the end,
To o'ermastering assault was forced to bend."

XXXIII
So said Sir Odoric; and after showed
(Though 'twere too tedious to recount his suit)

Him no light cause had stirred, but puissant goad.
— If ever earnestness of prayer could boot
To melt a heart that with resentment glowed,
— If e'er humility produced good fruit,
It well might here avail; since all that best
Moves a hard heart, Sir Odoric now exprest.

XXXIV
Whether or no to venge such infamy,
Youthful Zerbino doubted: the review
Of faithless Odorico's treachery
Moved him to death the felon to pursue;
The recollection of the amity
So long maintained between them, with the dew
Of pity cooled the fury in his mind,
And him to mercy towards the wretch inclined.

XXXV
While Scotland's prince is doubting in such wise
To keep him captive, or to loose his chain;
Or to remove him from before his eyes,
By dooming him to die, or live in pain;
Loud neighing, thitherward the palfrey hies
From which the Tartar king had stript the rein;
And the old harridan, who had before
Nigh caused Zerbino's death, among them bore.

XXXVI
The horse, that had the others of that band
Heard at a distance, thither her conveyed.
Sore weeping came the old woman, and demand
For succour, in her trouble, vainly made.
Zerbino, when he saw her, raised his hand
To heaven, that had to him such grace displayed,
Giving him to decide that couple's fate;
The only two that had deserved his hate.

XXXVII

The wicked hag is kept, so bids the peer,
Until he is determined what to do:
He to cut off her nose and either ear
Now thought, and her as an example shew.
Next, 'twere far better, deemed the cavalier,
If to the vultures he her carcase threw:
He diverse punishments awhile revolved,
And thus the warrior finally resolved.

XXXVIII

He to his comrades turned him round, and said:
"To let the traitour live I am content,
Who, if full grace he has not merited,
Yet merits not to be so foully shent.
I, as I find his fault of Love was bred,
To give him life and liberty consent;
And easily we all excuses own,
When on commanding Love the blame is thrown.

XXXIX

"Often has Love turned upside down a brain
Of sounder wit than that to him assigned,
And led to mischief of far deeper stain,
Than has so outraged us. Let Odoric find
Pardon his offences; I the pain
Of these should justly suffer, who was blind;
Blind when I gave him such a trust, nor saw
How easily the fire consumes the straw."

XL

"Then gazing upon Odoric, 'gan say:
"This is the penance I enjoin to thee;
That thou a year shalt with the beldam stay,
Nor ever leave this while her company;
But, roving or at rest, by night or day,

Shalt never for an hour without her be;
And her shall even unto death maintain
Against whoever threatens her with pain.

XLI
"I will, if so this woman shall command,
With whosoe'er he be, thou battle do.
I will this while that thou all France's land,
From city shalt to city, wander through."
So says he: for as Odoric at his hand
Well merits death, for his foul trespass due,
This is a pitfall for his feet to shape,
Which it will be rare fortune if he 'scape.

XLII
So many women, many men betrayed,
And wronged by her, have been so many more,
Not without strife by knight shall he be stayed,
Who was beneath his care the beldam hoar.
So, for their crimes, shall both alike be paid;
She for her evil actions done before,
And he who wrongfully shall her defraud;
Nor far can go before he finds an end.

XLIII
To keep the pact Zerbino makes him swear
A mighty oath, under this penalty,
That should he break his faith, and anywhere
Into his presence led by fortune be,
Without more mercy, without time for prayer,
A cruel death shall wait him, as his fee.
Next by his comrades (so their lord commands)
Sir Odoric is unpinioned from his bands.

XLIV
Corebo frees the traitor in the end,
Almonio yielding, yet as ill content:

For much Zerbino's mercies both offend,
Which thus their so desired revenge prevent.
Thence, he disloyal to his prince and friend,
In company with that curst woman went.
What these befel Sir Turpin has not said,
But more I once in other author read.

XLV
This author vouches (I declare not who)
That hence they had not one day's journey wended,
When Odoric, to all pact, all faith, untrue,
For riddance of the pest to him commended,
About Gabrina's neck a halter threw,
And left her to a neighbouring elm suspended;
And in a year (the place he does not name)
Almonio by the traitor did the same.

XLVI
Zerbino, who the Paladin pursues,
And loath would be to lose the cavalier,
To his Scottish squadron of himself sends news,
Which for its captain well might stand in fear;
Almonio sends, and many matters shews,
Too long at full to be recited here;
Almonio sends, Corebo next; nor stayed
Other with him, besides the royal maid.

XLVII
So mighty is the love Zerbino bore,
Nor less than his the love which Isabel
Nursed for the valorous Paladin, so sore
He longed to know if that bold infidel
The Count had found, who in the duel tore
Him from his horse, together with the sell,
That he to Charles's camp, till the third day
Be ended, will not measure back his way.

XLVIII

This was the term for which Orlando said
He should wait him, who yet no faulchion wears;
Nor is there place the Count has visited,
But thither in his search Zerbino fares.
Last to those trees, upon whose bark was read
The ungrateful lady's writing, he repairs,
Little beside the road; and there finds all
In strange disorder, rock and water-fall.

XLIX

Far off, he saw that something shining lay,
And spied Orlando's corslet on the ground;
And next his helm; but not that head-piece gay
Which whilom African Almontes crowned:
He in the thicket heard a courser neigh,
And, lifting up his visage at the sound,
Saw Brigliadoro the green herbage browze,
With rein yet hanging at his saddle-bows.

L

For Durindane, he sought the greenwood, round,
Which separate from the scabbard met his view;
And next the surcoat, but in tatters, found;
That, in a hundred rags, the champaign strew.
Zerbino and Isabel, in grief profound,
Stood looking on, nor what to think they knew:
They of all matters else might think, besides
The fury which the wretched Count misguides.

LI

Had but the lovers seen a drop of blood,
They might have well believed Orlando dead:
This while the pair, beside the neighbouring flood,
Beheld a shepherd coming, pale with dread.
He just before, as on a rock he stood,

Had seen the wretch's fury; how he shed
His arms about the forest, tore his clothes,
Slew hinds, and caused a thousand other woes.

LII
Questioned by good Zerbino, him the swain
Of all which there had chanced, informed aright.
Zerbino marvelled, and believed with pain,
Although the proofs were clear: This as it might,
He from his horse dismounted on the plain,
Full of compassion, in afflicted plight;
And went about, collecting from the ground
The various relics which were scattered round.

LIII
Isabel lights as well; and, where they lie
Dispersed, the various arms uniting goes.
Lo! them a damsel joins, who frequent sigh
Heaves from her heart, and doleful visage shows.
If any ask me who the dame, and why
She mourns, and with such sorrow overflows;
I say 'twas Flordelice, who, bound in trace
Of her lost lover's footsteps, sought that place.

LIV
Her Brandimart had left disconsolate
Without farewell, i' the court of Charlemagne:
Who there expected him six months or eight; —
And lastly, since he came not there again,
From sea to sea, had sought her absent mate,
Through Alpine and through Pyrenean chain:
In every place had sought the warrior, save
Within the palace of Atlantes' grave.

LV
If she had been in that enchanted hold,
She might before have seen the cavalier

Wandering with Bradamant, Rogero bold,
Gradasso and Ferrau and Brava's peer.
But, when Astolpho chased the wizard old,
With the loud bugle, horrible to hear,
To Paris he returned; but nought of this
As yet was known to faithful Flordelice.

LVI
To Flordelice were known the arms and sword
(Who, as I say, by chance so joined the twain),
And Brigliadoro, left without his lord,
Yet bearing at the saddle-bow his rein:
She with her eyes the unhappy signs explored,
And she had heard the tidings of the swain,
Who had alike related, how he viewed
Orlando running frantic, in his mood.

LVII
Here prince Zerbino all the arms unites,
And hangs, like a fair trophy, on a pine.
And, to preserve them safe from errant knights,
Natives or foreigners, in one short line
Upon the sapling's verdant surface writes,
ORLANDO'S ARMS, KING CHARLES'S PALADINE.
As he would say, `Let none this harness move,
Who cannot with its lord his prowess prove!'

LVIII
Zerbino having done the pious deed,
Is bowning him to climb his horse; when, lo!
The Tartar king arrives upon the mead.
He, at the trophied pine-tree's gorgeous show,
Beseeches him the cause of this to read;
Who lets him (as rehearsed) the story know.
When, without further pause, the paynim lord
Hastes gladly to the pine, and takes the sword.

LIX
"None can (he said) the action reprehend,
Nor first I make the faulchion mine today;
And to its just possession I pretend
Where'er I find it, be it where it may.
Orlando, this not daring to defend,
Has feigned him mad, and cast the sword away;
But if the champion so excuse his shame,
This is no cause I should forego my claim.

LX
"Take it not thence," to him Zerbino cried,
"Nor think to make it thine without a fight:
If so thou tookest Hector's arms of pride,
By theft thou hadst them, rather than by right."
Without more parley spurred upon each side.
Well matched in soul and valour, either knight.
Already echoed are a thousand blows;
Nor yet well entered are the encountering foes.

LXI
In scaping Durindane, a flame in show
(He shifts so quickly) is the Scottish lord.
He leaps about his courser like a doe,
Where'er the road best footing does afford.
And well it is that he should not forego
An inch of vantage; who, if once that sword
Smite him, will join the enamoured ghosts, which rove
Amid the mazes of the myrtle grove.

LXII
As the swift-footed dog, who does espy
Swine severed from his fellows, hunts him hard,
And circles round about; but he lies by
Till once the restless foe neglect his guard;
So, while the sword descends, or hangs on high,

Zerbino stands, attentive how to ward,
How to save life and honour from surprise;
And keeps a wary eye, and smites and flies.

LXIII
On the other side, where'er the foe is seen
To threaten stroke in vain, or make good,
He seems an Alpine wind, two hills between,
That in the month of March shakes leafy wood;
Which to the ground now bends the forest green.
Now whirls the broken boughs, at random strewed.
Although the prince wards many, in the end
One mighty stroke he cannot scape or fend.

LXIV
In the end he cannot scape one downright blow,
Which enters, between sword and shield, his breast,
As perfect was the plate and corslet, so
Thick was the steel wherein his paunch was drest:
But the destructive weapon, falling low,
Equally opened either iron vest;
And cleft whate'er it swept in its descent,
And to the saddle-bow, through cuirass, went.

LXV
And, but that somewhat short the blow descends,
It would Zerbino like a cane divide;
But him so little in the quick offends,
This scarce beyond the skin is scarified.
More than a span in length the wound extends;
Of little depth: of blood a tepid tide
To his feet descending, with a crimson line,
Stains the bright arms which on the warrior shine.

LXVI
'Tis so, I sometimes have been wont to view
A hand, more white than alabaster, part

The silver cloth, with ribbon red of hue;
A hand I often feel divide my heart.
Here little vantage young Zerbino drew
From strength and greater daring, and from art;
For in the temper of his arms and might,
Too much the Tartar king excelled the knight.

LXVII
The fearful stroke was mightier in show,
Than in effect, by which the Prince was prest;
So that poor Isabel, distraught with woe,
Felt her heart severed in her frozen breast.
The Scottish prince, all over in a glow,
With anger and resentment was possest,
And putting all his strength in either hand,
Smote full the Tartar's helmet with his brand.

LXVIII
Almost on his steed's neck the Tartar fell,
Bent by the weighty blow Zerbino sped;
And, had the helmet been unfenced by spell,
The biting faulchion would have cleft his head.
The king, without delay, avenged him well,
"Nor I for you till other season," said,
"Will keep this gift"; and levelled at his crest,
Hoping to part Zerbino to the chest.

LXIX
Zerbino, on the watch, whose eager eye
Waits on his wit, wheels quickly to the right;
But not withal so quickly, as to fly
The trenchant sword, which smote the shield outright,
And cleft from top to bottom equally;
Shearing the sleeve beneath it, and the knight
Smote on his arm; and next the harness rended,
And even to the champion's thigh descended.

LXX

Zerbino, here and there, seeks every way
By which to wound, nor yet his end obtains;
For, while he smites upon that armour gay,
Not even a feeble dint the coat retains.
On the other hand, the Tartar in the fray
Such vantage o'er the Scottish prince obtains,
Him he has wounded in seven parts or eight,
And reft his shield and half his helmet's plate.

LXXI

He ever wastes his blood; his energies
Fail, though he feels it not, as 't would appear;
Unharmed, the vigorous heart new force supplies
To the weak body of the cavalier.
His lady, during this, whose crimson dyes
Where chased by dread, to Doralice drew near,
And for the love of Heaven, the damsel wooed
To stop that evil and disastrous feud.

LXXII

Doralice, who as courteous was as fair,
And ill-assured withal, how it would end,
Willingly granted Isabella's prayer,
And straight to truce and peace disposed her friend,
As well Zerbino, by the other's care,
Was brought his vengeful anger to suspend;
And, wending where she willed, the Scottish lord
Left unachieved the adventure of the sword.

LXXIII

Fair Flordelice, who ill maintained descries
The goodly sword of the unhappy count,
In secret garden, and so laments the prize
Foregone, she weeps for rage, and smite her front:
She would move Brandimart to this emprize;

And, should she find him, and the fact recount,
Weens, for short season will the Tartar foe
Exulting in the ravished faulchion go.

LXXIV
Seeking him morn and evening, but in vain,
Flordelice after Brandimart did fare;
And widely wandered from him, who again
Already had to Paris made repair.
So far the damsel pricked by hill and plain,
She reached the passage of a river, where
She saw the wretched count; but what befel
The Scottish prince, Zerbino, let me tell.

LXXV
For to leave Durindana such misdeed
To him appeared, it past all other woes;
Though he could hardly sit upon his steed,
Though mighty loss of life-blood, which yet flows.
Now, when his anger and his heat secede,
After short interval, his anguish grows;
His anguish grows, with such impetuous pains,
He feels that life is ebbing from his veins.

LXXVI
For weakness can the prince no further hie,
And so beside a fount is forced to stay:
Him to assist the pitying maid would try,
But knows not what to do, not what to say.
For lack of comfort she beholds him die;
Since every city is too far away,
Where in this need she could resort to leech,
Whose succour she might purchase or beseech.

LXXVII
She, blaming Fortune, and the cruel sky,
Can only utter fond complaints and vain.

"Why sank I not in ocean, (was her cry,)
When first I reared my sail upon the main?"
Zerbino, who on her his languid eye
Had fixt, as she bemoaned her, felt more pain
Than that enduring and strong anguish bred,
Through which the suffering youth was well-nigh dead.

LXXVIII
"So be thou pleased, my heart," (Zerbino cried,)
"To love me yet, when I am dead and gone,
As to abandon thee without a guide,
And not to die, distresses me alone.
For did it me in place secure betide
To end my days, this earthly journey done,
I cheerful, and content, and fully blest
Would die, since I should die upon thy breast.

LXXIX
"But since to abandon thee, to whom a prize
I know not, my sad fate compels, I swear,
My Isabella, by that mouth, those eyes,
By what enchained me first, that lovely hair;
My spirit, troubled and despairing, hies
Into hell's deep and gloomy bottom; where
To think, thou wert abandoned so by me,
Of all its woes the heaviest pain will be."

LXXX
At this the sorrowing Isabel, declining
Her mournful face, which with her tears o'erflows,
Towards the sufferer, and her mouth conjoining
To her Zerbino's, languid as a rose;
Rose gathered out of season, and which, pining
Fades where it on the shadowy hedgerow grows,
Exclaims, "Without me think not so, my heart,
On this your last, long, journey to depart.

LXXXI
"Of this, my heart, conceive not any fear,
For I will follow thee to heaven or hell;
It fits our souls together quit this sphere,
Together go, for aye together dwell.
No sooner closed thine eyelids shall appear
Than either me internal grief will quell,
Or, has it not such power, I here protest,
I with this sword to-day will pierce my breast.

LXXXII
"I of our bodies cherish hope not light,
That they shall have a happier fate when dead:
Together to entomb them, may some wight,
Haply by pity moved, be hither led."
She the poor remnants of his vital sprite
Went on collecting, as these words she said;
And while yet aught remains, with mournful lips,
The last faint breath of life devoutly sips.

LXXXIII
'Twas here his feeble voice Zerbino manned,
Crying. "My deity, I beg and pray,
By that love witnessed, when thy father's land
Thou quittedst for my sake; and, if I may
In any thing command thee, I command,
That, with God's pleasure, thou live-out thy day;
Nor ever banish from thy memory,
That, well as man can love, have I loved thee.

LXXXIV
"God haply will provide thee with good aid,
To free thee from each churlish deed I fear;
As, when in the dark cavern thou wast stayed,
He sent, to rescue thee, Anglante's peer;
So he (grammercy!) succoured thee dismaid

At sea, and from the wicked Biscayneer.
And, if thou must choose death, in place of worse,
Then only choose it, as a lesser curse."

LXXXV
I think not these last words of Scotland's knight
Were so exprest, that he was understood:
With these, he finished, like a feeble light,
Which needs supply of was, or other food.
— Who is there, that has power to tell aright
The gentle Isabella's doleful mood?
When stiff, her loved Zerbino, with pale face,
And cold as ice, remained in her embrace.

LXXXVI
On the ensanguined corse, in sorrow drowned,
The damsel throws herself, in her despair,
And shrieks so lout that wood and plain resound
For many miles about; nor does she spare
Bosom or cheek; but still, with cruel wound,
One and the other smites the afflicted fair;
And wrongs her curling lock of golden grain,
Aye calling on the well-loved youth in vain.

LXXXVII
She with such rage, such fury, was possest,
That, in her transport, she Zerbino's glaive
Would easily have turned against her breast,
Ill keeping the command her lover gave;
But that a hermit, from his neighbouring rest,
Accustomed oft to seek the fountain-wave,
His flagon at the cooling stream to fill,
Opposed him to the damsel's evil will.

LXXXVIII
The reverend father, who with natural sense
Abundant goodness happily combined,

And, with ensamples fraught and eloquence,
Was full of charity towards mankind,
With efficacious reasons her did fence,
And to endurance Isabel inclined;
Placing, from ancient Testament and new,
Women, as in a mirror, for her view.

LXXXIX
The holy man next made the damsel see,
That save in God there was no true content,
And proved all other hope was transitory,
Fleeting, of little worth, and quickly spent;
And urged withal so earnestly his plea,
He changed her ill and obstinate intent;
And made her, for the rest of life, desire
To live devoted to her heavenly sire.

XC
Not that she would her mighty love forbear,
For her dead lord, nor yet his relics slight;
These, did she halt or journey, every where
Would Isabel have with her, day and night.
The hermit therefore seconding her care,
Who, for his age, was sound and full of might,
They on his mournful horse Zerbino placed,
And traversed many a day that woodland waste.

XCI
The cautious elder would not bear away
Thus all alone with him that damsel bland
Thither, where in a cave, concealed from day,
His solitary cell hard by did stand:
Within himself exclaiming: "I convey
With peril fire and fuel in one hand."
Nor in such bold experiments the sage
Wisely would trust to prudence or to age.

XCII
He thought to bear her to Provence, where, near
The city of Marseilles a borough stood,
Which had a sumptuous monastery; here
Of ladies was a holy sisterhood;
And, hither to transport the cavalier,
They stowed his body in a chest of wood,
Made in a town by the way-side; and which
Was long and roomy, and well closed with pitch.

XCIII
So, compassing a mighty round, they fare
Through wildest parts, for many and many a day;
Because, the war extending every where,
They seek to hide themselves as best they may:
At length a cavalier arrests the pair,
That with foul scorn and outrage bars their way;
Of whom you more in fitting time shall learn,
But to the Tartar king I now return.

XCIV
After the fight between the two was done,
Already told by me, the king withdrew
To a cooling shade and river from the sun,
His horse's reins and saddle to undo;
Letting the courser at his pleasure run,
Browsing the tender grass the pasture through:
But he reposed short time ere he descried
An errant knight descend the mountain's side.

XCV
Him Doralice, as soon as he his front
Uplifted, knew; and showed him to her knight:
Saying: "Behold! the haughty Rodomont,
Unless the distance has deceived my sight.
To combat with thee, he descends the mount:

Now it behoves thee put forth all thy might.
To lose me, his betrothed, a mighty cross
The monarch deems, and comes to venge his loss."

XCVI
As a good hawk, who duck or woodcock shy,
Partridge or pigeon, or such other prey,
Seeing towards her from a distance fly,
Raises her head, and shows her blithe and gay;
So Mandricardo, in security
Of crushing Rodomont in that affray,
Gladly his courser seized, bestrode the seat,
Reined him, and in the stirrups fixt his feet.

XCVII
When the two hostile warriors were so near,
That words could be exchanged between the twain,
Loudly began the monarch of Argier
To threat with head and hand, in haughty strain,
That to repentance he will bring the peer
Who lightly for a pleasure, rash and vain,
Had scrupled not his anger to excite
Who dearly will the offered scorn requite.

XCVIII
When Mandricardo: "He but vainly tries
To fright, who threatens me — by words unscared.
Woman, or child, or him he terrifies,
Witless of warfare; not me, who regard
With more delight than rest, which others prize,
The stirring battle; and who am prepared
My foeman in the lists or field to meet;
Armed or unarmed, on horse or on my feet."

XCIX
They pass to outrage, shout, and ire, unsheath
The brand; and loudly smites each cruel foe;

Like winds, which scarce at first appear to breathe,
Next shake the oak and ash-tree as they blow;
Then to the skies upwhirl the dusty wreath,
Then level forests, and lay houses low,
And bear the storm abroad, o'er land and main,
By which the flocks in greenwood-holt are slain.

C

Of those two infidels, unmatched in worth,
The valiant heart and strength, which thus exceed,
To such a warfare and such blows give birth,
As suits with warrior of so bold a seed.
At the loud sound and horrid, trembles earth,
When the swords cross; and to the stroke succeed
Quick sparks; or rather, flashing to the sky,
Bright flames by thousands and by thousands fly.

CI

Without once gathering breath, without repose,
The champions one another still assail;
Striving, now here, now there, with deadly blows,
To rive the plate, or penetrate the mail.
Nor this one gains, nor the other ground foregoes;
But, as if girded in by fosse or pale,
Or, as too dearly sold they deem an inch,
Ne'er from their close and narrow circle flinch.

CII

Mid thousand blows, so, with two-handed swing,
On his foe's forehead smote the Tartar knight,
He made him see, revolving in a ring,
Myriads of fiery balls and sparks of light.
The croupe, with head reversed, the Sarzan king
Now smote, as if deprived of all his might,
The stirrups lost; and in her sight, so well
Beloved, appeared about to quit the sell.

CIII

But as steel arbalest that's loaded sore,
By how much is the engine charged and strained,
By lever or by crane, with so much more
Fury returns, its ancient bent regained,
And, in discharging its destructive store,
Inflicts worse evil than itself sustained;
So rose that African with ready blade,
And straight with double force the stroke repaid.

CIV

Rodomont smites, and in the very place
Where he was smit, the Tartar in return;
But cannot wound the Sarzan in the face,
Because his Trojan arms the weapon turn;
Yes so astounds, he leaves him not in case,
If it be morn or evening to discern.
Rodomont stopt not, but in fury sped
A second blow, still aiming at his head.

CV

King Mandricardo's courser, who abhorred
The whistling of the steel which round him flew,
Saved, with sore mischief to himself, his lord;
In that he backed the faulchion to eschew:
Aimed at his master, not at him, the sword
Smote him across the head, and cleft it through.
No Trojan helm defends the wretched horse,
Like Mandricardo, and he dies parforce.

CVI

He falls, and Mandricardo on the plain
No more astound, slides down upon his feet,
And whirls his sword; to see his courser slain
He storms all over fired with angry heat.
At him the Sarzan monarch drives amain;

Who stands as firm as rock which billows beat.
And so it happened, that the courser good
Fell in the charge, while fast the footman stood.

CVII
The African, who feels his horse give way,
The stirrups quits, and lightly from the sell
Is freed, and springs on earth: for the assay
Hence matched anew, stands either infidel.
Worse than before the battle boils, while they
With pride and anger, and with hatred swell,
About to close; but that, with flowing rein,
A messenger arrives to part the twain.

CVIII
A messenger arrives, that from the Moor,
With many others, news through France conveyed;
Who word to simple knight and captain bore,
To join the troops, beneath their flags arrayed.
For he, the emperor, who the lilies wore,
Siege to their quarters had already laid;
And, save quick succour thither was addrest,
He read, their army's scathe was manifest.

CIX
The Moorish messenger not only knows,
By ensigns and by vest, the warlike pair,
But by the circling blades, and furious blows,
With which no other hands could wound the air;
Hence dared not 'twixt champions interpose,
Nor deemed his orders an assurance were
From such impetuous fury, nor the saw,
Which says embassadors are safe by law:

CX
But to fair Doralice approached, and said
Marsilius, Agramant, and Stordilane,

Within weak works, with scanty troops to aid,
Were close beleaguered by the Christian train.
And, having told his tale, the damsel prayed,
That this she to the warriors would explain;
And would accord the pair, and to their post
Dispatch, for rescue of the Moorish host.

CXI
The lady, with bold heart, 'twixt either foe
Threw herself, and exclaimed: "I you command,
By the large love you hear me, as I know,
That you to better use reserve the brand;
And that you instantly in succour go
Of our host, menaced by the Christian band;
Which now, besieged within its camp, attends
Ruin or speedy succour from its friends.

CXII
The messenger rehearsed, when she had done,
Fully the peril of the paynim train;
And said that he bore letters to the son
Of Ulien, from the son of King Troyane.
The message ended, every grudge foregone,
'Twas finally resolved between the twain,
They should conclude a truce, and till the day
The Moorish siege was raised, their strife delay.

CXIII
Intending, when from siege their Chivalry
Shall be relieved — the one and the other knight —
No longer to remain in company,
But bandy cruel war was with fell despite,
Until determined by their arms shall be
To whom the royal dame belongs of right.
And she, between whose hands their solemn troth
They plighted, was security for both.

CXIV
DISCORD, at hearing this, impatient grew;
With any truce or treaty ill content:
And that such fair agreement should ensue,
PRIDE, who was present, could as ill consent:
But LOVE was there, more puissant than the two,
Equalled of none in lofty hardiment;
And launching from his bow his shafts of proof,
With these, made PRIDE and DISCORD stand aloof.

CXV
To keep the truce the rival warriors swore;
Since so it pleased her well, who either swayed.
One of their coursers lacked: for on the moor
Lifeless King Mandricardo's had been laid:
Hence, thither, in good time, came Brigliador,
Who, feeding, by the river's margin strayed.
But here I find me at my canto's end;
So, with your licence, shall the tale suspend.

CANTO 25

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

I
Oh! mighty springs of war in youthful breast,
Impetuous force of love, and thirst of praise!

Nor yet which most avails is known aright:
For each by turns its opposite outweighs.
Within the bosom here of either knight,
Honour, be sure, and duty strongly sways:
For the amorous strife between them is delayed,
Till to the Moorish camp they furnish aid.

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

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

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

V

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

VI

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

VII

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

VIII

Because the troop about that fortress see
Accompanying him, the well-known dame,
They to Rogero leave the passage free,
Nor even question him from whence he came.
Reaching the square, of evil company

He finds it full, and bright with ruddy flame;
And, in the midst, is manifest to view
The youth condemned, with face of pallid hue.

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

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

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

XII
As while at feed, in full security,
A troop of fowl along the marish wend,

If suddenly a falcon from the sky
Swoop mid the crowd, and one surprise and rend,
The rest dispersing, leave their mate to die,
And only to their own escape attend;
So scattering hadst thou seen the frighted throng,
When young Rogero pricked that crowd among.

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

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

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

XVI

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

XVII

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

XVIII

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

XIX

When now Rogero and the stranger knight,
Clear of the city-gates, the champaigne reach,
The youth repays, with praises infinite,
Rogero in kind mode and cunning speech,
Who him, although unknown, had sought to right,

At risk of life, and prays his name to teach
That he may know to whom his thanks he owed
For such a mighty benefit bestowed.

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

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

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

XXIII
"You not first, second, or even fourth will be,
Who have in this their error had to learn;

Nor father, brother, nor even mother me
From her (such our resemblance) can discern.
'Tis true, this hair, which short and loose you see,
In many guise, and hers, with many a turn,
And in long tresses wound about her brow,
Wide difference made between us two till now.

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

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

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

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

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

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

XXX
"My sister was assured the huntress maid
Falsely conceited her a man to be;
Nor in that need could she afford her aid;
And found herself in sore perplexity.
` 'Tis better that I now dispel (she said)

The foolish thought she feeds, and that in me
The damsel should a gentle woman scan,
Rather than take me for a craven man.'

XXXI
"And she said well: for cravenhood it were
Befitting man of straw, not warrior true,
With whom so bright a lady deigned to pair,
So wonderous sweet and full of nectarous dew,
To clack like a poor cuckow to the fair,
Hanging his coward wing, when he should woo,
Shaping her speech to this in wary mode,
My sister that she was a damsel, showed;

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

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

XXXIV
"He who had marked her sorrow and lament,
That day, himself had sorrowed with the fair.

`What pains (she said) did ever wight torment,
So cruel, but that mine more cruel were?
I need not to accomplish my intent,
In other love, impure or pure, despair;
The rose I well might gather from the thorn:
My longing only is of hope forlorn.

XXXV

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

XXXVI

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

XXXVII

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

XXXVIII

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

XXXIX

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

XL

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

XLI

"Because perceiving vantage there was none
In the male cheer by which she was misled,
The damsel held it wise, reproach to shun,
Which might by any carping tongue be said.
And this the rather: that the ill, which one

Of the two garments in her mind had bred,
Now with the other which revealed the cheat,
She would assay to drive from her conceit.

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

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

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

XLV
"On issueing from their bed when day is broken,
The wretched Flordespina's woes augment:

For of departing Bradamant had spoken,
Anxious to scape from that embarrassment.
The princess a prime jennet, as a token,
Forced on my parting sister, when she went;
And gilded housings, and a surcoat brave,
Which her own hand had richly broidered, gave.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LII
"I rode all night — Love served me as a guide —
To seek the home of beauteous Flordespine;
And there arrived, before in ocean's tide
The western sun had hid his orbit sheen.
A happy man was he who fastest hied

To tell my coming to the youthful queen;
Expecting from that lady, for his pain,
Favour and goodly guerdon to obtain.

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

LIV
"Her beauteous arms about my neck she throws,
And fondly clasping me, my mouth she kist.
If to my inmost heart the arrow goes,
Which Love directs, may well by you be wist.
She leads me to her chamber of repose
In haste, not suffers others to assist
In taking off my panoply of steel;
Disarming me herself from head to heel.

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

LVI
"Next to the hall, where dame and cavalier
In crowds are gathered, we united go;

Who make to us such court and goodly cheer,
As men to queen or high-born lady show.
Here oft I laughed at some, with secret jeer,
Who, knowing not the sex concealed below
My flowing robe of feminine array,
Wooed me with wishful eyes in wanton way.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LXIII
"Treasure I covet not, nor yet aspire
O'er land or people to hold sovereign sway;
Nor greater strength nor valour would acquire,
Nor fame in every warfare bear away;
But only to accomplish thy desire,

Entreat the damsel she will show some way.
Nor one nor other method I forestall;
But to her choice refer me, all in all.

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

LXV - LXIX
(Stazas LXV - LXIX untranslated by Rose)

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

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

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

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

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

LXXV
"These she, since Ferrau took them, aye has stayed
Imprisoned in a dark and evil cell;
Till the discourteous and foul pact was made
With that false Maganzese of whom I tell;
And them to-morrow, to a place conveyed

'Twixt Bayonne and a town of his, will sell
To him, who will be present, to advance
The price of the most precious blood in France.

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

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

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

LXXIX
The other heard him not, or heard at most
As we great talkers hear, who little do:

But Richardetto took aside their host
And told how him he from the fire withdrew;
And how he was assured, beyond his boast,
He would in time and place his prowess shew.
'Twas now that better audience than before
Aldigier lent, and set by him great store;

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

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

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

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

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

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

LXXXVI
That which is needed, in obedience meet,
Aldigier's valets bring, a careful band,
The youth begins to write; and, first, to greet
The maid, as wonted courtesies demand;
Next tells how Agramant has sent to entreat,

In his dispatches, succour at his hand;
And, save he quickly to his comfort goes,
Must needs be slain or taken by his foes.

LXXXVII
Then adds, his sovereign being so bested,
And praying him for succour in his pain,
She must perceive what blame upon his head
Would light, if Agramant applied in vain;
And, since with her he is about to wed,
'Tis fitting he should keep him with stain;
For ill he deems a union could endure
Between aught foul and her to passing pure.

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

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

XC
"I would," he said, "relieve, with your good will,
My king, besieged by Charlemagne's array,

That the misjudging rabble, prone to ill,
Might never, to my shame and scandal, say:
Rogero, in fair wind and weather, still
Waited upon his sovereign, night and day,
And now that Fortune to King Charles is fled,
Has with that conquering lord his ensign spread.'

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

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

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

XCIV

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

XCV

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

XCVI

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

XCVII

Those three adventurous warriors halted where
A path went through the uncultivated plain,
And saw a knight arrive upon the lair,
Who, flourished o'er with gold, wore plate and chain,
And on green field that beauteous bird and rare,

Which longer than an age extends its reign.
No more, my lord: for at my canto's close
I find myself arrived, and crave repose.

CANTO 26

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

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

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

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

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

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

VI
"Two of our own to rescue from their foes,
And free from chains, us Love and Pity sway."
He to that stranger next the reason shows
Why thus in steel their bodies they array.
"So just is the excuse which you oppose,"

— He answered — "that I ill should this gainsay,
And hold you surely for three cavaliers
That seldom upon earth will find their peers.

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

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

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

X
And when, now nearer, the advancing crew
Were better marked in Moorish habit stoled,

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

XI

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

XII

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

XIII

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

XIV

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

XV

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

XVI

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

XVII

If ever you remember to have viewed,
Or heard, — what time the wasps divided are,
And all the winged college is at feud,
Mustering their swarms for mischief in mid air, —
The greedy swallow swoop amid that brood,

To mangle and devour, and kill, and tear,
You must imagine so, on either part
The bold Rogero and Marphisa dart.

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

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

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

XXI
She marvels at the champion's horrid blows;
She marvels how in vain they never fell.

The iron, smit by Balisarda shows
Like paper, not like stubborn plate and shell.
To pieces helm and solid corslet goes,
And men are severed, even to the sell;
Whom into equal parts those strokes divide,
Half dropt on this, and half on the other side.

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

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

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

XXV

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

XXVI

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

XXVII

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

XXVIII

When now the conquering troop their temples bare,
All see they have received a damsel's aid,
Known by her curling locks of golden hair,
And delicate and beauteous face displayed:
Her the knights honoured much, and to declare

Her name, so well deserving glory, prayed;
Nor she, that ever was of courteous mood
Among her friends, their instances withstood.

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

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

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

XXXII
The beast the low and those of proudest port
Had slain or maimed throughout this earthly ball;
Yea, fiercest seemed on those of noble sort,
Sovereign and satrap, prince and peer, to fall;
And made most havoc in the Roman court;

For it had slaughtered Pope and Cardinal:
Had filled St. Peter's beauteous seat with scathe,
And brought foul scandal on the HOLY FAITH.

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

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

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

XXXVI
The TENTH, in writing, on his back displayed
The Lion, who that Beast is seen to hold

By both his ears, and him so well has bayed,
That thither troop assistants manifold.
'Twould seem the world all fear aside has laid;
And, in amendment of their errors old,
Thitherward nobles troop, but these are few;
And so that hideous Beast those hunters slew.

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

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

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

XL

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

XLI

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

XLII

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

XLIII

"No one shall more that cruel beast molest
Than Francis, who the realm of France will steer,
Who justly shall be forward in this quest,
Whom none shall go beyond, whom few shall peer
Since he in splendour, as in all the rest,

Wanting in worth, will many make appear
Who whilom perfect seemed; so fade and yield
All lesser glories to the sun revealed.

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

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

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

XLVII
"Imbued with every generous quality,
Which can in great commander be combined,

— Prudence like his who won Thrasymenae
And Trebbia's field, with Caesar's daring mind,
And Alexander's fortune, him I see;
Without which all designs are mist and wind;
Withal, so passing liberal, I in none
Mark his example or his parragon."

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

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

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

LI

"Two Hercules and two Hippolyti
Of Este, a Hercules and Hippolyte
Of the Gonzagas' and the Medici,
Hunt and fatigue the monster in his flight:
Nor Julian lets his good son pass him by;
Nor bold Ferrant his brother; nor less wight
Is Andrew Doria; nor by any one
Is Francis Sforza in the chase outdone.

LII

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

LIII

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

LIV

To converse gay the friends themselves addrest,
And seemly pastimes, when their meal was done,
Through the hot noontide, and fine carpets prest,
'Mid shrubs, by which the limpid river run.
Vivian and Malagigi, that the rest

Might be more tranquil, watched with armour on;
When unaccompanied they saw a dame,
Who quickly towards their place of shelter came;

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

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

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

LVIII
"I from Mount Alban with a courser sped;
(So your good sister had commanded me)

A horse much loved by her, and highly bred;
Frontino is yclept that charger free;
And him I more than thirty miles had led
Towards Marseilles, where she designed to be
Within few days; by her enjoined to wend
Thither, and her arrival there attend.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LXV
Listening, the visage of the youthful knight
Showed with what rage his heart was in a flame,
As well as that the horse was his delight;
As well upon account of whence it came;
And also that 'twas reft in his despite;

He sees dishonour will ensue and blame,
Save he from Rodomont redeems the prey,
And with a due revenge that wrong repay.

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

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

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

LXIX
Marphisa had, at her companions' prayer,
Cloathed her in female ornaments and vest,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LXXVI
Him on the left side smote that paynim peer,
And (for the blow was with huge force designed)
Little his shield, and less his iron gear,
Availed, which opened like the yielding rhind:
The weapon pierced his shoulder; Aldigier

Now right now left upon his horse inclined;
Then him, 'mid grass and flowers, his comrades view,
With arms of crimson, face of pallid, hue.

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

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

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

LXXX
"I too with lance and sword do doughty deed,
And more than one good knight on earth have laid.

— Give me," she cried, "my armour and my steed."
And readily her squires that hest obeyed:
Then in her waistcoat stood, of flowing weed
Despoiled, with well-knit from and charms displayed;
And in all points (such strength she shewed and grace)
Resembled heavenly Mars, except her face.

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

LXXXII
Like brittle crystal, in that proud career,
The weapons at the rest to pieces went;
Yet neither of those warriors, 'twould appear,
Backwards one inch at their encounter bent.
Marphisa, who would willingly be clear
What of a closer fight would be the event,
For a new combat with the paynim lord,
Wheeled, to attack that warrior with the sword.

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

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

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

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

LXXXVII
Marphisa, who had evermore in thought
To prove the paladins of Charles, and who
To France was over land and ocean brought,
From clime so distant, with no other view,
Than by her own experience to be taught

If their far-spread renown were false or true,
Resolved together with the troop to speed,
As soon as she had heard their monarch's need.

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

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

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

XCI
Rogero followed fast the paynim knight,
Tracked o'er the level by those footsteps new,

But overtook him not, till he got sight,
Beside the fount, of Mandricardo too.
Already either had his promise plight,
He nought unknown to his compeer would do,
Till they had succour to that host conveyed,
On which King Charles his yoke had nearly laid.

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

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

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

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

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

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

XCVIII
While of that African he so demands
Frontino, or him threats with instant fray;
And either still the other's claim withstands,
Nor this the steed will grant, nor that delay;
King Mandricardo stirs, on the other hand,

Another strife; who sees that ensign gay
Rogero on his shield was wont to wear,
The bird which reigns o'er other fowls of air.

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

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

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

CII
"Audacious man, mine ensign do'st thou wear,
Nor this to-day for the first time, is said;

And think'st thou, madman, I will thee forbear,
Because for once to spare thee I was led?
But since nor menace nor yet counsel are
Of force to drive this folly from thy head,
It shall appear how much it had been best
For thee forthwith to have obeyed my hest."

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

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

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

CVI

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

CVII

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

CVIII

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

CIX

— "The bargain which thou hopest thou shalt not have,"
(King Mandricardo answered Rodomont)
"I will accord thee more than thou do'st crave,
And trust to make thee sweat from feet to front.
And to bestow on others, much shall save,

As water never fails in plenteous font;
And for Rogero and a thousand more,
And all the world beside reserve a store."

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

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

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

CXIII
Marphisa, to appease the warriors bent,
Exclaimed, "Sirs, listen to my better lore;

A good remembrance 'tis, all argument
To leave until we Agramant restore.
If each is on his own design intent,
With Mandricardo will I strive once more;
And fain would see, according to his word,
If he can conquer me with spear and sword.

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

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

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

CXVII

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

CXVIII

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

CXIX

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

CXX

As soon as to himself the Child returns,
And is by Vivian armed with sword again,
To venge the injury that stripling burns,
And runs at Rodomont with flowing rein,
Like lion, whom a bull upon his horns

Has lifted, though he feels this while no pain,
So him his heat of blood, disdain, and ire,
To venge that cruel outrage goad and fire.

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

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

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

CXXIV
Marphisa has king Mandricardo prest
Meanwhile, and makes him sweat breast, front, and face;

And he Marphisa has as sore distrest:
But such good plates each valiant bosom case,
Impassable is either iron vest;
And both have hitherto maintained their place.
But, at a turn her martial courser made,
Marphisa needed young Rogero's aid.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CXXXI
At the first hearing of that voice, the son
Of Ulien, on his part, the strife suspended;
And thither, where the furious palfrey run,
Swiftly in succour of the lady wended.
No less was by the Tartar monarch done;

Who neither Child nor damsel more offended;
But without craving time, or truce, or peace,
Pursued King Rodomont and Doralice.

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

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

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

CXXXV
Thither returns Rogero, where apart
Is he, the brother of his lady fair;

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

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

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

CANTO 27

ARGUMENT
By good Rogero and those paynims three
Defeated, Charlemagne to Paris flies.
Already all, throughout their chivalry,
Are mad with spite and hatred; jars arise,
And strife; and means to still their enmity

Their sovereign is unable to devise.
From him departs the monarch of Argier,
Who is rejected of his lady dear.

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

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

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

IV

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

V

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

VI

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

VII

Guard thyself, Charles: for, lo! against thee blown
Is such a storm, that I no refuge see:
Nor these redoubted monarchs come alone,
But those of Sericane and Circassy;
While Fortune, who would probe thee to the bone,

Has taken those two shining stars from thee,
Who kept thee by their wisdom and their light;
And thou remainest blind and wrapt in night.

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

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

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

XI
Her to Anglantes or to Brava brought,
He deemed the Count enjoyed in mirth and play;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

XVIII
Where thickest camped lay Charles's host, they spurred,
Closing their files against the Christian foe.
"Afric and Spain!" is the assailants' word,
Whom at all points the Franks for paynims know.
— "To arms, to arms!" throughout their camp is heard:

But first is felt the Moorish sabre's blow:
Even on the rear-guard falls the vengeful stroke,
Not charged alone, but routed, beat and broke.

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

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

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

XXII
Where the small band advances in such wise,
Deserving well eternal praise to gain,

Vouching their deeds, a long-drawn furrow lies,
A signal record of their might and main.
His army's cruel slaughter, with surprise,
Anger and rage, is viewed by Charlemagne.
So he whose shattered walls have felt its force,
Throughout his mansion tracks the lightning's course.

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

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

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

XXVI

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

XXVII

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

XXVIII

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

XXIX

At once a formidable larum rose;
Horns, drums, and shrilling clarions filled the skies;
And the wind ruffles, as it comes and goes,
Banner and gonfalon of various dyes.
The Germans and the warlike Bretons close;

Ranged on the other part, in martial wise,
Italians, English, French, were seen, and through
Those armies furious war blazed forth anew.

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

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

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

XXXIII
And. like Orlando and Duke Aymon's son,
Had faithful Brandimart thrown up the game,

Charles had from Paris into exile gone,
If he had scaped alive so fierce a flame.
Brandimart does his best, and when 'tis done,
Yields to the storm: Thus Fortune, fickle dame,
Now smiles upon the paynim monarch, who
Besieges royal Charlemagne anew.

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

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

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

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

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

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

XL
And good Rogero (she inflames them so)
With Rodomont and Mandricardo fares
To Agramant; and all (since now the foe
The paynims pressed no more, the vantage theirs)
To him the seed of their dissensions show,

And what the bitter produce which it bears:
Then to the judgment of the king refer
Who first in listed field his claim should stir.

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

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

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

XLIV
King Agramant, with prayer and kingly word,
Had willingly appeased that jarring crew;

But since the foes were deaf to all accord,
Nor would assent to peace or truce anew,
Considered how at least he might afford
The field of each of them in order due;
And, as the best resolve, at last decreed,
Each should by lot possess the listed mead.

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

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

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

XLVIII

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

XLIX

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

L

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

LI

Were seated with the Queen of fair Castille
Queens, princesses, and dames of noble strain,
From Arragon, Granada, and Seville,
And Atlas' columns; and amid the train
Assembled to behold that fierce appeal,

Was placed the daughter of King Stordilane:
Two costly vests — one red, one green — she wore;
But ill the first was dyed, and faded sore.

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

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

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

LV
He, seeing this, agnised it for the blade
So famous, which Anglantes' warrior bore,

For which he had the fairest fleet arrayed
Which ever put to sea from eastern shore;
And had Castille's rich kingdom overlaid,
And conquered fruitful France some years before;
But cannot now imagine how that sword
Is in possession of the Tartar lord;

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

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

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

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

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

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

LXII
"I will confuse the order of the field,
Throughout, if partially confused by thee;
Abandon will I not my blazoned shield,
Unless thou combat for it now with me."
— "Were one and the other Mars, for battle steeled,

(Replies enraged, the king of Tartary)
"Nor one nor the other's might should make me waive
My title to that shield and goodly glaive";

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

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

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

LXVI
"Leave me the care," the fierce Gradasso cried,
"The phrensy of this madman to subdue."

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

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

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

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

LXX

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

LXXI

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

LXXII

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

LXXIII

Assured 'twas no mistake, Circassia's chief
Turned him about to Rodomont, and cried:
"Reft from me in Albracca, by a thief,
This horse is mine; which might be certified
By them whose words would warrant well belief:

But as my witnesses are distant wide,
If it be questioned, I will make it plain,
And will, with sword in hand, the truth maintain.

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

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

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

LXXVII
Fierce and enraged, replied Circassia's peer,
"To play the churl with thee is courteous deed,

But I to thee repeat more plain and clear,
Thou ill wouldst aught design against that steed,
For, while I an avenging sabre rear,
This I prohibit thee, and, should it need,
And every better means of battle fail,
With thee for this would battle, tooth and nail."

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

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

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

LXXXI

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

LXXXII

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

LXXXIII

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

LXXXIV

The king bade Sacripant explain his right,
And how that horse was taken from him sought;
And this from first to last Circassia's knight
Rehearsed, and reddened as the tale he taught,
Relating to the king the robber's sleight;

Who had surprised him overwhelmed with thought,
Upon four spears his courser's saddle stayed,
And from beneath the naked horse conveyed.

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

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

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

LXXXVIII
A squire laced on her helmet, at her hest;
She wore the remnant of her armour sheen;

Nor without martial cuirass on her breast,
Find I, that she ten times was ever seen,
Even from the day when first that iron vest
Braced on her limbs the passing-valiant queen:
With helm on head, where, mid the highest rows,
Brunello sits among the first, she goes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

XCV
Not that he loved the losel or esteemed,
Rather to him some time had borne despite;
And often had to hand the caitiff schemed,
Since he had forfeited the ring of might.
But here his honour touched the monarch deemed,

So that his visage reddened at the slight:
He would, in person, follow her at speed,
And to his utmost power avenge the deed.

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

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

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

XCIX
Right willingly King Agramant gave way
To King Sobrino's counsel sage and staid;

And let renowned Marphisa wend her way,
Nor scathed he, nor let scathe, that martial maid,
Neither endured that any her should pray;
And heaven knows with what courage he obeyed
That wise advice, to calm such ruder strife
And quarrel, as throughout his camp were rife.

C

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

CI

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

CII

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

CIII

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

CIV

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

CV

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

CVI

All know what exploits wrought by him had been
For her in joust and war; they all unsound
And weak King Mandricardo's judgment ween;
But he, who oft was with her on their round,
And oftener private with the youthful queen,

What time the tell-tale sun was under ground,
He, knowing well how sure he was to speed,
Laughed at the silly rabble's idle creed.

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

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

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

CX
Branded with double scorn, before those peers,
By noble Agramant, whose sovereign sway

He, as in loyal duty bound, reveres,
And by his lady on the selfsame day,
There will no more the monarch of Algiers
Abide, but of his band — a large array —
Two serjeants only for his service takes,
And with that pair the paynim camp forsakes.

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

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

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

CXIV

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

CXV

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

CXVI

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

CXVII

Wherever that afflicted paynim goes,
He fills the kindling air with sighs that burn;
And Echo oft, for pity of his woes,
With him from hollow rock is heard to mourn:
"O female mind! how lightly ebbs and flows

Your fickle mood," (he cries,) "aye prone to turn!
Object most opposite to kindly faith!
Lost, wretched man, who trusts you to his scathe!

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

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

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

CXXI
"Yet be not therefore proud and full of scorn
Women, because man issues from your seed;

For roses also blossom on the thorn,
And the fair lily springs from loathsome weed.
Despiteous, proud, importunate, and lorn
Of love, of faith, of counsel, rash in deed,
With that, ungrateful, cruel and perverse,
And born to be the world's eternal curse!"

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

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

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

CXXV

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

CXXVI

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

CXXVII

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

CXXVIII

From bank to bank the stream was covered o'er
With boat of little burden, which conveyed,
For the supply of the invading Moor,
Victual, from many places round purveyed:
Since even from Paris to the pleasant shore

Of Acquamorta, all his rule obeyed;
And — fronting Spain — whate'er of level land
Was seen, extending on the better hand.

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

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

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

CXXXII
Mine host, most diligent in his vocation
Of all the trade who throughout France were known,

(In that he had, 'mid strange and hostile nation,
And every chance of warfare, kept his own)
— Prompt to assist him in his occupation,
Some of his kin had called; whereof was none
Who dared before the warrior speak of aught,
Seeing that paynim mute and lost in thought.

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

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

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

CXXXVI

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

CXXXVII

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

CXXXVIII

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

CXXXIX

"He of his many tales, among the rest,
(Whereof a third is from my memory gone)
So well one story in my head imprest,
It could not be more firmly graved in stone:
And what I thought and think, would be professed

For that ill sex, I ween by every one
Who heard; and, Sir — if pleased to lend an ear —
To their confusion yon that tale shall hear."

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

CANTO 28

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

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

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

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

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

V
"He not so much rejoiced that he in height
Of grandeur was exalted o'er the rest,
And that, for riches, subjects, and for might,
Of all the neighbouring kings he was the best,
As that, superior to each other wight,

He beauty was throughout the world confest.
This pleased the monarch, who the praise conferred,
As that wherein he most delighted, heard.

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

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

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

IX
"Because the youth had ne'er been known to measure,
In all his life, a single pace from Rome;

But, on what Fortune gave him, lived at leisure,
Contented in his own paternal dome;
Nor had diminished nor encreased the treasure,
Wherewith his father had endowed that home;
And he more distant would Paris deem
Than Tanais another would esteem;

X

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

XI

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

XII

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

XIII

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

XIV

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

XV

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

XVI

"And round his neck entreats him, for her sake,
That chain in memory of herself to wind:
Her gift the husband is well pleased to take;
Not that a token needs his love to bind:
For neither time, nor absence, e'er will shake,

Nor whatsoever fortune is behind,
Her memory, which, rooted fast and deep,
He still has kept, and after death will keep.

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

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

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

XX
" `No other but myself my need could do.
Doubt not but I shall speedily be back.'

— No servant took he, but, with an adieu,
Jocundo, at a trot, wheeled round his hack,
And when that cavalier the stream was through,
The rising sun 'gan chase the dusky rack.
At home he lighted, sought his bed, and found
The consort he had quitted sleeping sound.

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

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

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

XXIV

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

XXV

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

XXVI

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

XXVII

"His eye-balls seem deep-buried in his head,
His nose seems grown — his cheeks are pined so sore —
Nor even remains (his beauty so is fled)
Enough to warrant what he was before.
Such fever burns him, of his sorrow bred,

He halts on Arbia's and on Arno's shore;
And, if a charm is left, 'tis faded soon,
And withered like a rose-bud plucked at noon.

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

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

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

XXXI
"Lodged by him in his palace, every day
And every hour, the stranger youth he sees,

Studious to honour him, and bids purvey
Store of provision for his better ease.
While still his thoughts to his ill consort stray,
Jocundo languishes; nor pastimes please
That melancholy man; nor music's strain
One jot diminishes his ceaseless pain.

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

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

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

XXXV

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

XXXVI

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

XXXVII

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

XXXVIII

"One day, amid the rest, the youth surveyed
The dame disordered and opprest with gloom;
Having twice summoned, by her waiting-maid,
The favoured dwarf, who yet delayed to come;
A third time by the lady sent, she said:

— `Engaged at play, Madonna, is the groom,
Nor, lest he lose a doit, his paltry stake,
Will that discourteous churl his game forsake.'

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

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

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

XLII
"The monarch, who to every thing beside
Could better have given credit, freely swore:

To him the cause Jocundo signified,
Why he had many days lamenting sore;
— Because he had his evil wife espied
In the embraces of a serjeant poor;
And vowed he should in fine have died of grief,
If he for longer time had lacked relief.

XLIII
"But that within his highness' palace said,
He had witnessed what had much appeased his woe;
For, if foul shame had fallen upon his head,
At least he was not single; saying so,
He to that chink the Lombard monarch led,
Who spied the mannikin of hideous show.
(Lines 7 & 8 untranslated by Rose)

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

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

XLVI

" `Both fair and youthful, measured by this scale,
Nor easily our equals shall we find;
What woman but to us shall strike her sail,
If even to the ugly these are kind?
At least, if neither youth nor grace avail,
The money may, with which our bags are lined;
Nor will I that we homeward more return,
Ere the chief spoils we from a thousand earn.

XLVII

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

XLVIII

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

XLIX

"By solid proof those comrades ascertain,
Here tarrying for a month, and there for two,
That their own wives are of no other vein
Than those of others, and as chast and true.
After some season, wearied are the twain

With ever running after something new:
For, without risk of death, thus evermore
The intruders ill could enter other's door.

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

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

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

LIII
As yet, upon the bloom of spring, the maid
Was a fresh flower that scarce began to blow:

Her sire with many children was o'erlaid,
And was to poverty a mortal foe.
Hence 'tis an easy matter to persuade
Mine host his buxom daughter to forego,
And let them, where they will the damsel bear;
In that to treat her well the travellers swear.

LIV
(Lines 1-6 untranslated by Rose)
They to Zattiva come upon the day
That from Valencia they had bent their way.

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

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

LVII
"The stripling asked her whitherward they sped,
And of the two which claimed her as his right;
This, point by point, to him Flammetta read;
Flammetta she, the Greek that boy was hight.

` — When I had hoped the time was coming,' said
The Greek — `that I should live with thee, my light,
Flammetta, thou, alas! art lost to me,
Nor know I if I more thy face shall see.

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

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

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

LXI
(Stanza LXI untranslated by Rose)

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

LXIII - LXX
(Stanzas LXIII - LXX untranslated by Rose)

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

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

LXXIII
" `A thousand, beauteous all, have we found kind,
Nor one of those so many has stood fast.
If tried, all women we by proof should find

Like these; but be the experiment our last.
Then we may deem our own not worse inclined
Than are the wives of others, and as chaste:
And, if like others we our own discern,
I hold it best that we to them return.'

LXXIV

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

LXXV

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

LXXVI

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

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

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

LXXIX - LXXXIII
(Stanzas LXXIX - LXXXIII untranslated by Rose)

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

LXXXV
Having stopt further question in this wise,
The paynim monarch from the table rose:
Then lays him on his bed, till from the skies

The dusky shades depart, and morning glows:
But spends a larger part of night in sighs
At his liege-lady's sin, than in repose.
Rodomont thence departs at dawn of day,
Resolved by water to pursue his way.

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

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

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

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

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

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

XCII
To pass to Afric straight, the cavalier
Kept to the right, towards Acquamorta's shore,
And lighted on a stream and hamlet, dear
To Ceres and to Bacchus, which that Moor
Found quitted by the peasants, in their fear,

As often by the soldier harried sore.
The beach upon one side broad ocean laved,
And on the other yellow harvests waved.

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

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

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

XCVI
Who that attendant monk and damsel were,
And what that burden, will to you be clear,

Remembering Isabella is the fair,
Charged with the corse of her Zerbino dear:
I left her, where from Provence, in the care
Of that good sire, she bowned herself to steer,
By whom persuaded, had the lady given
The remnant of her virtuous life to heaven.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CANTO 29

ARGUMENT
Isabel makes the paynim take her head,
Rather than he his wicked will should gain;
Who, having his unhappy error read,

Seeks to appease his wounded spirit in vain.
He builds a bridge, and strips those thither led;
But falls from it with Roland the insane;
Who thence, of him regardless, endlong speeds,
And by the road achieves prodigious deeds.

I

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

II

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

III

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

IV

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

V

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

VI

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

VII

He fell into the sea, by one is said,
Distant three miles and more; and, in that sound,
He having prayer, and Ave vainly made,
Because he knew not how to swim, was drowned.
Others report a Saint bestowed his aid,

And dragged him with a visible hand aground.
Whichever be the reading of this mystery,
Of him I speak no further in mine history.

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

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

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

XI
Sad Isabella in her mind is bent
To slay herself with her own hand, before

That fell barbarian compass his intent;
And be the means to make her wrong so sore
That cavalier, by cruel Fortune spent,
Within her loving arms, to whom she swore
With mind to him devoted, his to be,
Vowing to Heaven perpetual chastity.

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

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

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

XV

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

XVI

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

XVII

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

XVIII

And will maintain his promise, till the fact
Vouched of that wondrous water shall appear;
And force himself, meanwhile, to do no act,
To show no sign of violence; but the peer
Resolves he will not after keep the pact,

As one who holds not God or saint in fear;
And to that king, regardless of his oath,
All lying Afric yields in breach of troth.

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

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

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

XXII
To Argier's warlike king, unused to wine,
(Cursed, and forbidden by his law, esteemed)

The liquor, tasted once, appeared divine,
Sweeter than nectar or than manna seemed:
He, quaffing largely, now of Ishmael's line
The sober use deserving censure deemed.
So fast their cups with that good wine they fill,
Each reveller's head is whirling like a mill.

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

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

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

XXVI

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

XXVII

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

XXVIII

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

XXIX

"I will that all, in every future age,
Who bear thy name, be blest with genius high;
Be courteous, gentle, beautiful, and sage,
And to the real pitch of honour fly.
That to their glory the historic page

They may with worthy argument supply;
So that for aye Parnassus' hill and well
Shall ring with Isabel and Isabel."

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

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

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

XXXIII
This nearly imitates that pile beside
Old Tyber's stream, by Adrian built; and nigh

The sepulchre, will he a tower provide,
Wherein he purposes some time to lie.
A narrow bridge, and only two yards wide,
He flung across the stream which rolled fast by.
Long, but so scanty is that bridge, with pain
The narrow pass two coursers can contain;

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

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

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

XXXVII

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

XXXVIII

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

XXXIX

If those he conquers are of pagan strain,
He is content to take their arms and vest:
And of those first arrived the titles plain
Are written, and their arms suspended rest.
But he in prison pens the christened train,
('Twould seem) to be to Argier's realm addrest.
Not yet was brought that building to a head
When thitherward the crazed Orlando sped.

XL

It chanced Orlando, in his furious mood,
Came thither where that foaming river ran;
Where Rodomont beside the mighty flood
Was hurrying on his work; nor yet were done
The tower and tomb, the bridge, scarce finished, stood:

Here — save his casque was open — Ulien's son
Steeled cap-a-pee, stood ready armed for fight,
When to the bridge approached Anglantes' knight.

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

XLII
"Only for lord and cavalier was made,
And not for thee, dull slave, that bridge was meant."
To this no heed insane Orlando paid,
But, fixt upon his purpose, forward went.
"This madman must I school," the paynim said,
And was approaching with the fell intent
Him into that deep river to dispatch,
Nor deeming in such foe to find his match.

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

XLIV
When Flordelice that bridge and tower was near,
(So was by name the wandering damsel hight)

Grappling with Roland stood the Sarzan peer,
And would into that river pitch the knight.
She, conversant with Brava's cavalier,
The miserable county knew aright;
And mighty marvel in that dame it raised
To see him rove, a naked man and crazed.

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

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

XLVII
Roland, whose better wit was lost withal,
I know no where, and who used force alone;
That utmost force, to which this earthly ball
Haply affords few paragons, or none,
Let himself backwards in that struggle fall,
Embracing as he stood with Ulien's son.
Together in the foaming stream they sank;
High flashed the wave, and groaned the echoing bank.

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

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

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

LI
Much country had been traversed by the knight,
Urged by the furious rage which him misguides:
At last he reached the hill whose boundary height
Arragonese and neighbouring Frank divides.
Thither directing aye his course outright,

Where the descending sun his visage hides,
He reached a path upon the rugged steep,
Which overhung a valley dark and deep.

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

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

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

LV
That other to a jutting fragment clung,
Who so to gain the higher steep would strive;

Because he hopes, if once those crags among,
To keep him from that fool he may contrive;
But by the feet Orlando, ere he sprung,
Seized him, who will not leave the wretch alive;
And stretching them as wide as he could strain,
So stretched his arms, he rent his prey in twain.

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

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

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

LIX

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

LX

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

LXI

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

LXII

The youth, that sees him chase his love who fled,
His courser spurs, and in pursuit is gone.
With naked faulchion after him he sped,
And cut and thrust at Roland as he run.
He from his shoulders hoped to cleave his head,

But found the madman's skin as hard as bone;
Yea, harder far than steel, nor to be harmed;
So good Orlando at his birth was charmed.

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

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

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

LXVI
If but two inches short had fallen his prey,
Upon her would have pounced Orlando near;

Who would have crushed her in his furious way,
But that kind Fortune saved her from the peer.
Let her by other theft herself purvey
With other palfrey, as she did whilere;
For never will she have this courser more,
Who chased by swift Orlando scours the shore.

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

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

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

LXX

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

LXXI

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

LXXII

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

LXXIII

As much, or little less, would do the knight
By his own love, did not that damsel hide;
Because the wretch discerns not black from white,
And harms where he would help. A curse betide
The wonder-working ring, and eke the wight

Who gave it to that lady, full or pride!
Since Roland, but for this, would venge the scorn
He and a thousand more from her had borne.

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

CANTO 30

ARGUMENT
Great feats achieve Orlando by the way.
The Tartar king is by Rogero slain:
For whom fair Bradamant, his spouse, does stay,
But Fate forbade, that he who wounded lay
To her his plighted promise should maintain.
He after boldly with the brethren made,
Their lord Rinaldo in his need to aid.

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

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

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

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

V
And he, who could like any otter swim,
Leapt in and rose upon the further side.
Behold! a mounted shepherd at the brim
Arrived, his horse to water in the tide;
Nor when he saw Orlando coming, him

Eschewed, whom naked and alone he spied.
— "My jennet for thy hackney were I fain
To barter," cried the madman to the swain:

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

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

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

IX
He came at last to Malaga, and here
Did mightier scathe than he had done elsewhere;

For now — besides that the infuriate peer
Of all its people left the country bare,
Nor (such the ravage) could another year
The desperate havoc of the fool repair —
So many houses burnt he, or cast down,
Sacked was a third of that unhappy town.

X

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

XI

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

XII

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

XIII

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

XIV

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

XV

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

XVI

Leave we the paladin at will to stray!
To speak of him occasion will come round.
— Sir, what befel the lady of Catay,
Who scaped, in time, from him of wit unsound,
And afterwards, upon her homeward way,

Was with good bark and better weather bound;
And how she made Medoro, India's king;
Perchance some voice in happier verse may sing.

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

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

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

XX
Rogero brooks not that in other fight
His shield be braced, nor will Gradasso bear

That save against himself the Tartar knight
Should wield the sword Orlando used to wear
"See we, in fine, on whom the chance will light
(Cries Agramant) and further words forbear.
How Fortune rules the matter let us see,
And choose him that of her shall chosen be.

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

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

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

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

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

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

XXVII
The foolish rabble anxiously attends
Those goodly champions' contest for the prize,
A crowd which neither sees nor comprehends
Other than that which is before its eyes.
But they who know what boots and what offends,

— Marsilius and Sobrino, and the wise —
Censure the fight, and monarch that affords
A field of combat to those martial lords.

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

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

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

XXXI
But more than king, than all, who sought in vain
To soften Agrican's infuriate son,

The beauteous daughter of King Stordilane
Lamented, besought him, woe-begone,
Besought him he would do what all would fain
Behold by the relenting warrior done;
— Lamenting her, as through the cavalier,
For ever kept in agony and fear.

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

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

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

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

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

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

XXXVIII
"Alack! my dearest life! take thou no dread,
Alack! for love of Heaven! of thing so light:
For if (to my sole harm) with banners spread,
Their following of the Frank or paynim rite
King Agramant and Charles united led,

This need not cause you matter for affright.
What poor account you make of me is clear
If this one, sole, Rogero breeds such fear.

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

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

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

XLII
"Ah! as I might have won you from my foe,
Why did I not for you in arms contend?

I so had them my valour shown, I know,
You would have well foreseen Rogero's end.
For heaven's sake dry your tears, nor by such woe
— An evil omen for my arms — offend;
And learn, 'tis Honour pricks me to the field,
And not an argent bird and blazoned shield."

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

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

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

XLVI

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

XLVII

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

XLVIII

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

XLIX

As Turpin truly writes, into the sky
Upwent the splinters, broke in the career;
For two or three fell flaming from on high,
Which had ascended to the starry sphere.
The knights unsheathed their faulchions from the thigh,

And, like those who were little moved by fear,
For new encounter wheeled, and, man to man,
Pointing at one another's vizor ran.

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

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

LII
But yet no stroke well worthy of their might
Those peers have dealt, so cautious are the twain.
The Tartar's faulchion was the first to bite,
By which was good Rogero well nigh slain.
By one of those fell blows which either knight
So well could plant, his shield was cleft in twain;
Beneath, his cuirass opened to the stroke,
And to the quick the cruel weapon broke.

LIII
The assistants' hearts were frozen at the blow,
So did Rogero's danger them appal,

On whom the many's favor, well they know,
And wishes rest, if not of one and all.
And then (had Fortune ordered matters so,
As the most part desired they should befall)
Taken had been the Tartar king or slain;
So had that blow offended all the train.

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

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

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

LVII

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

LVIII

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

LIX

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

LX

Whate'er that sword takes-in it shears outright,
And in the Tartar's side inflicts a wound:
He curses Heaven and raves in such despite,
Less horribly the boisterous billows sound.
He now prepares to put forth all his might:

The shield, with argent bird and azure ground,
He hurls, with rage transported, from his hand,
And grasps with right and left his trenchant brand.

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

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

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

LXIV
He the left side of his good cuirass gored,
And found a passage to the heart below;

Which a full palm above the flank he bored;
So that parforce the Tartar must forego
His every title to the famous sword,
The blazoned buckler, and its bird of snow,
And yield, together with these seeds of strife,
— Dearer than sword and shield — his precious life.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LXXI
Nor to Rogero lean the men alone;
To him incline as well the female train,
Who for the land of France had left their own,
Amid the troops of Africk or of Spain;
And Doralice, herself, although she moan,

And for her lover, cold and pale, complain,
Save by the griding curb of shame represt,
Her voice, perchance, had added to the rest.

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

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

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

LXXV
With Mandricardo's arms, his other weed
Was to Rogero given, and given with these

Was warlike Brigliador, whom on the mead
Orlando left, distraught with his disease.
To Agramant Rogero gave the steed,
Well knowing how that goodly gift would please.
No more of this: parforce my strain returns
To her that vainly for Rogero burns.

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

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

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

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

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

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

` LXXXII
"Alas! alas! Rogero, that above
Myself hast evermore been prized by me,
Who would have thought thou more than me could'st love
Any, and most thy mortal enemy?

And harm'st where thou should'st help; nor do I see
If thou as worthy praise or blame regard
Such tardiness to punish and reward.

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

LXXXIV
To her Rogero, in his absence, said
The lady these sad words, and more beside,
Lamenting aye; while her attendant maid
Nor once alone, but often, certified
The stripling would observe his faith, and prayed
Her — who could do no better — to abide
The Child's arrival till the time came round
When he by promise to return was bound.

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

LXXXVI
But in that he his promise ill maintained,
No blame upon Rogero should be cast;

Him one or other cause so long detained,
The appointed time parforce he overpast:
On a sick bed, long time, he, sorely pained,
Was laid, wherein a month or more he past
In doubt of death; so deeply him had gored
Erewhile in fight the Tartar monarch's sword.

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

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

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

XC

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

XCI

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

XCII

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

XCIII

His course to Mont Albano had he ta'en;
And, there embracing wife and children dear,
Mother and brethren and the cousins twain,
(They who were captives to their foe whilere)
A parent swallow seems, amid that train,

Which, with full beak, its fasting youth doth cheer.
With them a day or more the warrior stayed,
Then issued forth and others thence conveyed.

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

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

CANTO 31

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

I

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

II

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

III

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

IV

Scorn, and repulse, and finally each pain
Of suffering love, his every martyrdom,
Through recollection, make us entertain
Delights with greater rapture, when they come.
But if weak mind be poisoned by that bane,

That filthy pest, conceived in Stygian home,
Though joy ensue, with all its festive pleasures,
The wretched lover ill his comfort measures.

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

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

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

VIII
The following day they met a cavalier,
Towards evening, with a lady by his side;

Sable his shield, and sable was his gear,
Whose ground a bar of silver did divide.
As foremost, and of seeming force, the peer,
Young Richardetto to the joust defend:
He, prompt for battle, wheeled his courser round,
And for the tourney took sufficient ground.

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

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

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

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

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

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

XV
And to his foe, that having wheeled anew,
Approached with hand unarmed, the warrior cried:
"Sir, to the goodly courser whom ye slew,
Because, whenas he lived, he was my pride,
I deem, I ill should render honour due,

If thus unvenged by my good arm he died;
And so fall on, and do as best ye may,
For we parforce must meet in new assay."

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

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

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

XIX
To that king paladin with praise replied
The stranger peer; alighting on the plain,

Rinaldo to the valet, at his side,
Consigned the goodly steed Baiardo's rein,
And when his banner he no longer spied,
Now widely distant with the warrior's train,
His buckler braced, his biting faulchion drew,
And to the field defied the knight anew.

XX

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

XXI

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

XXII

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

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

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

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

XXVI
He of Mount Alban is the first to say,
They should not combat darkling, on the plain;
But should their duel till such time delay
As slow Arcturus should have turned his wain.
(And adds,) as safely as himself might stay

The foe in his pavilion, of his train
As duly tended, honoured, and well seen,
As he in any place had ever been.

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

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

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

XXX
Sir Guido, when he knew his host to be
Rinaldo, famed above each famous knight,

Whom he had burned with more desire to see
Than ever blindman covets the lost light,
In rapture cries, "What fortune tempted me
With you, my lord, to strive in deadly fight,
Whom long I have beloved, and love, whose worth
I prize above all dwellers' upon earth?

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

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

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

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

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

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

XXXVI
So one day and another prick the train,
That they to Paris' leaguered gates are nigh,
Scarce ten miles distant, on the banks of Seine;
When, as good Fortune wills it, they descry
Gryphon and Aquilant, the two that stain

Their virtuous armour with a different dye;
Sable was Aquilant's, white Gryphon's, weed;
Good Olivier's and Sigismonda's seed.

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

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

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

XLI
They — erst at feud and with sore hate possest,
Through Truffaldino — (which were long to say)

Each other with fraternal love carest,
Now putting all their enmity away.
Rinaldo next Sir Sansonet addrest,
Who somewhat later joined that fair array;
And (knowing well his force and mighty thew)
Received the cavalier with honour due.

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

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

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

XLV

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

XLVI

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

XLVII

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

XLVIII

By accident, so strange and sad, distrust,
Rinaldo is distraught with ceaseless woe:
He feels his heart dissolve within his breast,
As in the sun dissolves the flake of snow;
And, with unchanged resolve, upon the quest

Of good Orlando, every where will go;
In hopes, if he discover him, to find
Some means of cure for his distempered mind.

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

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

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

LII
At the first charge on that unchristened band,
Their guard and sentries, taken by surprise,

So broken are by good Rinaldo's brand,
No wight is left, save he who slaughtered lies.
Their first post forced, the paynims understand
No laughing matter is the lord's emprize;
For. sleeping and dismaid, their naked swarms
Make small resistance to such warriors' arms.

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

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

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

LVI

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

LVII

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

LVIII

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

LIX

Tidings to Charles Rinaldo had conveyed,
That he for Paris with his squadron steers,
To assail, by night, the paynims ill purveyed;
And ready and in arms the king appears.
He, when his help is needed, comes in aid,

With all his peerage, and, beside his peers,
Brings Monodantes' son, amid that crew,
Of Flordelice the lover chaste and true;

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

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

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

LXIII
She tells him how the perilous bridge's floor
From cavaliers king Rodomont defends;

Where, on a pompous sepulchre, the Moor
His prisoners' ravished arms and vest suspends;
Tells how she saw Orlando, raging sore,
Do fearful deeds, and her relation ends,
Describing how the paynim fell reversed,
To his great peril, in the stream immersed.

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

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

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

LXVII

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

LXVIII

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

LXIX

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

LXX

When either steed would nimbly spring from ground,
As the spur galled and gored his bleeding flank,
He on that little bridge no footing found;
For all to narrow was the scanty plank.
Hence both fall headlong, and the deafening sound

Re-echo vaulted skies and grassy bank.
So rang our stream, when from the heavenly sphere
Was hurled the sun's ill-fated charioteer.

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

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

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

LXXIV
"Ah! courteous lord! if e'er you loved withal,
Have pity upon me who love this peer;

Let it suffice that he become thy thrall!
For if thou on this stone suspend his gear,
Amid whatever spoils adorn the wall,
The best and worthiest will his spoils appear."
She ended, and her prayer so well addrest,
It touched, though hard to move, the paynim's breast.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LXXXI
Uncounselled and confused, the king arrayed
His naked limbs in knightly plate and chain,
When thither Falsiron, the Spaniard, made
Grandonio, Balugantes, and their train:
They to the Moorish king the risk displayed

Of being taken in that press, or slain;
And vouched if thence he should in safety fare,
He well might thank propitious Fortune's care.

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

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

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

LXXXV
Those whom Rinaldo, whom his brethren slew,
Whom Oliviero's sons, the valiant twain,

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

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

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

LXXXVIII
Their king forgets no, how Rogero lay
Sore wounded, and as yet in evil case.
Him, with what care they could, he made convey
From that dread field, on horse of easy pace.
Borne to the sea by the securest way,
They in a bark the suffering warrior place,
And thence commodiously to Arles transport;
Whither their wasted squadrons make resort.

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

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

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

XCII
Hence had that king repaired to the sea-shore,
The place assigned to end their discord fell:
But all was marred by Malagigi's lore;
Who, cheating good Rinaldo with a spell,
To sea the champion in a pinnace bore.

Too tedious were the tale at length to tell.
Hence evermore Gradasso had opined,
The gentle baron was of craven kind.

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

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

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

XCVI
"Belike thou hoped," (said he of Sericane,)
"If for that time my vengeance thou couldst fly,

We should not meet in this wide world again:
But we are met, thou seest, anew; and I,
Be sure, though thou shouldst seek the Stygian reign,
Or be from earth translated to the sky,
Will hunt thee, save that courser thou forego,
Be it through heaven above or hell below.

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

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

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

C

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

CI

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

CII

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

CIII

The king of Sericane, as loath to leave
The second quarrel for the former breach,
Though doubtful how that tale he should receive,
Takes in good part the bold Rinaldo's speech.
Not, as upon the former battle's eve,

They choose their ground on Barcellona's beach:
But on the morn ensuing, and, fast by
A neighbouring fountain, will the question try.

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

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

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

CVII
It seemed Rinaldo's friends were all in fear,
And dreaded much, before it was begun,

The issue of the fight their cavalier
Should wage against Gradasso, one to one.
Much force, much daring, and much skill appear
In that fierce king; and since of Milo's son
The goodly sword was to his girdle tied,
All cheeks looked pale upon Rinaldo's side;

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

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

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

CANTO 32

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

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

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

III
But it behoves, ere more of these be said,
I should awhile of Agramant discourse,
Who had from that night's raging fire conveyed

To Arles, the remnant of his scattered force:
Since to unite his troops, and furnish aid
And victual, 'twas a place of much resource,
Seated upon a river, nigh the shore,
With Spain in front and Africa before.

IV

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

V

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

VI

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

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

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

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

X
This while does good duke Aymon's daughter mourn,
Because those twenty days so slowly trail:
— Which term elapsed — Rogero should return,
And be received into her church's pale.
Time halts not more with him to foreign bourne

Exiled, with prisoner pent in noisome jail,
Pines the poor wretch for liberty and light,
Or his loved land, desired and gladsome sight!

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

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

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

XIV
When, saving some four days, the term was ended,
Appointed for the youthful warrior's stay,

She, full of hope, the messenger attended
From hour to hour, that should arrive, and say,
"Behold Rogero comes"; and oft ascended
A turret, from whose top she might survey
Gay champaign, wood, and, mid the wide expanse,
A portion of the road, that led to France.

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

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

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

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

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

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

XXI
"But, woe is me, alas! and, what can I
Save my irrational desire lament?
Which makes me soar a pitch so passing high,
I reach a region, where my plumes are brent;
Then, unsustained, fall headlong from the sky;

Nor ends my woe; on other flight intent,
Again I imp my wings, again I soar;
To flame and fall, tormented evermore.

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

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

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

XXV
"Both Merlin and Melissa have I need
To blame, and shall for ever blame the twain,

That, to exhibit suckers of my seed,
Conjured up spirits from infernal reign,
Who with this empty hope my fancy feed,
Me in perpetual bondage to detain.
Nor other cause for this can I suppose,
Save that they grudge me safe and sweet repose."

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

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

XXVIII
Bound homeward from the hostile camp, where lay
King Agramant, she met a Gascon knight,
A prisoner to those paynims, from the day,
That fought nigh Paris was the famous fight.
The damsel prest him all he knew to say:
Then to the point she covets led the knight:
Asks of Rogero, on that theme abides,
Listens to that, not aught inquires besides.

XXIX

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

XXX

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

XXXI

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

XXXII

What he rehearsed, the Gascon knight believed,
Nor without cause believed the news he bore,
A rumour universally received
And bruited through the squadrons of the Moor;
Who had that notion of their love conceived

From signs of kindness witnessed evermore.
For — good or bad — though from one mouth it flows,
Fame to a boundless torrent quickly grows.

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

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

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

XXXVI
Turned on her face, her body on the bed,
Armed as she is, the grieving damsel throws,

And that the sad lament by sorrow bred,
May be unheard of any, bites the clothes;
And so, repeating what the stranger said,
To such a pitcher her smothered anguish grows,
Her plaints no longer able to restrain,
So vents the maid parforce her piteous pain:

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

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

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

XL

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

XLI

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

XLII

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

XLIII

"Thou hast left me, Rogero; thee to leave,
Alas! I neither will nor power possess.
But will and power have I my life to reave,
To scape from this o'erwhelming wretchedness.
To die at strife with thee alone I grieve:

For, had the gods so pleased my lot to bless,
As to require my life, when loved of thee,
Never so welcome had been death to me."

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

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

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

XLVII
The vest is of that colour which is spied
In leaf, when gray and yellow are at strife;

When it is gathered from the branch, or dried
Is the green blood, that was it's parent's life.
Embroidered is the surcoat's outer side
With stems of cypress which disdain the knife;
Which shoot not, when by biting steel laid low.
A habit well according with her woe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

LIV
"In France, in royal Charles's famous court,
The damsel hopes to find the cavalier,
Who in a thousand feats of high report
Has shown that he excels each puissant peer.
All three are monarchy who the dame escort,

And what their kingdoms ye as well shall hear.
One Sweden rules, one Gothland, Norway one;
Surpast in martial praise by few or none.

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

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

LVII
" `To Charlemagne, whom I esteem and hold
As wisest among reigning kings, by me
Shall be dispatched a costly shield of gold,
On pact and on condition, that it be
Bestowed on him, deemed boldest of the bold,
Amid the martial ranks of chivalry.
Serves the king Charlemagne or other lord,
I will be governed by that king's award.

LVIII
" `If when King Charles the buckler shall receive
And give to one so stout, that best among

All others he that warrior shall believe,
Do they to his or other court belong.
For me the golden buckler shall retrieve
One of you three, in his own virtue strong;
My every love and thought shall he possess;
Him for my spouse and lord will I confess.'

LIX
"Moved by these stirring speeches, hither hie
From that wide-distant sea, those monarchs bold,
Resolved to win the buckler, or to die
Beneath his hand who has that shield of gold."
Bradamant ponders much the squire's reply:
He give his horse the head — his story told —
And plies him so with restless heel and hand,
He overtakes the damsel's distant band.

LX
After him gallops not, nor hurries ought,
Bradamant, who pursues her road at ease:
Much evermore evolving in her thought
Things that may chance, she finally foresees
That through the buckler by that damsel brought,
Will follow strife and boundless enmities,
Amid king Charles's peerage and the rest,
If with that shield he shall reward the best.

LXI
This grieved the damsel's heart, but far above
That grief, the former fear her heard did goad;
That young Rogero had withdrawn his love
From her, and on the warlike queen bestowed.
So buried in the thoughts wherewith she strove,
Was Bradamant, she heeded nor her road,
Nor took she care where, at the close of light,
To find befitting shelter for the night.

LXII
As when from squall, or other chance, a barge
Drives from the river-side, where late it lay,
Under no mariner or pilot's charge,
The winds and waves at will transport their prey;
So Rabican with Bradamant, at large,
— She musing on Rogero — wends his way.
For thence, by many miles, was distant wide
That mind which should her courser's bridle guide.

LXIII
She raised her eyes at last, and saw the sun
Had turned his back on Bocchus' towers and wall;
Then, like a cormorant, his journey done,
Into his nurse's lap beheld him fall,
Beyond Marocco; and for her to run
To tree, for shelter from the rising squall,
Had been a foolish thought; for now 'gan blow
A blustering wind, which threatened rain or snow.

LXIV
To better speed fair Bradamant aroused
Her courser, yet but little way did ride,
When with his flock, which on the champaign browsed,
Leaving the fields, a shepherd she espied.
To him where, well or ill, she might be housed,
— With many instances the maid applied —
For never house could such ill shelter yield,
But that in rain 'twere worse to lodge afield.

LXV
To her the shepherd said, "I know of none
Whereto I could direct you, near at hand.
At least six leagues are distant all, but one,
Named TRISTRAM'S TOWER, throughout the neighbouring land.
But not to all men is the door undone;

For it behoves that they, with lance in hand,
Achieve their footing first and the defend,
Who to be lodged within its walls pretend.

LXVI
"If there be room within, to stranger knight
The castellain gives kindly welcome there:
But is a lodging claimed by other wight,
To joust with all new comers makes him swear:
If none, he need not move; but arms and fight
He must what stranger thither shall repair;
And he that worst his warlike arms shall ply,
Must wander forth beneath the naked sky.

LXVII
"If two. three, four, or more, seek shelter, they
That first arrive, in peace their quarters take.
Who follows, has a harder game to play;
For war upon those many must he make.
So, if one only in that mansion stay,
He with those two, or more, a lance must break.
Then with as many others as succeed:
Thus he what strength he has shall sorely need.

LXVIII
"As well, if wife or maid seek that repair,
(Is she alone, is she accompanied),
And afterwards another, the most fair
Is housed; that other must without abide."
Bradamant asked the kindly shepherd where
That castle stood; and he with signs replied
As well as words, and pointed with his hand
Where, five or six miles wide, the tower did stand.

LXIX
Though Rabican's good paces merit praise,
To hurry him the damsel had no skill,

By those so passing foul and broken ways,
(By season somewhat rainy rendered ill)
So, as to reach the tower, ere Night o'erlays
The world, whose every nook dark shadows fill.
Arrived, that lady finds the portal barred,
And that she seeks a lodging tells the guard.

LXX

He answers that the place is occupied
By dame and knight already housed, who, met
About the fire, in that chill evening-tide,
Wait till their supper be before them set.
To him that maid: "The board is not supplied,
I deem, for them, unless the meal be eat.
Now, say I wait their coming." (she pursues,)
Who know and will observe your castle's use."

LXXI

The guard his message bore, where at their ease
Reposed the weary cavaliers; his tale
Not overlikely was those kings to please;
For cold and peevish blew the wintry gale,
And now fast fell the rain; yet, forced to seize
Their arms, they slowly don the martial mail.
The rest remain within; while they proceed
Against the damsel, but with little speed.

LXXII

Three cavaliers they were, of might so tried,
Few champions but to them in prowess yield,
The same that she that very day, beside
The courier maid, encountered in the field,
They that in Iceland boasted, in their pride,
To bear away from France the golden shield:
Who (for they had the martial maid outrode)
Arrived before her at that lord's abode.

LXXIII

In feats of arms few warriors were more stout;
But she besure will be among those few,
She, that on no account will wait without,
Fasting and wet, night's weary watches through.
Within from window and from lodge, the rout
Look forth, and will the joust by moonlight view,
Which streams from underneath a covering cloud;
Albeit the furious rain beats fast and loud.

LXXIV

Such transport as the longing gallant cheers,
About to seize the stolen fruits of love,
When, after long delay, the listener hears
The bold within its socket softly move,
Such transport cheered her, of those cavaliers
The prowess and the pith a-fire to prove,
When now the opened portals she descried,
And drawbridge dropt, and issuing knights espied.

LXXV

When she beheld, how, of the drawbridge clear
Those knights, together or scarce sundered, came,
She took her ground; and next in fierce career,
With flowing bridle, drove the furious dame,
Levelling against those kings that virtuous spear,
Her cousin's gift, which never missed its aim;
Whose touch each warrior must unseat parforce;
Yea Mars, should Mars contend in mortal course.

LXXVI

The king of Sweden, foremost of those knights,
In falling too is foremost of the train;
With such surpassing force his helmet smites
That spear, which never yet was couched in vain.
Gothland's good king next meets the maid, and lights

With feet in air, at distance on the plain.
The third (unhorsed by Aymon's beauteous daughter)
Half buried lies in mire and marshy water.

LXXVII
When at three strokes she had unhorsed them all,
Lighting with head on earth and heels in air,
Retiring from the field, she sought the Hall,
In search of lodging; but, ere harboured there,
To issue forth, at whosoever's call,
Is, by the warder's hest, obliged to swear.
That lord who well had weighed her famous feats,
The damsel with surpassing honour greets.

LXXVIII
So does by her the lady, that erewhile
Had thither journeyed, with those monarchs three,
As I related, sent from the LOST ISLE
To France's king, upon an embassy.
Kind as she is and affable of style,
She renders back the stranger's courtesy;
Rises to welcome her with smiling air,
And to the fire conducts that warlike fair.

LXXIX
As Bradamant unarms, and first her shield,
And after puts her polished casque away,
A caul of shining gold, wherein concealed
And clustering close, her prisoned tresses lay,
She with the helmet doffs; and now revealed,
(While the long locks about her shoulders play,)
A lovely damsel by that band is seen,
No fiercer in affray than fair of mien.

LXXX
As when the stage's curtain is uprolled,
Mid thousand lamps, appears the mimic scene,

Adorned with arch and palace, pictures, gold,
And statues; or, as limpid and serene
The sun his visage, glorious to behold,
Unveils, emerging from a cloudy screen;
So when the lady doffs her iron case,
All paradise seems opened in her face.

LXXXI
Already so well-grown and widely spread
Were the bright tresses which the hermit shore,
These, gathered in a knot, behind her head,
Though shorter than their wont, the damsel wore;
And he, that castle's master, plainly read,
(Who often had beheld her face before)
That this was Bradamant; and now he paid
Yet higher honours to the martial maid.

LXXXII
With modest and with mirthful talk this while,
Seated about the fire, they feed the ear;
And in this way the weary time beguile
Till they are heartened with more solid cheer.
If new or ancient were his castle's style,
(Bradamant asks the courteous cavalier)
By whom begun, and how it took its rise?
And thus that castellain to her replies.

LXXXIII
"When Pharamond of France possessed the throne,
His son, prince Clodion, had a mistress rare;
And damsel in that ancient age was none
More graceful, beauteous, or more debonair;
So loved of Pharamond's enamoured son,
That he lost sight no oftener of the fair
Than Io's shepherd of his charge whilere:
For jealous as enamoured was the peer.

LXXXIV

"Her in this mansion, which his sire bestowed,
He kept, and rarely issued from his rest:
With him were lodged ten cavaliers, allowed
Through France to be the boldest and the best.
Hither, while in this castle he abode,
Sir Tristram and a dame their course addrest:
Whom from a furious giant, in her need,
Short time before that gentle knight had freed.

LXXXV

"Sir Tristram and his lady reached the Hall,
When now the sun had Seville left behind.
They for admission on the porter call,
Since they for ten miles round no shelter find,
But Clodion, that loved much, and was withal
Sore jealous, was determined in his mind
No stranger in his keep should ever inn,
So long as that fair lady lodged therein.

LXXXVI

"When, after long entreaties made in vain,
The castellain refused to house the knight,
He said, `What supplication cannot gain,
I hope to make thee do in they despite';
And loudly challenged him, with all his train,
Those ten which he maintained, to bloody fight;
Offering, with levelled lance and lifted glaive,
To prove Sir Clodion a discourteous knave;

LXXXVII

"On pact, if he sate fast, and overthrown
Should be the warder, and his warlike rout,
He in that castle should be lodged alone,
And Clodion with his knights remain without.
Against him goes the king of France's son,

At risque of death, to venge that galling flout;
But falls astound; the rest partake his fate,
And on the losers Tristram bars the gate.

LXXXVIII
"Entering the tower, he finds her harboured there
Whereof I spake, so dear in Clodion's eyes;
Whom SHE had equalled with the loveliest fair,
Nature, so niggard of such courtesies.
With her Sir Tristram talks, while fell despair
Aye racks the houseless prince in horrid wise.
Who prays the conquering knight, with suppliant cry,
Not to his arms the damsel to deny.

LXXXIX
"Though she small worth in Tristram's sight possess,
Nor any, saving Yseult, please his sight,
Nor other dame to love or to caress,
The philtre, drunk erewhile, allows the knight;
Yet, for he would that foul discourteousness
Of Clodion with a fit revenge requite,
He cries, `I deem it were foul wrong and sore,
If so such beauty I should shut the door.

XC
" `And, should Sir Clodion grieve beneath the tree
To lodge alone, and company demand;
Although less beautiful, I have with me
A fair and youthful damsel, here at hand,
Who, I am well content, his mate shall be,
And do in all things, as he shall command.
But she that is most fair to the most strong,
Meseemeth, in all justice should belong.'

XCI
"Shut out all night, the moody Clodion strayed,
Puffing and pacing round his lofty tower,

As if that prince the sentinel had played
On them, that slept at ease in lordly bower:
Him, sorer far than wind and cold dismayed
That lovely lady's loss in Tristram's power:
But he, with pity touched, upon the morrow,
Rendered her back, and so relieved his sorrow.

XCII
"Because, he said, and made it plain appear,
Such as he found her, he returned the fair;
And though for his discourtesy whilere,
Clodion had every scorn deserved to bear,
He was content with having made the peer
Outwatch the weary night in open air.
Accepting not that cavalier's excuse,
Who would have thrown on Love his castle's use.

XCIII
"For Love should make a churlish nature kind,
And not transform to rude a gentle breast.
When Tristram hence was gone, not long behind
Remained the enamoured prince who changed his rest:
But first he to a cavalier consigned
The tower; whereof that baron he possest,
On pact, that he and his in the domain
Henceforth this usage ever should maintain;

XCIV
"That cavalier of greater heart and power
Should in this hall be harboured without fail:
They that less worthy were should void the tower,
And seek another inn, by hill or dale.
In fine, that law was fixt, which to this hour
Endures, as you have seen"; while so his tale
To Bradamant recounts that castle's lord,
The sewer with savoury meats has heaped the board.

XCV
In the great hall that plenteous board was laid,
(None fairer was in all the world beside)
Then came where those beauteous ladies stayed,
And them, with torches lit, did thither guide.
On entering, Bradamant the room surveyed,
And she, that other fair, on every side;
Who as they gaze about the gorgeous hall
Filled full of picture, mark each storied wall.

XCVI
So beauteous are the figures, that instead
Of eating, on the painted walls they stare;
Albeit of meat they have no little need,
Who wearied sore with that day's labour are.
With grief the sewer, with grief the cook takes heed,
How on the table cools the untasted fare.
Nay, there is one amid the crowd, who cries,
"First fill your bellies, and then feast your eyes."

XCVII
The guests were placed, and now about to eat,
When suddenly bethought that castellain,
To house two damsels were a thing unmeet;
One lady must dislodge, and one remain;
The fairest stay, and she least fair retreat.
Where howls the wind, where beats the pattering rain.
Because they separate came, 'tis ordered so:
One lady must remain, one lady go.

XCVIII
The lord some matrons of his household crew
Calls, with two elders, in such judgments wise;
He marks the dames, and bids them of the two
Declare which is most beauteous in their eyes;
And all, upon examination due,

Cry, Aymon's daughter best deserves the prize,
And vouch as she in might those kings outweighed,
No less in beauty she surpassed the maid.

XCIX
The warder cries to that Islandic dame,
Who of her sentence has a shrewd suspicion,
"O lady, let it be no cause of blame,
That we observe our usage and condition;
To seek some other rest must be thine aim,
Since, by our universal band's admission,
Though unadorned that martial maid be seen,
Thou canst not match her charms and lovely mien."

C
As in a moment's time a cloud obscure
Steams from the bottom of some marshy dale,
Which the sun's visage, late so bright and pure,
Mantles all over with its dingy veil;
So that poor damsel, sentenced to endure,
Without, the pelting shower and blustering gale,
Is seen to change her cheer, and is no more
The fair and mirthful maid she was before.

CI
The maid turns pale, and all her colour flies,
Who dreads so stern a sentence to obey:
But generous Bradamant, in prudent guise,
Who could not bear to see her turned away,
Cried to that baron, "Partial and unwise
Your judgment seems, as well all judgments may,
Wherein the losing party has not room
To plead before the judge pronounces doom.

CII
"I, who this cause take on me to defend,
Say (whether fairer or less fair I be)

I came not as a woman, nor intend
That now mine actions shall be womanly.
But, saving I undress, who shall pretend
To say I am or am not such as she?
Neither should aught be said but what we know,
And least of all what works another woe.

CIII
"Many, as well as I, long tresses wear,
Yet are not therefore women; if, as guest,
I have admittance gained to your repair,
Like woman or like man, is manifest:
Then why should I the name of woman bear,
That in my actions stand a man confest?
'Tis ruled that woman should a woman chase;
Nor that a knight a woman should displace.

CIV
"Grant we (what I confess not howsoe'er)
That you the woman in my visage read;
But that in beauty I am not her peer:
Not therefore, deem I, of my valour's meed
Ye would deprive me, though in beauteous cheer
The palm I to that damsel should concede
'Twere hard, before I yield to her in charms,
That I should forfeit what I won in arms.

CV
"And if it be your usage, that the dame
Who yields in beauty, from your tower must wend,
Here to remain I my design to proclaim,
Should my resolve have good or evil game,
Hence I infer, unequal were the game,
If she and I in beauty should contend:
For if such strife 'twixt her and me ensues,
Nought can the damsel gain, and much may lose;

CVI

"And save the gain and loss well balanced be
In every match, the contest is unfair.
So that by right, no less than courtesy,
May she a shelter claim in you repair.
But are there any here that disagree,
And to impugn my equal sentence dare,
Behold my prompt, at such gainsayer's will,
To prove my judgment right, his judgment ill!"

CVII

Bradamant — grieved that maid of gentle kind
Should from that castle wrongfully be sped,
To bide the raging of the rain and wind,
Where sheltering house was none, nor even shed —
With reasons good, in wary speech combined,
Persuades that lord; but mostly what she said
On ending silences the knight; and he
Allows the justice of that damsel's plea.

CVIII

As when hot summer sun the soil has rived,
And most the thirsty plant of moisture drains,
The weak and wasting flower, well nigh deprived
Of that quick sap which circled in its veins,
Sucks in the welcome rain, and is revived;
So, when bold Bradamant so well maintains
The courier maid's defence, her beauteous cheer
And mirth revive, and brighten as whilere.

CIX

At length the supper, which had long been dight,
Nor yet was touched, enjoys each hungry guest;
Nor any further news of errant knight
Them, seated at the festive board, molest;
All, saving Bradamant, enjoy, whose sprite,

As wont, is still afflicted and opprest.
For that suspicious fear, that doubt unjust,
Which racked her bosom, marred the damsel's gust.

CX
The supper done — brought sooner to a close
Haply from their desire to feast their eyes —
First of the set, Duke Aymon's daughter rose,
And next the courier maid is seen to rise.
With that the warder signs to one, that goes
And many torches fires in nimble wise;
Whose light on storied wall and ceiling fell.
What followed shall another canto tell.

CANTO 33

ARGUMENT
Bradamant sees in picture future fight
There, where she gained admission by the spear.
From combat cease, upon Baiardo's flight,
Gradasso and Montalban's cavalier.
While soaring through the world, the English knight
Arrives in Nubia's distant realm, and here
Driving the Harpies from the royal board,
Hunts to the mouth of hell that impious horde.

I
Timagoras, Parrhasius, Polygnote,
Protogenes, renowned Apollodore,
Timanthes, and Apelles, first of note,
Zeuxis and others, famed heretofore,
Whose memory down the stream of Time will float,
While we their wreck and labours lost deplore,
Whose fame will flourish still in Fate's despite,
(Grammercy authors!) while men read and write.

II
And those, yet living or of earlier day,
Mantegna, Leonardo, Gian Belline,
The Dossi, and, skilled to carve or to pourtray,
Michael, less man than angel and divine,
Bastiano, Raphael, Titian, who (as they
Urbino and Venice) makes Cadoro shine;
With more, whose works resemble what he hear
And credit of those spirits, famed whilere;

III
The painters we have seen, and others, who
Thousands of years ago in honour stood,
Things which had been with matchless pencil drew,
Some working upon wall, and some on wood.
But never, amid masters old or new,
Have ye of pictures heard or pictures viewed
Of things to come; yet such have been pourtrayed
Before the deeds were done which they displayed.

IV
Yet let not artist whether new or old,
Boast of his skill such wondrous works to make;
But leave this feat to spell, wherewith controlled
The spirits of the infernal bottom quake.
The hall, whereof in other strain I told,
With volume sacred to Avernus' lake,
Or Norsine grot, throught subject Demons' might,
Was made by Merlin in a single night.

V
That art, whereby those ancient erst pourtrayed
Such wonders, is extinguished in our day.
But to the troop, by whom will be surveyed
The painted chamber, I return, and say;
A squire attendant on a signal made,

Bore thither lighted torches, by whose ray
Were scattered from that hall the shades of night,
Nor this in open day had shown more bright.

VI
When thus the castle's lord addressed that crew:
"Know, of adventures in this chamber wrought,
Up to our days, have yet been witnessed few;
A warfare storied, but its fields unfought.
Who limned the battles, these as well foreknew.
Here of defeats to come and victories taught,
Whate'er in Italy our host befalls
You may discern as painted on these walls.

VII
"The wars, wherein French armies should appear,
Beyond the Alps, of foul event or fair,
Even from his days until the thousandth year,
By the prophetic Merlin painted were.
Hither Great Britain's monarch sent the seer,
To him, that of King Marcomir was heir:
Why hither sent, and why this hall was made,
At the same time to you shall be displayed.

VIII
"King Pharamond, the first of those that passed
The Rhine, amid his Franks' victorious train,
When Gaul was won, bethought him how to cast
On restive Italy the curbing rein;
And this; that evermore he wasting fast
Beheld the Roman empire's feeble reign;
And (for both reigned at once) would make accord,
To compass his design, with Britain's lord.

IX
"The royal Arthur, by whom nought was done
Without the ripe advice of Merlin sage,

(Merlin, I say, the Devils mighty son,
Well versed in what should chance in future age,)
Knowing through him, to Pharamond made known,
He would in many woes his host engage,
Entering that region, which, with rugged mound,
Apennine parts, and Alp and sea surround.

X
"To him sage Merlin shows, that well nigh all
Those other monarchs that in France will reign,
By murderous steel will see their people fall,
Consumed by famine, or by fever slain;
And that short joy, long sorrow, profit small,
And boundless ill shall recompense their pain;
Since vainly will the lily seek to shoot
In the Italian fields its withered root.

XI
"King Pharamond so trusted to the seer
That he resolved to turn his arms elsewhere;
And Merlin, who beheld with sight as clear
The things to be, as things that whilom were,
'Tis said, was brought by magic art to rear
The painted chamber at the monarch's prayer;
Wherein whatever deeds the Franks shall do,
As if already done, are plain to view.

XII
"That king who should succeed, might comprehend,
As he renown and victory would obtain,
Whene'er his friendly squadrons should defend
From all barbarians else the Italian reign;
So, if to damage her he should descend,
Thinking to bind her with the griding chain,
— Might comprehend, I say, and read his doom —
How he beyond these hills should find a tomb."

XIII

So said, he leads the listening ladies where
Those pictured histories begin; to show
How Sigisbert his arms will southward bear
For what imperial Maurice shall bestow.
"Behold him from the Mount of Jove repair
Thither where Ambra and Ticino flow!
Eutar behold, who not alone repels,
But puts the foe to flight, and routs and quells.

XIV

"Where they with Clovis tread the mountain way,
More than a hundred thousand warriors trace;
See Benevento's duke the monarch stay,
Whose thinner files his hostile army face.
Lo! these who feign retreat an ambush lay.
Lo! where through danger, havoc, and disgrace,
The Franks, who to the Lombard wine-fat hie,
Drugged by the bait, like poisoned mullets die.

XV

"Where Childibert the boundary hills has crost,
Heading what bands of France and captains, see;
Yet shall no more than baffled Clovis boast
The conquest or the spoil of Lombardy.
Heaven's sword descends so heavy on his host.
Choked with their bodies every road shall be;
So pined with watery flux and withering sun,
That, out of ten, unharmed returns not one."

XVI

He shows King Pepin, shows King Charlemagne;
How into Italy their march they bend;
And one and the other fair success obtain,
Because her land they came not to offend.
But Stephen one, the other Adriane,

And, after, injured Leo, would defend.
This quells Astolpho, and that takes his heir,
And re-establishes the papal chair.

XVII
A youthful Pepin of the royal line
He after shows; who seemed to spread his host,
Even from THE KILNS to the Isle of Palestine;
And with a bridge, achieved at mighty cost,
At Malamocco, to bestride the brine,
And on Rialto's shore his battle post.
Then fly and leave his drowning bands behind,
His bridge destroyed by wasting waves and wind.

XVIII
"Burgundian Lewis ye behold descend
Thither with his invading squadrons, where,
Vanquishing and taken, nevermore to offend
With hostile arms, he is compelled to swear.
Behold! he slights his solemn oath — to wend,
Anew, with reckless steps, into the snare.
Lo! there he leaves his eyes; and his array,
Blind as the moldwarp, hence their lord convey.

XIX
"You see him named from Arles, victorious Hugh,
From Italy the Berengari chase!
Whom, quelled and broken twice and thrice, anew
Now the Bavarians, now the Huns, replace.
O'ermatched, he then for peace is fain to sue;
Nor long survives, nor he who fills his place;
To Berengarius yielding his domains,
Who, repossest of all his kingdom, reigns.

XX
"You see, her goodly pastor to sustain,
Another Charles set fire to Italy;

Who has two kings in two fierce battles slain,
Manfred and Conradine, and after see
His bands, who seem to vex the new-won reign
With many wrongs, and who dispersedly
— Some here, some there — in different cities dwell.
Slain on the rolling of the vesper-bell."

XXI
He shows them next (but after interval,
'Twould seem, of many and many an age, not years)
How through the Alps, a captain out of Gaul,
To war upon the great Viscontis, steers;
And seems to straiten Alexandria's wall,
Girt with his forces, foot and cavaliers:
A garrison within, an ambuscade
Without the works, the warlike duke has laid;

XXII
And the French host, decoyed in cunning wise
Thither where the surrounding toils are spread,
Conducted on that evil enterprise
By Armagnac, the Gallic squadron's head,
Slaughtered throughout the spacious champaign lies,
Or is to Alexandria captive led:
While, swoln not more with water than with blood,
Tanarus purples wide Po's ample flood.

XXIII
Successively that castellain displayed
One hight of Marca, of the Anjouites three.
How "Marsi, Daunians, Salentines," (he said)
"And Bruci, these shall oft molest, you see:
Yet not by Frank or Latian's friendly aid
Shall one delivered from destruction be.
Lo! from the realm, as oft as they attack,
Alphonso and Gonsalvo beat them back.

XXIV

"You see the eighth Charles, amid his martial train,
The flower of France, through Alpine pass has pressed.
Who Liris fords, and takes all Naples' reign,
Yet draws not sword nor lays a lance in rest:
All, save that rock which — Typheus' endless pain —
Lies on the giant's belly, arms, and breast:
By Inigo del Guasto here withstood,
Derived from Avalo's illustrious blood."

XXV

The warder of the castle, who makes clear
To beauteous Bradamant that history,
Says, having shown her Ischia's island, "Ere
I lead you further other things to see,
I'll tell what my great-grandfather whilere
— I then a child — was wont to tell to me.
Which in like manner (that great-grandsire said),
As well to him his father whilome read;

XXVI

"And his from sire or grandsire heard recite;
So son from sire; even to that baron, who
Heard it related by the very wight,
That these fair pictures without pencil drew,
Which you see painted azure, red, and white.
He when to Pharamond (as now to you)
Was shown the castle on the rocky mount,
Heard him relate the things I now recount.

XXVII

"Heard him relate, how in that fortilage
From that good knight should spring, who, 'twould appear,
Guards it so well, he scorns the fires that rage,
Even to the Pharo, flaming far and near,
Then, or within short space, and in that age,

(And named the week and day, as well as year,)
A noble warrior, unexcelled in worth
By other, that has yet appeared on earth.

XXVIII
"Nereus less fair, Achilles was less strong,
Less was Ulysses famed for daring feat;
Nestor, that knew so much and lived so long,
Less prudent; nimble Ladas was less fleet;
Less liberal and less prompt to pardon wrong,
Caesar, whose praises ancient tales repeat.
So that, compared with him, in Ischia born,
Each might appear of vaunted virtues shorn;

XXIX
"And if illustrious Crete rejoiced of old
In giving birth to Coelus' godlike heir;
If Thebes in Hercules and Bacchus bold,
If Delos boasted of her heavenly pair,
Nought should as well this happy isle withhold
From lifting high her glorious head in air,
When that great Marquis shall in her be born,
Whom with its every grace shall Heaven adorn.

XXX
"Sage Merlin said — and oft renewed that say —
He was reserved to flourish in an age,
When most opprest the Roman empire lay,
That he might free that holy heritage:
But as some deeds of his I must display
Hereafter, these I will not now presage.
So spake that wizard, and renewed the story,
Which told of Charlemagne's predestined glory.

XXXI
"Lewis, (so learned Merlin said,) is woe
To have brought to Italy King Charlemagne,

Whom he called in to harass, not o'erthrow
That ancient rival of his goodly reign;
At his return declares himself his foe,
And, leagued with Venice, would the king detain.
Behold that valiant monarch couch his spear,
And in his foes' despite a passage clear.

XXXII
"But his new kingdom leaving to his band,
Far other destiny awaits that throng:
For, with the Mantuan's friendly succour manned,
Gonsalvo to the war returns so strong,
He leaves not in few months, by sea or land,
One living head, his slaughtered troops among.
But then, because of one by treason spent,
In him appears the joy of triumph shent."

XXXIII
So saying, to his guests the cavalier
Alphonso, of Pescara hight, displayed:
"Who in a thousand feats will shine more clear
Than the resplendent carbuncle," he said.
"Behold, deceived by faithless treaty, here,
Mid snares by the malignant Aethiop laid,
Transfixt with deadly dart the warrior lies,
In whom the age's worthiest champion dies."

XXXIV
Under Italian escort next they see
Where the twelfth Lewis o'er the hills is gone;
Has by its roots uptorn the mulberry,
And in Viscontis' land the lilies sown:
"Treading in Charles's steps, by him shall be
Bridges athwart the Garigliano thrown.
Yet after shall he mourn his army's slaughter,
Dispersed and drowning in that fatal water."

XXXV

(The lord pursues) "with no less overthrow,
Broken in Puglia, see the Gallic train.
In him who twice entraps the routed foe,
Gonslavo you behold, the pride of Spain.
Fortune to Lewis a fair face shall show,
As late a troubled mien, upon that plain,
Which even to where vext Adria pours her tides,
Po, between Alp and Apennine, divides."

XXXVI

The host reproved himself, while so he said,
And pieced his tale, as having left untold
Things first in order; next to them displayed
A royal castle by its warder sold.
A prisoner by the faithless Switzer made,
He shows the lord who hired him with his gold:
Which double treason, without couching lance,
Has given the victory to the king of France.

XXXVII

That warder then shows Caesar Borgia, grown
Puissant in Italy, through this king's grace;
For all Rome's peerage, and all lords that own
Her sway, he into exile seems to chase:
Then shows the king, that will the saw take down,
And papal acorns in Bologna place:
Then Genoa's burghers, by this monarch broke,
And rebel city stooping to his yoke.

XXXVIII

"You see," (pursued that warder,) "how with dead
Covered is Ghiaradada's green champaign.
It seems each city opes her gates through dread;
And Venice scarce her freedom can maintain.
You see he suffers not the Church's head,

Passing the narrow confines of Romagne,
Modena from Ferrara's duke to reave;
Who would not to that prince a remnant leave.

XXXIX
"Nay he Bologna rescues from his sway;
Whither the Bentivogli them betake.
You next see Lewis siege to Brescia lay,
And the close-straitened city storm and take;
Felsina almost at the same time stay
With succour, and the papal army break;
And next, 'twoud seem, that either hostile band
Lies tented upon Chassis' level strand.

XL
"On this side France, upon the other Spain,
Extend their files, and battle rages high;
Fast fall the men at arms in either train,
And the green earth is tinged with crimson dye.
Flooded with human gore seems every drain;
Mars doubts to whom to give the victory;
When through Alphonso's worth the Spaniards yield,
And the victorious Franks maintain the field;

XLI
"And, for Ravenna sacked and ravaged lies,
The Roman pastor bites his lips through woe;
Called by him, from the hills, in tempest's guise,
Swoop the fierce Germans on the fields below.
It seems each Frenchman unresisting flies,
Chased by their bands beyond the mountain snow,
And that they set the mulberry's thriving shoot
There, whence they plucked the golden lily's root.

XLII
"Behold the Frank returns, and here behold
Is broken, by the faithless Swiss betrayed,

He, that his royal father seized and sold,
Whose succour dearly by the youth is paid.
Those over whom false Fortune's wheel had rolled,
Erewhile, beneath another king arraid,
You here behold, preparing to efface
With vengeful deed Novara's late disgrace;

XLIII
"And see with better auspices return
The valiant Francis, foremost of his train,
Who so shall break the haughty Switzer's horn,
That little short of spent their bands remain;
And them shall nevermore the style adorn,
Usurped by that foul troop of churlish vein,
Of scourge of princes, and the faith's defence,
To which those rustics rude shall make pretence.

XLIV
"Lo! he takes Milan, in the league's despite:
Lo! with the youthful Sforza makes accord:
Lo! Bourbon the fair city keeps, in right
Of Francis, from the furious German horde:
Lo! while in other high emprize and fight
Elsewhere is occupied his royal lord,
Nor knows the pride and license of his host,
Through these the city shall anew be lost.

XLV
"Lo! other French who his grandsire's vein
Inherits, not his generous name alone!
Who by the Church's favour will regain
— The Gaul expelled — a land which was his own.
France too returns, but keeps a tighter rein,
Nor over Italy, as wont, has flown:
For Mantua's noble duke the foe shall stay,
And, at Ticino's passage, bar his way.

XLVI
"Though on his cheek youth's blossoms scarce appear,
Worthy immortal glory, Frederick shines;
And well that praise deserves, since by his spear,
But more by care and skill, Pavia's lines
Against the French defends that cavalier,
And frustrates the sea-lion's bold designs.
You see two marquises, Italia's boast,
And both, alike the terror of our host.

XLVII
"Both of one blood and of one nest they are;
The foremost is the bold Alphonso's seed,
Whom, led by that false black into the snare,
You late beheld in purple torrent bleed.
You see defeated by his counsel ware,
How oft the Franks from Italy recede.
The next, of visage so benign and bright,
Is lord of Guasto and Alphonso hight;

XLVIII
"This is that goodly knight, whose praise you heard
When rugged Ischia's island I displayed,
Of whom sage Merlin, with prophetic word,
To Pharamond such mighty matters said;
Whose birth should to that season be deferred,
When more than ever such a champion's aid,
Against the barbarous enemy's attack,
Vext Italy, and Church, and Empire lack.

XLIX
"He in his cousin of Pescara's rear,
— Prosper Colonna, chief of that emprize —
Makes the rude Switzer pay Bicocca dear,
Paid by the Frenchman in yet dearer wise.
Behold where France prepares for fresh career,

And to repair her many losses tries
Behold one host on Lombardy descend!
Behold that other against Naples wend!

L
"Bust she, that moves us like the dust which flies
Before the restless wind, which whirls it round,
Lifts if aloft awhile, and from the skies
Blows back anew the rising cloud to ground,
To a hundred thousand swells, in Francis' eyes,
The soldiers who Pavia's walls surround.
The monarch sees but that which he commands,
Nor marks how wax or waste his leaguering bands.

LI
" `Tis thus that, through the greedy servant's sin,
And easy sovereign's goodness, on his side,
The files beneath his banners muster thin,
When in his midnight camp, `to arms,' is cried,
For by the wary Spaniards charged within
His ramparts is he; foes that with the guide
Of Avalo's fair lineage, would assay
To make to heaven or hell their desperate way.

LII
"You see the best of the nobility
Of all fair France extinguished on the field;
How many swords, how many lances, see
The Spaniards round the valiant monarch wield.
Behold! his horse falls under him; yet he
Will neither own himself subdued, or yield;
Though to assault him from all sides is run
By wrathful bands, and succour there is none.

LIII
"The monarch well defends him from the foe,
All over bathed with blood of hostile vein.

But valour stoops at last to numbers; lo!
The king is taken, is conveyed to Spain;
And all upon Pescara's lord bestow
And him of that inseparable twain —
Of Guasto hight — the praise and prime renown
For that great king captived and host o'erthrown.

LIV
"This host o'erthrown upon Pavia's plains,
That, bound for Naples, halts upon its way:
As an ill-nourished lamp or taper wanes,
For want of wax or oil, with flickering ray.
Lo! the king leaves his sons in Spanish chains,
And home returns, his own domain to sway.
Lo! while in Italy he leads his band,
Another wars upon his native land.

LV
"In every part you see how Rome is woe,
Mid ruthless rapine, murder, fire, and rape.
See all to wasting rack and ruin go,
And nothing human or divine escape.
The league's men hear the shrieks, behold the glow
Of hostile fires, and lo! they backward shape
Their course, where they should hurry on their way,
And leave the pontiff to his foes a prey.

LVI
"Lautrec the monarch sends with other bands;
Yet not anew to war on Lombardy;
But to deliver from rapacious hands
The Church's head and limbs, already free,
So slowly he performs the king's commands.
Next, overrun by him the kingdom see,
And his strong arms against the city turned,
Wherein the Syren's body lies inurned.

LVII
"Lo! the imperial squadrons thither steer,
Aid to the leaguered city to convey;
And lo! burnt, sunk, destroyed, they disappear,
Encountered by the Doria in mid-way.
Behold! how Fortune light does shift and veer,
So friendly to the Frenchman till this day!
Who slays their host with fever, not with lance;
Nor of a thousand one returns to France.

LVIII
These histories and more the pictures shew,
(For to tell all would ask too long a strain)
In beauteous colours and of different hue;
Since such that hall, it these could well contain.
The painting twice and thrice those guests review,
Nor how to leave them knows the lingering train,
'Twould seem; perusing oft what they behold
Inscribed below the beauteous work in gold.

LIX
When with these pictures they their sight had fed,
And talked long while — these ladies and the rest —
They to their chambers by that Lord were led,
Wont much to worship every worthy guest.
Already all were sleeping, when her bed
At last Duke Aymon's beauteous daughter prest.
She here, she there, her restless body throws,
Now right, now left, but vainly seeks repose:

LX
Yet slumber toward dawn, and in a dream
The form of her Rogero seems to view.
The vision cries: "Why vex yourself, and deem
Things real which are hollow and untrue?
Backwards shall sooner flow the mountainstream

Than I to other turn my thought from you.
When you I love not, then unloved by me
This heart, these apples of mine eyes, will be.

LXI
"Hither have I repaired (it seemed he said)
To be baptized and do as I professed.
If I have lingered, I have been delaid,
By other wound than that of Love opprest."
With that he vanished from the martial maid,
And with the vision broken was her rest.
New floods of tears the awakened damsel shed,
And to herself in this sad fashion said:

LXII
"What pleased was but a dream; alas! a sheer
Reality is this my waking bane;
My joy a dream and prompt to disappear,
No dream my cruel and tormenting pain.
Ah! wherefore what I seemed to see and hear,
Cannot I, waking, see and hear again?
What ails ye, wretched eyes, that closed ye show
Unreal good, and open but on woe?

LXIII
"Sweet sleep with promised peace my soul did buoy,
But I to bitter warfare wake anew;
Sweet sleep but brought with it fallacious joy,
But — sure and bitter — waking ills ensue.
If falsehood so delight and truth annoy,
Never more may I see or hear what's true!
If sleeping brings me weal, and watching woe,
The pains of waking may I never know!

LXIV
"Blest animals that sleep through half the year,
Nor ope your heavy eyelids, night nor day!

For if such tedious sleep like death appear,
Such watching is like life, I will not say,
Since — such my lot, beyond all wont, severe —
I death in watching, life in sleep assay.
But oh! if death such sleep resemble, Death,
Even now I pray three stop my fleeting breath!"

LXV
The clouds were gone, the horizon overspread
With glowing crimson by the new-born sun,
And in these signs, unlike the past, was read
A better promise of the day begun:
When Bradamant upstarted from her bed,
And armed her for the journey to be done,
Her thanks first rendered to the courteous lord,
For his kind of cheer and hospitable board.

LXVI
And found, the lady messenger, with maid
And squire, had issued from the castled hold,
And was a-field, where her arrival stayed
Those three good warriors, those the damsel bold
The eve before had on the champaign laid,
Cast from their horses by her lance of gold;
And who had suffered, to their mighty pain,
All night, the freezing wind and pattering rain.

LXVII
Add to such ill, that, hungering sore for food,
They and their horses, through the livelong night,
Trampling the mire, with chattering teeth, had stood:
But (what well-nigh engendered more despite
— Say not well nigh — more moved the warrior's mood)
Was that they knew the damsel would recite
How they had been unhorsed by hostile lance
In the first course which they had run in France;

LXVIII
And — each resolved to die or else his name
Forthwith in new encounter to retrieve —
That Ulany, the message-bearing dame,
(Whose style no longer I unmentioned leave),
A fairer notion of their knightly fame
Than heretofore, might haply now conceive,
Bold Bradamant anew to fight defied,
When of the drawbridge clear they her descried;

LXIX
Not thinking, howsoe'er, she was a maid,
Who in no look or act the maid confest;
Duke Aymon's daughter, loth to be delaid,
Refuses, as a traveller that is pressed.
But they so often and so sorely prayed,
That she could ill refuse the kings' request.
Her lance she levels, at three strokes extends
All three on earth, and thus the warfare ends:

LXX
For Bradamant no more her courser wheeled,
But turned her back upon the foes o'erthrown.
They, that intent to gain the golden shield,
Had sought a land so distant from their own,
Rising in sullen silence from the field
(For speech with all their hardihood was gone)
Appeared as stupefied by their surprise,
Nor to Ulania dared to lift their eyes.

LXXI
For they, as thither they their course addrest,
Had vaunted to the maid in boasting vein,
No paladin or knight with lance in rest,
Against the worst his saddle could maintain.
To make them vail yet more their haughty crest,

And look upon the world with less disdain,
She tells them, by no paladin or peer
Were they unhorsed, but by a woman's spear.

LXXII
"Now what of Roland's and Rinaldo's might,
Not without reason held in such renown,
Ought you to think (she said) when thus in fight
Ye by a female hand are overthrown?
Say, if the buckler one of these requite,
— Better than by a woman ye have done,
Will ye by those redoubted warriors do?
So think not I, nor haply think so you.

LXXIII
"This may suffice you all; and need in none
A clearer proof of prowess to display;
And who desires, if rashly any one
Desires, again his valour to assay,
Would add but scathe to shame, now made his own;
Now; and the same to-day as yesterday.
Unless perchance he thinks it praise and gain,
By such illustrious warriors to be slain."

LXXIV
When they by Ulany were certified
A woman's hand had caused their overthrow,
Who with a deeper black than pitch had dyed
Their honour, heretofore so fair of show;
And more than ten her story testified,
Where one sufficed — with such o'erwhelming woe
Were they possest, they with such fury burned,
They well nigh on themselves their weapons turned.

LXXV
What arms they had upon them, they unbound,
And cast them, strung by rage and fury sore,

Into the moat which girt that castle round,
Nor even kept the faulchions which they wore;
And, since a woman them had cast to ground,
O'erwhelmed with rage and shame, the warriors swore,
Themselves of such a crying shame to clear,
They, without bearing arms, would pass a year;

LXXVI
And that they evermore afoot would fare
Up hill or down, by mountain or by plain,
Nor, when the year was ended, would they wear
The knightly mail or climb the steed again;
Save that from other they by force should bear,
In battle, other steeds and other chain.
So, without arms, to punish their misdeeds,
These wend a-foot, those others on their steeds.

LXXVII
Lodged in a township at the fall of night,
Duke Aymon's daughter, journeying Paris-ward,
Hears how King Agramant was foiled in fight.
Good harbourage withal of bed and board,
She in her hostel found; but small delight
This and all comforts else to her afford.
For the sad damsel meat and sleep foregoes,
Nor finds a resting place; far less repose.

LXXVIII
But so I will not on her story dwell,
As not to seek anew the valiant twain;
Who, by consent, beside a lonely well,
Had tied their goodly coursers by the rein.
I of their war to you somedeal will tell,
A war not waged for empire or domain,
But that the best should buckle to his side
Good Durindana, and Baiardo ride.

LXXIX
No signal they, no trumpet they attend,
To blow them to the lists, no master who
Should teach them when to foin and when to fend,
Or wake their sleeping wrath; their swords they drew:
Then, one against the other, boldly wend,
With lifted blades, the quick and dextrous two.
Already 'gan the champions' fury heat,
And fast and hard their swords were heard to beat.

LXXX
None e'er by proof two other faulchions chose
For sound and solid, able to endure
Three strokes alone of such conflicting foes,
Passing all means and measure; but so pure,
So perfect was their temper, from all blows
By such repeated trial so secure,
They in a thousand strokes might clash on high,
— Nay more, nor yet the solid metal fly.

LXXXI
With mickle industry, with mighty pain
And art, Rinaldo, shifting here and there,
Avoids the deadly dint of Durindane,
Well knowing how 'tis wont to cleave and tear.
Gradasso struck with greater might and main,
But well nigh all his strokes were spent in air;
Of, if he sometimes smote, he smote on part,
Where Durindana wrought less harm than smart.

LXXXII
Rinaldo with more skill his blade inclined,
And stunned the arm of Sericana's lord.
Him oft he reached where casque and coat confined,
And often raked his haunches with the sword:
But adamantine was his corslet's rind,

Nor link the restless faulchion broke or bored.
If so impassive was the paynim's scale,
Know, charmed by magic was the stubborn mail.

LXXXIII
Without reposing they long time had been,
Upon their deadly battle so intent,
That, save on one another's troubled mien,
Their angry eyes the warriors had not bent.
When such despiteous war and deadly spleen,
Diverted by another strife, were spent,
Hearing a mighty noise, both champions turn,
And good Baiardo, sore bested, discern.

LXXXIV
They good Baiardo by a monster view,
— A bird, and bigger than that courser — prest.
Above three yards in length appeared to view
The monster's beak; a bat in all the rest.
Equipt with feathers, black as ink in hue,
And piercing talons was the winged pest;
An eye of fire it had, a cruel look,
And, like ship-sails, two spreading pinions shook.

LXXXV
Perhaps it was a bird; but when or where
Another bird resembling this was seen
I know not, I, nor have I any where,
Except in Turpin, heard that such has been.
Hence that it was a fiend, to upper air
Evoked from depths of nether hell I ween;
Which Malagigi raised by magic sleight,
That so he might disturb the champions' fight.

LXXXVI
So deemed Rinaldo too: and contest sore
'Twixt him and Malagigi hence begun;

But he would not confess the charge; nay swore,
Even by the light which lights the glorious sun,
That he might clear him of the blame he bore,
He had not that which was imputed done.
Whether a fiend or fowl, the pest descends,
And good Baiardo with his talons rends.

LXXXVII
Quickly the steed, possessed of mickle might,
Breaks loose, and, in his fury and despair,
Against the monster strives with kick and bite;
But swiftly he retires and soars in air:
He thence returning, prompt to wheel and smite,
Circles and beats the courser, here and there.
Wholly unskilled in fence, and sore bested,
Baiardo swiftly from the monster fled.

LXXXVIII
Baiardo to the neighbouring forest flies,
Seeking the closest shade and thickest spray;
Above the feathered monster flaps, with eyes
Intent to mark where widest is the way.
But that good horse the greenwood threads, and lies
At last within a grot, concealed from day.
When the winged beast has lost Baiardo's traces.
He soars aloft, and other quarry chases.

LXXXIX
Rinaldo and Gradasso, who descried
Baiardo's flight, the conqueror's destined meed,
The battle to suspend, on either side,
Till they regained the goodly horse, agreed,
Saved from that fowl which chased him, far and wide;
Conditioning whichever found the steed,
With him anew should to that fountain wend,
Beside whose brim their battle they should end.

XC
Quitting the fount, they follow, where they view
New prints upon the forest greensward made:
By much Baiardo distances the two,
Whose tardy feet their wishes ill obeyed.
Himself the king on his Alfana threw,
That near at hand was tethered in the glade,
Leaving his foe behind in evil plight;
— Never more malcontent and vext in sprite.

XCI
Rinaldo ceased in little time to spy
Baiardo's traces, who strange course had run;
And made for thorny thicket, wet or dry,
Tree, rock, or river, with design to shun
Those cruel claws, which, pouncing from the sky,
To him such outrage and such scathe had done.
Rinaldo, after labour vain and sore
To await him at the fount returned once more;

XCII
In case, as erst concerted by the twain,
The king should thither with the steed resort;
But having sought him there with little gain,
Fared to his camp afoot, with piteous port.
Return we now to him of Sericane,
He that had sped withal in other sort,
Who, not by judgement, guided to his prey,
But his rare fortune, heard Baiardo neigh;

XCIII
And found him shrowded in his caverned lair,
So sore moreover by his fright opprest,
He feared to issue into open air.
Thus of that horse himself the king possest.
Well he remembered their conditions were

To bring him to the fount; but little pressed
Now was that knight to keep the promise made,
And thus within himself in secret said:

XCIV
"Win him who will, in war and strife, I more
Desire in peace to make the steed my own:
From the world's further side, did I of yore
Wend hitherward, and for this end alone.
Having the courser, he mistakes me sore,
That thinks the prize by me will be foregone.
Him would Rinaldo conquer, let him fare
To Ind, as I to France have made repair.

XCV
"For him no less secure is Sericane,
Than twice for me has been his France," he said,
And pricked for Arles, along the road most plain,
And in its haven found the fleet arrayed.
Freighted with him, the steed and Durindane,
A well-rigged galley from that harbour weighed.
Of these hereafter! — I, at other call,
Now quit Rinaldo, king, and France, and all.

XCVI
Astolpho in his flight will I pursue,
That made his hippogryph like palfrey flee,
With reins and sell, so quick the welkin through;
That hawk and eagle soar a course less free.
O'er the wide land of Gaul the warrior flew
From Pyrenees to Rhine, from sea to sea.
He westward to the mountains turned aside,
Which France's fertile land from Spain divide.

XCVII
To Arragon he past out of Navarre,
— They who beheld, sore wondering at the sight —

Then, leaves he Tarragon behind him far,
Upon his left, Biscay upon his right:
Traversed Castile, Gallicia, Lisbon, are
Seville and Cordova, with rapid flight;
Nor city on sea-shore, nor inland plain,
Is unexplored throughout the realm of Spain.

XCVIII
Beneath him Cadiz and the strait he spied,
Where whilom good Alcides closed the way;
From the Atlantic to the further side
Of Egypt, bent o'er Africa, to stray;
The famous Balearic isles descried,
And Ivica, that in his passage lay;
Toward Arzilla then he turned the rein,
Above the sea that severs it from Spain.

XCIX
Morocco, Fez, and Oran, looking down,
Hippona, Argier, he, and Bugia told,
Which from all cities bear away the crown,
No palm or parsley wreath, but crown of gold;
Noble Biserta next and Tunis-town,
Capys, Alzerba's isle, the warrior bold,
Tripoli, Berniche, Ptolomitta viewed,
And into Asia's land the Nile pursued.

C
'Twixt Atlas' shaggy ridges and the shore,
He viewed each regions in his spacious round;
He turned his back upon Carena hoar,
And skimmed above the Cyrenaean ground;
Passing the sandy desert of the Moor,
In Albajada, reached the Nubian's bound;
Left Battus' tomb behind him on the plain,
And Ammon's, now dilapidated, fane.

CI

To other Tremizen he posts, where bred
As well the people are in Mahound's style;
For other Aethiops then his pinions spread,
Which face the first, and lie beyond the Nile.
Between Coallee and Dobada sped,
Bound for the Nubian city's royal pile;
Threading the two, where, ranged on either land,
Moslems and Christians watch, with arms in hand.

CII

In Aethiopia's realm Senapus reigns,
Whose sceptre is the cross; of cities brave,
Of men, of gold possest, and broad domains,
Which the Red Sea's extremest waters lave.
A faith well nigh like ours that king maintains,
Which man from his primaeval doom may save.
Here, save I err in what their rites require,
The swarthy people are baptized with fire.

CIII

Astolpho lighted in the spacious court,
Intending on the Nubian king to wait.
Less strong than sumptuous is the wealthy fort,
Wherein the royal Aethiop keeps his state,
The chains that serve the drawbridge to support,
The bolts, the bars, the hinges of the gate,
And finally whatever we behold
Herewrought in iron, there is wrought in gold.

CIV

High prized withal, albeit it so abound,
Is that best metal; lodges built in air
Which on all sides the wealthy pile surround,
Clear colonnades with crystal shafts upbear.
Of green, white, crimson, blue and yellow ground,

A frieze extends below those galleries fair.
Here at due intervals rich gems combine,
And topaz, sapphire, emerald, ruby shine.

CV
In wall and roof and pavement scattered are
Full many a pearl, full many a costly stone.
Here thrives the balm; the plants were ever rare,
Compared with these, which were in Jewry grown,
The musk which we possess from thence we bear,
In fine those products from this clime are brought,
Which in our regions are so prized and sought.

CVI
The soldan, king of the Egyptian land,
Pays tribute to this sovereign, as his head,
They say, since having Nile at his command
He may divert the stream to other bed.
Hence, with its district upon either hand,
Forthwith might Cairo lack its daily bread.
Senapus him his Nubian tribes proclaim;
We Priest and Prester John the sovereign name.

CVII
Of all those Aethiop monarchs, beyond measure,
The first was this, for riches and for might;
But he with all his puissance, all his treasure,
Alas! had miserably lost his sight.
And yet was this the monarch's least displeasure;
Vexed by a direr and a worse despite;
Harassed, though richest of those Nubian kings,
By a perpetual hunger's cruel stings.

CVIII
Whene'er to eat or drink the wretched man
Prepared, by that resistless need pursued,
Forthwith — infernal and avenging clan —

Appeared the monstrous Harpies' craving brood;
Which, armed with beak and talons, overran
Vessel and board, and preyed upon the food;
And what their wombs suffice not to receive
Foul and defiled the loathsome monsters leave.

CIX
And this, because upborn by such a tide
Of full blown honours, in his unripe age,
For he excelled in heart and nerve, beside
The riches of his royal heritage,
Like Lucifer, the monarch waxed in pride,
And war upon his maker thought to wage.
He with his host against the mountain went,
Where Egypt's mighty river finds a vent.

CX
Upon this hill which well-nigh kissed the skies,
Piercing the clouds, the king had heard recite,
Was seated the terrestrial paradise,
Where our first parents flourished in delight.
With camels, elephants, and footmen hies
Thither that king, confiding in his might;
With huge desire if peopled be the land
To bring its nations under his command.

CXI
God marred the rash emprise, and from on high
Sent down an angel, whose destroying sword
A hundred thousand of that chivalry
Slew, and to endless night condemned their lord.
Emerging, next, from hellish caverns, fly
These horrid harpies and assault his board;
Which still pollute or waste the royal meat,
Nor leave the monarch aught to drink or eat.

CXII
And him had plunged in uttermost despair
One that to him erewhile had prophesied
The loathsome Harpies should his daily fare
Leave unpolluted only, when astride
Of winged horse, arriving through the air,
An armed cavalier should be descried.
And, for impossible appears the thing,
Devoid of hope remains the mournful king.

CXIII
Now that with wonderment his followers spy
The English cavalier so make his way,
O'er every wall, o'er every turret high,
Some swiftly to the king the news convey.
Who calls to mind that ancient prophecy,
And heedless of the staff, his wonted stay,
Through joy, with outstretched arms and tottering feet,
Comes forth, the flying cavalier to meet.

CXIV
Within the castle court Astolpho flew,
And there, with spacious wheels, on earth descended;
The king, conducted by his courtly crew,
Before the warrior knelt, with arms extended,
And cried: "Thou angel send of God, thou new
Messiah, if too sore I have offended,
For mercy, yet, bethink thee, 'tis our bent
To sin, and thine to pardon who repent.

CXV
"Knowing my sin, I ask not, I, to be
— Such grace I dare not ask — restored to light;
For well I ween such power resides in thee,
As Being accepted in thy Maker's sight.
Let it suffice, that I no longer see,

Nor let me with perpetual hunger fight.
At least, expel the harpies' loathsome horde,
Nor let them more pollute my ravaged board;

CXVI
"And I to build thee, in my royal hold,
A holy temple, made of marble, swear,
With all its portals and its roof of gold,
And decked, within and out, with jewels rare.
Here shall thy mighty miracle be told
In sculpture, and thy name the dome shall bear."
So spake the sightless king of Nubia's reign,
And sought to kiss the stranger's feet in vain.

CXVII
"Nor angel" — good Astolpho made reply —
"Nor new Messiah, I from heaven descend;
No less a mortal and a sinner I,
To such high grace unworthy to pretend.
To slay the monsters I all means will try,
Or drive them from the realm which they offend.
If I shall prosper, be thy praises paid
To God alone, who sent me to thine aid.

CXVIII
"Offer these vows to God, to him well due;
To him thy churches build, thine altars rear."
Discoursing so, together wend the two,
'Mid barons bold, that king and cavalier.
The Nubian prince commands the menial crew
Forthwith to bring the hospitable cheer;
And hopes that now the foul, rapacious band,
Will not dare snatch the victual from his hand.

CXIX
Forthwith a solemn banquet they prepare
Within the gorgeous palace of the king.

Seated alone here guest and sovereign are,
And the attendant troop the viands bring.
Behold! a whizzing sound is heard in air,
Which echoes with the beat of savage wing.
Behold! the band of harpies thither flies,
Lured by the scent of victual from the skies.

CXX

All bear a female face of pallid dye,
And seven in number are the horrid band;
Emaciated with hunger, lean, and dry;
Fouler than death; the pinions they expand
Ragged, and huge, and shapeless to the eye;
The talon crook'd; rapacious is the hand;
Fetid and large the paunch; in many a fold,
Like snake's, their long and knotted tails are rolled.

CXXI

The fowls are heard in air; then swoops amain
The covey well nigh in that instant, rends
The food, o'erturns the vessels, and a rain
Of noisome ordure on the board descends.
To stop their nostrils king and duke are fain;
Such an insufferable stench offends.
Against the greedy birds, as wrath excites,
Astolpho with his brandished faulchion smites.

CXXII

At croup or collar now he aims his blow,
Now strikes at neck or pinion; but on all,
As if he smote upon a bag of tow,
The strokes without effect and languid fall.
This while nor dish nor goblet they forego;
Nor void those ravening fowls the regal hall,
Till they have feasted full, and left the food
Waste or polluted by their rapine rude.

CXXIII
That king had firmly hoped the cavalier
Would from his royal seat the harpies scare.
He now, that hope foregone, with nought to cheer,
Laments, and sighs, and groans in his despair.
Of his good horn remembers him the peer,
Whose clangours helpful aye in peril are,
And deems his bugle were the fittest mean
To free the monarch from those birds unclean;

CXXIV
And first to fill their ears, to king and train,
With melted wax, Astolpho gives command;
That every one who hears the deafening strain
May not in panic terror fly the land.
He takes the reins, his courser backs again,
Grasps the enchanted bugle in his hand;
And to the sewer next signs to have the board
Anew with hospitable victual stored.

CXXV
The meats he to an open galley bears,
And other banquet spreads on other ground.
Behold, as wont, the harpy-squad appears;
Astolpho quickly lifts the bugle's round;
And (for unguarded are their harassed ears)
The harpies are not proof against the sound;
In terror form the royal dome they speed,
Nor meat nor aught beside the monsters heed.

CXXVI
After them spurs in haste the valiant peer:
And on the winged courser forth is flown,
Leaving beneath him, in his swift career,
The royal castle and the crowded town;
The bugle ever pealing, far and near.

The harpies fly toward the torrid zone;
Nor light until they reach that loftiest mountain
Where springs, if anywhere, Nile's secret fountain.

CXXVII
Almost at that aerial mountain's feet,
Deep under earth, extends a gloomy cell.
The surest pass for him, as they repeat,
That would at any time descend to hell.
Hither the predatory troop retreat,
As a safe refuge from the deafening yell.
As far, and farther than Cocytus' shore
Descending, till that horn is heard no more.

CXXVIII
At that dark hellish inlet, which a way
Opens to him who would abandon light,
The terrifying bugle ceased to bray;
— The courser furled his wings and stopt his flight.
But, ere Astolpho further I convey,
— Not to depart from my accustomed rite —
Since on all sides the paper overflows,
I shall conclude my canto and repose.

CANTO 34

ARGUMENT
In the infernal pit Astolpho hears
Of Lydia's woe, by smoke well-nigh opprest.
He mounts anew, and him his courser bears
To the terrestrial paradise addrest.
By John advised in all, to heaven he steers;
Of some of his lost sense here repossest,
Orlando's wasted wit as well he takes,
Sees the Fates spin their threads, and earthward makes.

I

O fierce and hungry harpies, that on blind
And erring Italy so full have fed!
Whom, for the scourge of ancient sins designed,
Haply just Heaven to every board has sped.
Innocent children, pious mothers, pined
With hunger, die, and see their daily bread,
— The orphan's and the widow's scanty food —
Feed for a single feast that filthy brood.

II

Too foul a fault was his, who did unclose
That cave long shut, and made the passage free,
From whence that greediness, that filth arose,
Our Italy's infection doomed to be.
Then was good life extinguished, and repose
So banished, that with strife and poverty,
With fear and trouble, is she still perplext,
And shall for many a future year be vext:

III

Till she her sons has shaken by the hair,
And from Lethaean sloth to life restored;
Exclaiming, "Will none imitate that pair,
Zethes and Calais, with avenging sword
Rescue from claws and stench our goodly fare,
And cleanse and glad anew the genial board.
As they king Phineus from those fowls released,
And England's peer restored the Nubian's feast?"

IV

Hunting those hideous birds, that cavalier
Aye scared them with the bugle's horrid sound;
Till at the mountain-cave his long career
He closed, and ran the monstrous troop to ground:
Attentive to the vent he held his ear,

And in that troubled cavern heard rebound,
Weeping and wailing, and eternal yell;
Proof certain that its entrance led to hell.

V
Astolpho doubts if he within shall wend,
And see those wretched ones expelled from day;
Into the central pit of earth descend,
And the infernal gulfs around survey.
"Why should I fear, that on my horn depend
For certain succour?" (did the warrior say)
"Satan and Pluto so will I confound,
And drive before me their three-headed hound."

VI
He speedily his winged horse forsook;
(Him to a sapling near at hand he ties)
The cavern entered next; but first he took
His horn, whereon the knight in all relies.
Not far has he advanced before a smoke,
Obscure and foul, offends his nose and eyes.
Ranker than pitch and sulphur is the stench,
Yet not thereat does good Astolpho blench.

VII
But as he more descends into that lair,
So much he finds the smoke and vapour worse;
And it appears he can no further fare;
Nay, backward must retrace his way parforce.
Lo! something (what he knows not) he in air
Espies, that seems in motion, like a corse,
Upon whose wasted form long time had beat
The winter's rain and summers scorching heat.

VIII
In that dim cavern was so little light,
— Yea, well-nigh might be said that light was none —

Nought sees or comprehends the English knight
What wavers so, above that vapour dun:
For surer proof, a stroke or two would smite
With his good faulchion Otho's valiant son:
Then deemed that duke it was a spirit, whom
He seemed to strike amid the misty gloom.

IX
When him a melancholy voice addressed;
"Ah! without harming other, downward wend.
Me but too sore the sable fumes molest,
Which hither form the hellish fires ascend."
Thereat the duke, amazed, his steps represt,
And to the spirit cried: "So may Heaven send
A respite from the vapours that exhale,
As thou shalt deign to tell thy mournful tale!

X
"And to be known on earth shouldst thou be fain,
Thee will I satisfy." To him the sprite:
So sweet it seems to me, in fame again
Thus to return into the glorious light,
My huge desire such favour to obtain,
Forces my words from me in my despite,
Constraining me to tell the things ye seek;
Though 'tis annoyance and fatigue to speak.

XI
"Lydia, the child of Lydia's king, am I,
To proud estate and princely honours born,
Condemned by righteous doom of God on high
In murky smoke eternally to mourn:
Because a kindly lover's constancy
I, while I lived, repaid with spite and scorn.
With countless others swarm these grots below,
For the same sin, condemned to the same woe.

XII

"Yet lower down, harsh Anaxarete
Suffers worse pain where thicker fumes arise;
Heaven changed her flesh to stone, and here to be
Tormented, her afflicted spirit sties:
In that unmoved she, hung in air, could see
A lover vest by her barbarities.
Here Daphne learns how rashly she had done
In having given Apollo such a run."

XIII

"Of hosts of ingrate women in this cell
Confined, it would be tedious to recite,
If, one by one, I upon these should dwell;
So many, their amount is infinite.
'Twould be more tedious of the men to tell,
Whose base ingratitude due pains requite;
And whom, in a more dismal prison pent,
Smoke blinds, and everlasting fires torment.

XIV

"Since to belief soft woman is more prone,
He that deceives her, merits heavier pain;
To Theseus and to Jason this is known,
And him that vexed of old the Latian reign,
And him that of his brother Absalon
Erewhile provoked the pestilent disdain,
Because of Thamar; countless is the horde
Of those who left a wife or wedded lord.

XV

"But, rather of my state than theirs to shew,
And sin which brought me hither: — I was fair,
But so much haughtier was than fair of hue,
I know not if I ever equalled were:
Nor which was most excessive of the two,

My pride of beauty, could to thee declare.
Though it is certain, Pride but took its rise
In that rare loveliness which pleased all eyes.

XVI
"There lived a Thracian knight, for warlike skill
And prowess, upon earth without a peer;
Who, voiced by many a worthy witness still,
The praises of my matchless charms did hear.
So that, of forethought and his own free will,
Fixed all his love on me that cavalier;
Weening this wife that I, upon my part,
Should for his valour duly prize his heart.

XVII
"He came to Lydia, and by faster tie
Was fettered at my sight; and there enrolled
Amid my royal father's chivalry,
In mickle fame increased that baron bold.
His feats of many a sort, and valour high
Would make a tale too tedious to be told;
With what his boundless merit had deserved,
If a more grateful master he had served.

XVIII
"Pamphylia, Caria, and Cilicia's reign,
Through him, my father brought beneath his sway,
Who never moved a-field his martial train,
But when that warrior pointed out the way:
He, when he deemed he had deserved such gain,
Pressed close the Lydian king, upon a day,
And craved me from the monarch as his wife,
As meed of all that booty made in strife.

XIX
"Rejected of the monarch was the peer,
Who was resolved his child should highly wed;

Not him who was a simple cavalier;
Who, saving valour, was with nought bested.
For on my father, bent on gain and gear
And avarice, of all vice the fountain-head,
Manners and merit for as little pass,
As the lute's music on the lumpish ass.

XX

"Alcestes, he of whom I speak (so hight
That warrior), when he sees his suit denied,
Repulsed by one, by whom he had most right
To think that he should most be gratified,
Craves his discharge, and threatens he this slight
Will make the Lydian monarch dear abide.
The Armenian, an old rival of my sire,
And mortal for, he sought with this desire;

XXI

"And so the monarch urged, he made him rear
His banner, and attack my sire; and, through
His famous feats, that Thracian cavalier
Was named the captain of the invading crew.
For the Armenian sovereign, far and near,
All things (so said the knight) he would subdue;
But claiming as his share, when all was won,
My sovereign beauties for the service done.

XXII

"I ill to you the mischief could express
Alcestes did us in that war; o'erthrown
By him four armies were, and he in less
Than one short twelvemonth left us neither town,
Not tower, save one, where cliffs forbade access:
'Twas here my sire, amid those of his own
Whom most he loved, took refuge, in his need,
With all the wealth he could collect with speed.

XXIII
"Us in this fortilage the knight attacked,
And shortly to such desperation drave,
That gladly would the king have made a pact,
To yield me for his consort, yea his slave,
With half our realm, if certain by that act
Himself from every other loss to save;
Right sure he otherwise should forfeit all,
And, after, die in bonds, a captive thrall.

XXIV
"Before this happened, to try every way
Of remedy the Lydian king was bent;
And thither, where Alcestes' army lay,
Me, the first cause of all the mischief, sent.
To yield my person to him as a prey
I with intention to Alcestes went;
To bid him take what portion of our reign
He pleased, and pacify his fierce disdain.

XXV
"When of my coming that good knight does know,
Me he encounters pale and trembling sore:
'Twould seem a vanquished man's a prisoner's brow,
He, rather than a victor's semblance, bore.
I who perceive he loves, address not now
The warrior as I was resolved before.
My vantage I descry, and shift my ground,
To fit the state wherein that knight was found.

XXVI
"To curse the warrior's passion I begun,
And of his crying cruelty complained,
Since foully by my father had he done,
And me would have by violence constrained;
Who with more grace my person would have won,

Nor waited many days, had he maintained
His course of courtship, as begun whilere.
To king and all of us so passing dear;

XXVII
"And if the honest suit he hoped to gain
Had been at first rejected by my sire,
'Twas, he was somedeal of a churlish vein,
Nor ever yielded to a first desire;
He should not therefore, restive to the rein,
Have left his goodly task, so prompt to ire;
Sure, passing aye from good to better deed,
In little time to win the wished-for meed;

XXVIII
"And if my father would not have been won,
To him I would so earnestly have prayed,
That he my lover should have made his son;
Nay, had my royal sire my suit gainsayed,
For him in secret that I would have done,
Wherewith he should have deemed himself appaid:
But since, it seemed, he other means designed,
Never to love him had I fixed my mind;

XXIX
"And, though I sought him, at my father's hest,
And pious love for him had been my guide,
He might be sure, not long should be possest
The bliss that I, in my despite, supplied;
For the red blood should issue from my breast
As soon as his ill will was satisfied
On this my wretched person, which alone
He so by brutal force should make his own.

XXX
"With these, and words like these, I moved the peer,
When I such puissance in myself espied;

And him so contrite made, in desert drear,
Was never seen a saint more mortified.
Before my feet the doleful cavalier
Fell down, and snatched a poniard from his side;
Which, he protested, I parforce should take,
And for so foul a sin my vengeance slake.

XXXI
"To push my mighty victory to an end
I scheme, when him I see in such distress,
And give him hopes he may even yet pretend
That I deservedly his love should bless,
If he his ancient error will amend,
Will of his realm my father repossess,
And will in future time deserve my charms
By love and service, not by force of arms.

XXXII
"So promised he to do; and set me free,
And let me, as I came, untouched, depart;
Nor even to kiss my lips he ventured; see
If he is yoked securely, if his heart
Love has well touched with the desire of me,
If he for him need feather other dart!
He seeks the Armenian, why by pact should take
Whatever spoil the conquering armies make;

XXXIII
"And him, as best he might, would fain persuade
To leave to Lydia's monarch his domain,
Upon whose wasted lands his host had preyed,
And rest content with his Armenian reign.
— He would not hear of this (the monarch said,
With cheers with fury swolen) nor would refrain
From pressing Lydia's king with armed band,
So long as he possessed a palm of land;

XXXIV
"And if the knight, when a vile woman sues,
His purpose shift, let him the evil bear:
He will not, for the warrior's asking, lose
What he has hardly conquered in a year.
Alcestes to the king his suit renews,
And next complains, that he rejects his prayer.
At length the Thracian fires, and threatens high,
By love or force the monarch shall comply.

XXXV
"So kindling anger waxed between the two,
It urged them from ill words to worser deed:
Upon the king his sword Alcestes drew;
Though thousands aid the monarch in his need,
And, in despite of all, their sovereign slew;
And made that day as well the Armenian bleed,
Backed by the Thracians' and Cilicians' aid
And other followers, by the warrior paid.

XXXVI
"His conquest he pursued, and, at his cost,
Without expense to us, in less than one
Short month, the kingdom by my father lost
Restored; and, to repair the mischief done,
(Beside spoil given) he conquered with his host,
— Taxing or taking what his arms had won —
Armenia and Cappadocia which confine;
And scowered Hyrcania to the distant brine.

XXXVII
"Him not to greet with triumphs, but to slay,
Returning from that warfare, we intend;
But, fearing failure, our design delay
In that we find too many him befriend.
Feeding him aye with hope from day to day,

I for the Thracian warrior love pretend:
But first declare my will that he oppose
And prove his valour on our other foes;

XXXVIII
"And him, now sole, now ill accompanied,
On strange and perilous emprize I speed;
Wherein a thousand knights might well have died;
But all things happily with him succeed:
For Victory was ever on his side;
And oft with horrid foes of monstrous breed,
With Giants and with Lestrigons, who brought
Damage in our domains, the warrior fought.

XXXIX
Nor Juno, nor Eurystheus, in such chase
Ever renowned Alcides vext so sore,
In Erymanth, Nemaea, Lerna, Thrace,
Aetolia, Africa, by Tyber's shore,
By Ebro's sunny bank, or other place,
As (hiding murderous hate, while I implore)
I exercise my lover still in strife,
With the same fell design upon his life.

XL
"Unable to achieve my first intent,
I on a scheme of no less mischief fall:
Through me, all deemed his friends by him are shent,
Who thus bring down on him the hate of all.
The Thracian leader never more content
Than to obey, whatever be the call,
Is at my bidding ever prompt to smite,
Without regarding who or what the wight.

XLI
"When I perceive that, through the warrior's mean,
Extinguished is my father's every foe;

And, conquered by himself, that knight is seen
— Friendless, through us — I now the masque forego;
What I, from him, beneath a flattering mien,
Had hitherto concealed, I plainly show;
— What deep and deadly hate by bosom fired,
And that I but to work his death desired.

XLII
"Then, thinking if such course I should pursue,
That public shame would still the deed attend,
(For men too well my obligations knew,
And would be prompt my cruelty to shend.)
Meseemed enough to drive him from my view,
So that he should no more my eyes offend:
Nor would I more address or see the peer,
Nor letter would receive or message hear.

XLIII
"This my ingratitude in him such pain
At length produced, that mastered by his woe,
After entreating mercy long in vain,
He sickened sore and sank beneath the blow.
For pain which fits my sin, dark fumes now stain
My cheek, and with salt rheum mine eyes o'erflow.
Thus in eternal torment shall I dwell;
For saving mercy helpeth not in hell."

XLIV
Since wretched Lydia spake no more, the peer
Would fain discern if more in torment lay;
But, those false ingrates' curse, the darkness drear
So waxed before him, and obscured the way,
That not one inch advanced the cavalier;
Nay, back parforce returns that warrior; nay,
Himself from that increasing smoke to save,
Makes for the mouth of the disastrous cave.

XLV

The motion of his quickly shifting feet
More savours of a run than walk or trot.
Thus mounting the ascent in swift retreat,
Astolpho sees the outlet of the grot;
Where, through the darkness of that dismal seat
And those foul fumes, a dawn of daylight shot;
He from the cavern, sorely pained and pined,
Issues at last, and leaves the smoke behind;

XLVI

And next to bar the way against that band,
Whose greedy bellies so for victual crave,
Picks stones, and trees lays level with his brand,
Which charged with pepper or amomum wave;
And what might seem a hedge, with busy hand,
As best he can, constructs before the cave;
And so succeeds in blocking that repair,
The harpies shall no more revisit air.

XLVII

While in that cave Astolpho did remain,
The fumes that from the sable pitch arose,
Not only what appeared to sight did stain;
But even so searched the flesh beneath his clothes,
He sought some cleansing stream, long sought in vain;
But found at length a limpid till, which rose
Out of a living rock, within that wood,
And bathed himself all over in the flood.

XLVIII

Then backed the griffin-horse, and soared a flight
Whereby to reach that mountain's top he schemes,
Which little distant, with its haughty height,
From the moon's circle good Astolpho deems;
And, such desire to see it warms the knight,

That he aspires to heaven, nor earth esteems.
Through air so more and more the warrior strains,
That he at last the mountain-summit gains.

XLIX
Here sapphire, ruby, gold, and topaz glow,
Pearl, jacinth, chrysolite and diamond lie,
Which well might pass for natural flowers which blow,
Catching their colour from that kindly sky.
So green the grass! could we have such below,
We should prefer it to our emerald's dye.
As fair the foliage of those pleasant bowers!
Whose trees are ever filled with fruit and flowers.

L
Warble the wanton birds in verdant brake,
Azure, and red, and yellow, green and white.
The quavering rivulet and quiet lake
In limpid hue surpass the crystal bright.
A breeze, which with one breath appears to shake,
Aye, without fill or fall, the foliage light,
To the quick air such lively motion lends,
That Day's oppressive noon in nought offends;

LI
And this, mid fruit and flower and verdure there,
Evermore stealing divers odours, went;
And made of those mixt sweets a medley rare,
Which filled the spirit with a calm content.
In the mid plain arose a palace fair,
Which seemed as if with living flames it brent.
Such passing splendour and such glorious light
Shot from those walls, beyond all usage bright.

LII
Thither where those transparent walls appear,
Which cover more than thirty miles in measure,

At ease and slowly moved the cavalier,
And viewed the lovely region at his leisure;
And deemed — compared with this — that sad and drear,
And seen by heaven and nature with displeasure,
Was the foul world, wherein we dwell below:
So jocund this, so sweet and fair in show!

LIII
Astound with wonder, paused the adventurous knight,
When to that shining palace he was nigh,
For, than the carbuncle more crimson bright,
It seemed one polished stone of sanguine dye.
O mighty wonder! O Daedalian sleight!
What fabric upon earth with this can vie?
Let them henceforth be silent, that in story
Exalt the world's seven wonders to such glory!

LIV
An elder, in the shining entrance-hall
Of that glad house, towards Astolpho prest;
Crimson his waistcoat was, and white his pall;
Vermillion seemed the mantle, milk the vest:
White was that ancient's hair, and white withal
The bushy beard descending to his breast;
And from his reverend face such glory beamed,
Of the elect of Paradise he seemed.

LV
He, with glad visage, to the paladin,
Who humbly, from his sell had lighted, cries:
"O gentle baron, that by will divine
Have soared to this terrestrial paradise!
Albeit nor you the cause of your design,
Nor you the scope of your desire surmise,
Believe, you not without high mystery steer
Hitherward, from your arctic hemisphere.

LVI
"You for instruction, how to furnish aid
To Charles and to the Church in utmost need,
With me to counsel, hither are conveyed,
Who without counsel from such distance speed.
But, son, ascribe not you the journey made
To wit or worth; nor through your winged steed,
Nor through your virtuous bugle had ye thriven,
But that such helping grace from God was given.

LVII
"We will discourse at better leisure more,
And you what must be done shall after hear;
But you that, through long fast, must hunger sore,
First brace your strength with us, with genial cheer."
Continuing his discourse, that elder hoar
Raised mighty wonder in the cavalier,
When he avouched, as he his name disclosed,
That he THE HOLY GOSPEL, had composed;

LVIII
He of our Lord so loved, the blessed John;
Of whom a speech among the brethren went,
He never should see death, and hence the Son
Of God with this rebuke St. Peter shent;
In saying, "What is it to thee, if one
Tarry on earth, till I anew be sent?"
Albeit he said not that he should not die,
That so he meant to say we plain descry.

LIX
Translated thither, he found company,
The patriarch Enoch, and the mighty seer
Elias; nor as yet those sainted three
Have seen corruption, but in garden, clear
Of earth's foul air, will joy eternity

Of spring, till they angelic trumpets hear,
Sounding through heaven and earth, proclaim aloud
Christ's second advent on the silvery cloud.

LX
The holy ancients to a chamber lead,
With welcome kind, the adventurous cavalier;
And in another then his flying steed
Sufficiently with goodly forage cheer.
Astolpho they with fruits of Eden feed,
So rich, that in his judgment 'twould appear,
In some sort might our parents be excused
If, for such fruits, obedience they refused.

LXI
When with that daily payment which man owes,
Nature had been contented by the peer,
As well of due refreshment as repose,
(For all and every comfort found he here)
And now Aurora left her ancient spouse,
Not for his many years to her less dear,
Rising from bed, Astolpho at his side
The apostle, so beloved of God, espied.

LXII
Much that not lawfully could here be shown,
Taking him by the hand, to him he read.
"To you, though come from France, may be unknown
What there hath happened," next the apostle said;
"Learn, your Orlando, for he hath foregone
The way wherein he was enjoined to tread,
Is visited of God, that ever shends
Him whom he loveth best, when he offends:

LXIII
"He, your Orlando, at his birth endowed
With sovereign daring and with sovereign might,

On whom, beyond all usage, God bestowed
The grace, that weapon him should vainly smite,
Because he was selected from the crowd
To be defender of his Church's right.
As he elected Sampson, called whilere
The Jew against the Philistine to cheer;

LXIV
"He, your Orlando, for such gifts has made
Unto his heavenly Lord an ill return:
Who left his people, when most needing aid,
Then most abandoned to the heathens' scorn.
Incestuous love for a fair paynim maid
Had blinded so that knight, of grace forlorn,
That twice and more in fell and impious strife
The count has sought his faithful cousin's life.

LXV
"Hence God hath made him mad, and, in this vein,
Belly, and breast, and naked flesh expose;
And so diseased and troubled is his brain,
That none, and least himself, the champion knows,
Nebuchadnezzar whilom to such pain
God in his vengeance doomed, as story shows;
Sent, for seven years, of savage fury full,
To feed on grass and hay, like slavering bull.

LXVI
"But yet, because the Christian paladine
Has sinned against his heavenly Maker less,
He only for three months, by will divine,
Is doomed to cleanse himself of his excess.
Nor yet with other scope did your design
Of wending hither the Redeemer bless,
But that through us the mode you should explore,
Orlando's missing senses to restore.

LXVII

" `Tis true to journey further ye will need,
And wholly must you leave this nether sphere;
To the moon's circle you I have to lead,
Of all the planets to our world most near,
Because the medicine, that is fit to speed
Insane Orlando's cure, is treasured here.
This night will we away, when over head
Her downward rays the silver moon shall shed."

LXVIII

In talk the blest apostle is diffuse
On this and that, until the day is worn:
But when the sun is sunk i' the salt sea ooze,
And overhead the moon uplifts her horn,
A chariot is prepared, erewhile in use
To scower the heavens, wherein of old was borne
From Jewry's misty mountains to the sky,
Sainted Elias, rapt from mortal eye.

LXIX

Four goodly coursers next, and redder far
Than flame, to that fair chariot yokes the sire;
Who, when the knight and he well seated are,
Collects the reins; and heavenward they aspire.
In airy circles swiftly rose the car,
And reached the region of eternal fire;
Whose heat the saint by miracle suspends,
While through the parted air the pair ascends.

LXX

The chariot, towering, threads the fiery sphere,
And rises thence into the lunar reign.
This, in its larger part they find as clear
As polished steel, when undefiled by stain;
And such it seems, or little less, when near,

As what the limits of our earth contain:
Such as our earth, the last of globes below,
Including seas, which round about it flow.

LXXI
Here doubly waxed the paladin's surprize,
To see that place so large, when viewed at hand;
Resembling that a little hoop in size,
When from the globe surveyed whereon we stand,
And that he both his eyes behoved to strain,
If he would view Earth's circling seas and land;
In that, by reason of the lack of light,
Their images attained to little height.

LXXII
Here other river, lake, and rich champaign
Are seen, than those which are below descried;
Here other valley, other hill and plain,
With towns and cities of their own supplied;
Which mansions of such mighty size contain,
Such never he before of after spied.
Here spacious hold and lonely forest lay,
Where nymphs for ever chased the panting prey.

LXXIII
He, that with other scope had thither soared,
Pauses not all these wonder to peruse:
But led by the disciple of our Lord,
His way towards a spacious vale pursues;
A place wherein is wonderfully stored
Whatever on our earth below we lose.
Collected there are all things whatsoe'er,
Lost through time, chance, or our own folly, here.

LXXIV
Nor here alone of realm and wealthy dower,
O'er which aye turns the restless wheel, I say:

I speak of what it is not in the power
Of Fortune to bestow, or take away.
Much fame is here, whereon Time and the Hour,
Like wasting moth, in this our planet prey.
Here countless vows, here prayers unnumbered lie,
Made by us sinful men to God on high:

LXXV
The lover's tears and sighs; what time in pleasure
And play we here unprofitably spend;
To this, of ignorant men the eternal leisure,
And vain designs, aye frustrate of their end.
Empty desires so far exceed all measure,
They o'er that valley's better part extend.
There wilt thou find, if thou wilt thither post,
Whatever thou on earth beneath hast lost.

LXXVI
He, passing by those heaps, on either hand,
Of this and now of that the meaning sought;
Formed of swollen bladders here a hill did stand,
Whence he heard cries and tumults, as he thought.
These were old crowns of the Assyrian land
And Lydian — as that paladin was taught —
Grecian and Persian, all of ancient fame;
And now, alas! well-nigh without a name.

LXXVII
Golden and silver hooks to sight succeed,
Heaped in a mass, the gifts which courtiers bear,
— Hoping thereby to purchase future meed —
To greedy prince and patron; many a snare,
Concealed in garlands, did the warrior heed,
Who heard, these signs of adulation were;
And in cicalas, which their lungs had burst,
Saw fulsome lays by venal poets versed.

LXXVIII
Loves of unhappy end in imagery
Of gold or jewelled bands he saw exprest;
Then eagles' talons, the authority
With which great lords their delegates invest:
Bellows filled every nook, the fume and fee
Wherein the favourites of kings are blest:
Given to those Ganymedes that have their hour,
And reft, when faded is their vernal flower.

LXXIX
O'erturned, here ruined town and castle lies,
With all their wealth: "The symbols" (said his guide)
"Of treaties and of those conspiracies,
Which their conductors seemed so ill to hide."
Serpents with female faces, felonies
Of coiners and of robbers, he descried;
Next broken bottles saw of many sorts,
The types of servitude in sorry courts.

LXXX
He marks mighty pool of porridge spilled,
And asks what in that symbol should be read,
And hears 'twas charity, by sick men willed
For distribution, after they were dead.
He passed a heap of flowers, that erst distilled
Sweet savours, and now noisome odours shed;
The gift (if it may lawfully be said)
Which Constantine to good Sylvester made.

LXXXI
A large provision, next, of twigs and lime
— Your witcheries, O women! — he explored.
The things he witnessed, to recount in rhyme
Too tedious were; were myriads on record,
To sum the remnant ill should I have time.

'Tis here that all infirmities are stored,
Save only Madness, seen not here at all,
Which dwells below, nor leaves this earthly ball.

LXXXII
He turns him back, upon some days and deeds
To look again, which he had lost of yore;
But, save the interpreter the lesson reads,
Would know them not, such different form they wore.
He next saw that which man so little needs,
— As it appears — none pray to Heaven for more;
I speak of sense, whereof a lofty mount
Alone surpast all else which I recount.

LXXXIII
It was as 'twere a liquor soft and thin,
Which, save well corked, would from the vase have drained;
Laid up, and treasured various flasks within,
Larger or lesser, to that use ordained.
That largest was which of the paladin,
Anglantes' lord, the mighty sense contained;
And from those others was discerned, since writ
Upon the vessel was ORLANDO'S WIT.

LXXXIV
The names of those whose wits therein were pent
He thus on all those other flasks espied.
Much of his own, but with more wonderment,
The sense of many others he descried,
Who, he believed, no dram of theirs had spent;
But here, by tokens clear was satisfied,
That scantily therewith were they purveyed;
So large the quantity he here surveyed.

LXXXV
Some waste on love, some seeking honour, lose
Their wits, some, scowering seas, for merchandise,

Some, that on wealthy lords their hope repose,
And some, befooled by silly sorceries;
These upon pictures, upon jewels those;
These on whatever else they highest prize.
Astrologers' and sophists' wits mid these,
And many a poet's too, Astolpho sees.

LXXXVI
Since his consent the apostle signified
Who wrote the obscure Apocalypse, his own
He took, and only to his nose applied,
When (it appeared) it to its place was gone;
And henceforth, has Sir Turpin certified,
That long time sagely lived king Otho's son;
Till other error (as he says) again
Deprived the gentle baron of his brain.

LXXXVII
The fullest vessel and of amplest round
Which held the wit Orlando erst possessed,
Astolpho took; nor this so light he found,
As it appeared, when piled among the rest.
Before, from those bright spheres, now earthward bound,
His course is to our lower orb addressed,
Him to a spacious palace, by whose side
A river ran, conducts his holy guide.

LXXXVIII
Filled full of fleeces all its chambers were,
Of wool, silk, linen, cotton, in their hue,
Of diverse dyes and colours, foul and fair.
Yarns to her reel from all those fleeces drew,
In the outer porch, a dame of hoary hair.
On summer-day thus village wife we view,
When the new silk is reeled, its filmy twine
Wind from the worm, and soak the slender line.

LXXXIX
A second dame replaced the work when done
With other; and one bore it off elsewhere;
A third selected from the fleeces spun,
And mingled by that second, foul from fair.
"What is this labour?" said the peer to John;
And the disciple answered Otho's heir,
"Know that the Parcae are those ancient wives,
That in this fashion spin your feeble lives.

XC
"As long as one fleece lasts, life in such wise
Endureth, nor outlasts it by a thought.
For Death and Nature have their watchful eyes
On the hour when each should to his end be brought.
The choicest threads are culled for Paradise,
And, after, for its ornaments are wrought;
And fashioned from the strands of foulest show
Are galling fetters for the damned below."

XCI
On all the fleeces that erewhile were laid
Upon the reel, and culled for other care,
The names were graved on little plates, which made
Of silver, or of gold, or iron, were,
These piled in many heaps he next surveyed;
Whence an old man some skins was seen to bear,
Who, seemingly unwearied, hurried sore,
His restless way retracing evermore.

XCII
That elder is so nimble and so prest,
That he seems born to run; he bears away
Out of those heaps by lapfulls in his vest
The tickets that the different names display.
Wherefore and whither he his steps addrest,

To you I shall in other canto say,
If you, in sign of pleasure, will attend,
With that kind audience ye are wont to lend.

CANTO 35

ARGUMENT
The apostle praises authors to the peer.
Duke Aymon's martial daughter in affray,
Conquers the giant monarch of Argier,
And of the good Frontino makes a prey.
She next from Arles defies her cavalier,
And, while he marvels who would him assay,
Grandonio and Ferrau she with her hand
And Serpentine unhorses on the strand.

I
Madonna, who will scale the high ascent
Of heaven, to me my judgment to restore,
Which, since from your bright eyes the weapon went,
That pierced my heart, is wasting evermore?
Yet will not I such mighty loss lament,
So that it drain no faster than before;
But — ebbing further — I should fear to be
Such as Orlando is described by me.

II
To have anew that judgment, through the skies,
I deem there is no need for me to fly
To the moon's circle, or to Paradise;
For, I believe, mine is not lodged so high.
On your bright visage, on your beauteous eyes,
Alabastrine neck, and paps of ivory,
Wander my wits, and I with busy lip,
If I may have them back, these fain would sip.

III
Astolpho wandered through that palace wide,
Observing al the future lives around:
When those already woven he had spied
Upon the fatal wheel for finish wound,
He a fair fleece discerned that far outvied
Fine gold, whose wondrous lustre jewels ground,
Could these into a thread be drawn by art,
Would never equal by the thousandth part.

IV
The beauteous fleece he saw with wondrous glee
Equalled by none amid that countless store;
And when and whose such glorious life should be,
Longed sore to know. "This," (said the apostle hoar,
Concealing nothing of its history,)
"Shall have existence twenty years before,
Dating from THE INCARNATE WORD, the year
Shall marked my men with M and D appear;

V
"And, as for splendor and for substance fair,
This fleece shall have no like or equal, so
Shall the blest age wherein it shall appear
Be singular in this our world below;
Because all graces, excellent and rare,
Which Nature or which Study can bestow,
Or bounteous Fortune upon men can shower,
Shall be its certain and eternal dower.

VI
"Between the king of rivers' horns," (he cries,)
"Stands what is now a small and humble town.
Before it runs the Po, behind it lies
A misty pool of marsh; this — looking down
The stream of future years — I recognize

First of Italian cities of renown;
Not only famed for wall and palace rare,
But noble ways of life and studies fair.

VII
"Such exaltation, reached so suddenly,
Is not fortuitous nor wrought in vain;
But that is may his worthy cradle be,
Whereof I speak, shall so the heaven ordain.
For where men look for fruit they graff the tree,
And study still the rising plant to train;
And artist uses to refine the gold
Designed by him the precious gem to hold.

VIII
"Nor ever, in terrestrial realm, so fine
And fair a raiment spirit did invest,
And rarely soul so great from realms divine
Has been, or will be, thitherward addrest,
As that whereof THE ETERNAL had design
To fashion good Hippolytus of Este:
Hippolytus of Este shall he be hight,
On whom so rich a gift of God shall light.

IX
"All those fair graces, that, on many spent,
Would have served many wholly to array,
Are all united for his ornament,
Of whom thou hast entreated me to say.
To prop the arts, the virtues is he sent;
And should I seek his merits to display,
So long a time would last my tedious strain,
Orlando might expect his wits in vain."

X
'Twas so Christ's servant with the cavalier
Discoursed; they having satisfied their view

With sight of that fair mansion, far and near,
That whence conveyed were human lives, the two
Issued upon the stream, whose waves appear
Turbid with sand and of discoloured hue;
And found that ancient man upon the shore,
Who names, engraved on metal, thither bore.

XI
I know not if you recollect; of him
I speak, whose story I erewhile suspended,
Ancient of visage, and so swift of limb,
That faster far than forest stag he wended.
With names he filled his mantle to the brim,
Aye thinned the pile, but ne'er his labour ended;
And in that stream, hight Lethe, next bestowed,
Yea, rather cast away, his costly load.

XII
I say, that when upon the river side
Arrives that ancient, of his store profuse,
He all those names into the turbid tide
Discharges, as he shakes his mantle loose.
A countless shoal, they in the stream subside;
Nor henceforth are they fit for any use;
And, out of mighty myriads, hardly one
Is saved of those which waves and sand o'errun.

XIII
Along that river and around it fly
Vile crows and ravening vultures, and a crew
Of choughs, and more, that with discordant cry
And deafening din their airy flight pursue;
And to the prey all hurry, when from high
Those ample riches they so scattered view;
And with their beak or talon seize the prey:
Yet little distance they their prize convey.

XIV
When they would raise themselves in upward flight,
They have not strength the burden to sustain;
So that parforce in Lethe's water light
The worthy names, which lasting praise should gain.
Two swans there are amid those birds, as white,
My lord, as is your banner's snowy grain;
Who catch what names they can, and evermore
With these return securely to the shore.

XV
Thus, counter to that ancient's will malign,
Who them to the devouring river dooms,
Some names are rescued by the birds benign;
Wasteful Oblivion all the rest consumes.
Now swim about the stream those swans divine,
Now beat the buxom air with nimble plumes,
Till, near that impious river's bank, they gain
A hill, and on that hill a hallowed fane.

XVI
To Immortality 'tis sacred; there
A lovely nymph, that from the hill descends,
To the Lethean river makes repair;
Takes from those swans their burden, and suspends
The names about an image, raised in air
Upon a shaft, which in mid fane ascends;
There consecrates and fixes them so fast,
That all throughout eternity shall last.

XVII
Of that old sire, and why he would dispense
Idly, all those fair names, as 'twould appear,
And of the birds and holy place, from whence
The nymph was to the river seen to steer,
The solemn mystery, and the secret sense,

Astolpho, marvelling, desired to hear;
And prayed the man of God would these unfold,
Who to the warrior thus their meaning told.

XVIII
"There moves no leaf beneath, thou hast to know,
But here above some sign thereof we trace;
Since all, in Heaven above or Earth below,
Must correspond, though with a different face.
That ancient, with his sweeping beard of snow,
By nought impeded and so swift of pace,
Works the same end and purpose in our clime,
As are on earth below performed by Time.

XIX
"The life of man its final close attains,
When on the wheel is wound the fatal twine;
There fame, and here above the mark remains;
For both would be immortal and divine,
But for that bearded sire's unwearied pains,
And his below, that for their wreck combine.
One drowns them, as thou seest, mid sand and surges.
And one in long forgetfulness immerges.

XX
"And even, as here above, the raven, daw,
Vulture, and divers other birds of air,
All from the turbid water seek to draw
The names, which in their sight appear most fair;
Even thus below, pimps, flatterers, men of straw,
Buffoons, informers, minions, all who there
Flourish in courts, and in far better guise
And better odour, than the good and wise;

XXI
"And by the crowd are gentle courtiers hight,
Because they imitate the ass and swine:

When the just Parcae or (to speak aright)
Venus and Bacchus cut their master's twine,
— These base and sluggish dullards, whom I cite —
Born but to blow themselves with bread and wine,
In their vile mouths awhile such names convey,
Then drop the load, which is Oblivion's prey.

XXII
"But as the joyful swans, that, singing sweet,
Convey the medals safely to the fane,
So they whose praises poets well repeat,
Are rescued from oblivion, direr pain
Than death. O Princes, wary and discreet,
That wisely tread in Caesar's steps, and gain
Authors for friends! They, doubt it not, shall save
Your noble names from Lethe's laxy wave.

XXIII
"Rare as those gentle swans are poets too,
That well the poet's name have merited,
As well because it is Heaven's will, that few
Great rulers should the paths of glory tread,
As through foul fault of sordid lordlings, who
Let sacred Genius beg his daily bread;
Who putting down the Virtues, raise the tribe
Of Vices, and the liberal arts proscribe.

XXIV
"Believe it, that these ignorant men should be
Blind and deprived of judgment, is God's doom;
Who makes them loathe the light of poetry,
That envious Death may wholly them consume.
Besides that Song can quicken and set free
Him that is prisoned in the darkness tomb,
Though foul his name, if Cirrha him befriend.
Its savour myrrh and spikenard shall transcend.

XXV

"Aeneas not so pious, nor of arm
So strong Achilles, Hector not so bold,
Was, as 'tis famed; and mid the nameless swarm,
Thousands and thousands higher rank might hold:
But gift of palace and of plenteous farm,
Bestowed by heirs of them, whose deeds they told,
Have moved the poet with his honoured hand,
To place them upon Glory's highest stand.

XXVI

"Augustus not so holy and benign
Was as great Virgil's trumpet sounds his name,
Because he savoured the harmonious line.
His foul proscription passes without blame.
That Nero was unjust would none divine,
Nor haply would he suffer in his fame,
Though Heaven and Earth were hostile, had he known
The means to make the tuneful tribe his own.

XXVII

"Homer a conqueror Agamemnon shows,
And makes the Trojan seem of coward vein,
And from the suitors, faithful to her vows,
Penelope a thousand wrongs sustain:
Yet — would'st thou I the secret should expose? —
By contraries throughout the tale explain:
That from the Trojan bands the Grecian ran;
And deem Penelope a courtezan.

XXVIII

"What fame Eliza, she so chaste of sprite,
On the other hand, has left behind her, hear!
Who widely is a wanton baggage hight,
Solely that she to Maro was not dear,
Marvel not this should cause me sore despite,

And if my speech diffusive should appear.
Authors I love, and pay the debt I owe,
Speaking their praise; an author I below!

XXIX
"There earned I, above all men, what no more
Time nor yet Death from me shall take away;
And it behoved our Lord, of whom I bore
Such testimony, so my paints to pay.
It grieves me much for them, on whom her door
Courtesy closes on a stormy day;
Who meagre, pale, and worn with hopeless suit,
Knock night and day, and ever without fruit.

XXX
Henceforth with that apostle let the peer
Remain; for I have now to make a spring
As far as 'tis from heaven to earth; for here
I cannot hang for ever on the wing.
I to the dame return, who was whilere
Wounded by jealousy with cruel sting.
I left her where, successively o'erthrown,
Three kings she quickly upon earth had strown;

XXXII
And afterwards arriving in a town,
At eve, which on the road to Paris lay,
Heard tidings of Rinaldo's victory blown;
And how in Arles the vanquished paynim lay.
— Sure, her Rogero with the king is gone —
As soon as reappears the dawning day,
Towards fair Provence, whither (as she hears)
King Charlemagne pursues, her way she steers.

XXXIII
She towards Provence, by the nearest road,
So journeying, met a maid of mournful air;

Who, though her cheeks with tears were overflowed,
Was yet of visage and of manners fair.
She was it, so transfixed with Love's keen goad,
Who sighed for Monodante's valiant heir,
Who at the bridge had left her lord a thrall,
When with King Rodomont he tried a fall.

XXXIV
She sought one of an otter's nimbleness,
By water and by land, a cavalier
So fierce, that she that champion — to redress
Her wrongs — might match against the paynim peer.
When good Rogero's lady, comfortless,
To that fair dame, as comfortless, drew near,
Her she saluted courteously, and next
Demanded by what sorrow she was vext.

XXXV
Flordelice marked the maid, that, in her sight,
Appeared a warrior fitted for her needs;
And of the bridge and river 'gan recite,
Where Argier's mighty king the road impedes;
And how he had gone nigh to slay her knight;
Not that more doughty were the monarch's deeds;
But that the wily paynim vantage-ground
In that streight bridge and foaming river found.

XXXVI
"Are you (she said) so daring and so kind,
As kind and daring you appear in show,
Venge me of him that has my lord confined,
And makes me wander thus, opprest with woe,
For love of Heaven; or teach me where to find
At least a knight who can resist the foe,
And of such skill that little boot shall bring
His bridge and river to the pagan king.

XXXVII
"Besides that so you shall achieve an end,
Befitting courteous man and cavalier,
You will employ your valour to befriend
The faithfullest of lovers far and near.
His other virtues I should ill commend,
So many and so many, that whoe'er
Knoweth not these, may well be said to be
One without ears to hear or eyes to see."

XXXVIII
The high-minded maid, to whom aye welcome are
All noble quests, by which she worthily
May hope a great and glorious name to bear,
Straight to the paynim's bridge resolves to hie;
And now so much the more — as in despair —
Wends willingly, although it were to die:
In that she, ever with herself at strife,
Deeming Rogero lost, detested life.

XXXIX
"O loving damsel (she made answer), I
Offer mine aid, for such as 'tis, to do
The hard and dread adventure, passing by
Causes beside that move me, most that you
A matter of your lover testify,
Which I, in sooth, hear warranted of few;
That he is constant; for i'faith I swear,
I well believed all lovers perjured were."

XL
With these last words a sigh that damsel drew,
A sigh which issued from her heart; then said:
"Go we"; and, with the following sun, those two
At the deep stream arrived and bridge of dread:
— Seen of the guard, that on his bugle blew

A warning blast, when strangers thither sped —
The pagan arms him, girds his goodly brand,
And takes upon the bridge his wonted stand;

XLI
And as the maid appears in martial scale,
The moody monarch threatens her to slay,
Unless her goodly courser and her mail,
As an oblation to the tomb she pay.
Fair Bradamant who knew the piteous tale,
How murdered by him Isabella lay,
The story gentle Flordelice had taught;
Replied in answer to that paynim haught.

XLII
"Wherefore, O brutish man, for your misdeed
Should penance by the innocent be done?
'Tis fitting to appease her you should bleed;
You killed her, and to all the deed is known.
So that, of trophied armour or of weed
Of those so many, by your lance o'erthrown,
Your armour should the blest oblation be,
And you the choicest victim, slain by me;

XLIII
"And dearer shall the gift be from my hand;
Since I a woman am, as she whilere;
Nor save to venge her have I sought this strand;
In this desire alone I hither steer:
But first, 'tis good some pact we understand,
Before we prove our prowess with the spear:
You shall do by me, if o'erthrown, what you
By other prisoners have been wont to do.

XLIV
"But if, as I believe and trust, you fall,
I will your horse and armour have (she cried),

And taking down all others from the wall,
Hang on the tomb alone those arms of pride;
And will that you release each warlike thrall."
— "The pact is just (King Rodomont replied),
But those, my prisoners, are not here confined,
And therefore cannot be to you consigned.

XLV
"These have I sent into mine Africk reign;
But this I promise thee, and pledge my fay;
If, by strange fortune, thou thy seat maintain,
And I shall be dismounted in the fray;
Delivered, all, shall be the captive train,
Within what time suffices to convey
An order thither, that they our of hand
'Should do what thou, if conqueror, may'st command.

XLVI
"But art thou undermost, as fitter were,
And, as thou surely wilt be, I from thee
Not therefore will thy forfeit armour tear,
Nor shall thy name inscribed, as vanquished, be.
To thy bright face, bright eyes, and beauteous hair,
All breathing love and grace, the victory
Will I resign; let it suffice that thou
Then stoop to love me, as thou hatest now.

XLVII
"To fall by me thou needest not disdain;
I with such strength, such nerve am fortified."
Somedeal she smiled; but smiled in bitter vein;
Savouring of anger more than aught beside.
She spake not to that haughty man again,
To the bridge-end returned the damsel, plied
Her courser with the rowels, couched her spear,
And rode to meet the furious cavalier.

XLVIII
King Rodomont prepares his course to run;
Comes on at speed; and with such mighty sound
Echoes that bridge, the thundering noise might stun
The ears of many distant from the ground.
The golden lance its wonted work has done;
For that fierce Moor, in tourney so renowned,
This from the saddle lifts, in air suspends,
Then headlong on the narrow bridge extends.

XLIX
Scarce for her horse the martial damsel can
Find space to pass, when she has thrown her foe;
And little lacked, and mighty risque she ran
Of falling into that deep stream below:
But, born of wind and flame, good Rabican
So dextrous was, and could so lightly go,
He picked a path along the outer ledge,
And could have paced upon a faulchion's edge.

L
The damsel wheeled, towards the cavalier
Returned, and him bespoke in sportive way;
"Who is the loser now to thee is clear,
And who is undermost in this assay."
Silent remained the monarch of Argier,
Amazed, that woman him on earth should lay.
He cannot, or he will not speak; and lies
On earth, like one astound, in idiot guise.

LI
Silent and sad, he raised himself from ground,
And when he some few paces thence had gone,
His shield unbraced and helm and mail unbound,
He flung against the tomb; and thence, alone,
Afoot the moody monarch left that ground:

Yet not till he had given command to one
(Of his four squires was he) to do his hest
Relating to those captives, as exprest.

LII
He parts; and save that in a caverned cell
He dwelt, no further news of him were known:
Meanwhile the harness of that infidel
Bradamant hung upon the lofty stone;
And having thence removed all plate and shell
Wherewith (as by the writing it was shown)
The cavaliers of Charles their limbs had drest,
She moved not, nor let other move, the rest.

LIII
Besides the arms of Monodantes' heir
Were those of Sansonet and Olivier,
Who, bound in search of good Orlando, were
Thither conducted by the road most near.
The day before here taken was the pair,
And sent by that proud paynim to Argier:
These warriors' arms the martial maid bade lower
From that fair tomb, and stored them in the tower.

LIV
All others, taken from the paynim train,
Bradamant left suspended from the stone;
Mid these a king's, that idly and in vain,
Had thither, seeking Frontalatte, gone:
I say his arms, that ruled Circassia's reign;
Who, after wandering long, by date and down,
Here to his grief another courser left,
And lightly went his way, of arms bereft.

LV
Stript of his armour and afoot, did part
That paynim monarch from the bridge of dread;

As Rodomont permitted to depart
Those other knights that in his faith were bred:
But to his camp to wend he had no heart,
For there he was ashamed to show his head:
Since, in such fashion, thither to return
After his boasts, had been too foul a scorn.

LVI
Yet still with new desire the warrior burned
To seek her, fixed alone in his heart's core;
And such the monarch's chance, he quickly learned
(I cannot tell you who the tidings bore)
She was towards her native land returned.
Hence, as Love spurs and goads him evermore,
He bowns him straight her footsteps to pursue:
But I to Bradamant return anew.

LVII
When she in other writing had displaid
How she had freed that passage from the foe,
To mournful Flordelice the martial maid,
She that still held her weeping visage low,
Turned her, and courteously that lady prayed
To tell her whither she designed to go.
To her afflicted Flordelice replied:
"To Arles, where camp the paynims, would I ride.

LVIII
"Which bark (I hope) and fitting company,
To carry me to Africk may afford;
Nor will I halt upon my way, till I
Once more rejoin my husband and my lord;
All means and measures there resolved to try,
That may release him from his jailer's ward;
And should the Saracen deceitful prove,
Others, and others yet, I mean to move."

LIX
"My company (replied the martial fair)
For some part of the road, I offer thee,
Till we have sight of Arles; then to repair
Thither, will pray you, for the love of me,
To find King Agramant's Rogero there,
Whose glorious name is spread o'er land and sea,
And render to that knight this goodly horse,
Whence the proud Moor was flung in martial course.

LX
"Say thus, from point to point, `A cavalier
That would in combat prove his chivalry,
And to the world at large would fain make clear
Thy breach of faith with him, that thou may'st be
Ready and well prepared for the career,
Gave me this horse, that I might give it thee.
He bids thee promptly mail and corslet dight,
And wait him, who with thee will wage the fight.'

LXI
"Say this and nought beside, and would he hear
My name, declare that 'tis to thee unknown."
With wonted kindness cried that dame, "I ne'er
In spending life itself, not words alone,
Should weary in your service; since whilere
You would in my behalf as much have done."
Her Aymon's daughter thanked in courteous strain,
And to her hand consigned Frontino's rein.

LXII
Through long days' journey, by that river-shore,
Together go the lovely pilgrim pair,
Till they see Arles, and hear the hollow roar.
Of billows breaking on the sea-beach bare.
Almost without the suburbs, and before

The furthest barrier, stops the martial fair;
To furnish Flordelice what time might need
For the conveyance of Rogero's steed.

LXIII
She forward rode, within the enclosure sped,
And o'er the bridge and through the gateway wended,
And (furnished with a guide, who thither led)
To young Rogero's inn; and there descended.
She to the Child, as bid, her message said,
And gave the courser, to her care commended:
Then (for she waits not for an answer) speeds
In haste to execute her proper needs.

LXIV
Rogero stands confused; he finds no end
To his perplexing thoughts, and cannot see
Who should defy him, who that message send,
To speak him ill, and do him courtesy.
Who thus as faithless him should reprehend,
Or any reprehend, whoe'er it be,
Nor knows he nor imagines; least of all
On Bradamant the knight's suspicions fall.

LXV
To think 'twas Rodomont the youthful peer
Was more inclined than any other wight;
And wherefore even from him he this should hear,
Muses, nor can the cause divine aright;
Save him, in all the world the cavalier
Knows not of one, that has him at despite.
Meanwhile Dordona's lady craved the field;
And loud that martial damsel's bugle pealed.

LXVI
To Agramant and King Marsilius flew
The news, that one craved battle on the plain.

Serpentine stood by chance before the two,
And gained their leave to don his plate and chain,
And vowed to take that haughty man; the crew
Of people over wall and rampart strain;
Nor child nor elder was there, but he pressed
To see which champion should bestir him best.

LXVII
In beauteous arms and costly surcoat drest,
Serpentine of the star to combat sped;
The ground he at the first encounter prest;
As if equipt with wings, his courser fled.
The damsel flew his charger to arrest,
And by the bride to that paynim led,
Exclaiming: "Mount, and bid your monarch send
A knight that better can with me contend."

LXVIII
The Moorish king, that on the rampart's height
Stood, with a mighty following, next the plain,
Marking the joust, much marvelled at the sight
Of the foe's courtesy to him of Spain.
"He takes him not, although he may of right,"
He cries i' the hearing of the paynim train.
Serpentine comes, and, as the maid commands,
A better warrior of that king demands.

LXIX
Grandonio de Volterna, fierce of mood,
And in all Spain the proudest cavalier,
The second for that fell encounter stood,
Such favour had his suit obtained whilere.
"To thee thy courtesy shall do no good,"
He threats, "for if unhorsed in the career
A prisoner to my lord shalt thou be led:
But, if I fight as wonted, thou art dead."

LXX

She cries, "I would not thy discourtesy
Should make me so forget my courteous vein,
But that aforehand I should caution thee
Back to thy fortress to return again,
Ere on hard earth thy bones shall battered be.
Go tell thy king no champion of thy grain
I seek, but hither come to crave the fight
With warrior that is worthy of my might."

LXXI

Bradamant's sharp and stinging answer stirred
The paynim's fury to a mighty flame;
So that, without the power to speak a word,
He wheeled his courser, filled with rage and shame;
Wheeling as well, at that proud paynim spurred
Her horse with levelled lance the warlike dame.
As the charmed weapon smites Grandonio's shield,
With heels in air, he tumbles on the field.

LXXII

To him the high-minded damsel gave his horse,
And said, "Yet was this fate to thee foreshown,
Instead of craving thus the knightly course,
Better mine embassy wouldst thou have done.
Some other knight, that equals me in force,
I pray thee bid the Moorish king send down,
Nor weary me, by forcing me to meet
Champions like thee, untried in martial feat."

LXXIII

They on the walls, that know not who the peer
That in the joust so well maintains his seat,
Name many a warrior, famous in career,
That often make them shake in fiercest heat.
Brandimart many deem the cavalier;

More guesses in renowned Rinaldo meet;
Many would deem Orlando was the knight,
But that they knew his pitiable plight.

LXXIV
The third encounter craved Lanfusa's son,
And cried, "Not that I better hope to fare,
But that to warriors who this course have run,
My fall may furnish an excuse more fair."
Next, with all arms that martial jousters don,
Clothed him, and of a hundred steeds that were
Ready for service, kept in lordly stall,
For speed and action chose the best of all.

LXXV
He bowned him for the tournay, on his side
But first saluted her and she the knight.
"If 'tis allowed to ask," (the lady cried,)
"Tell me in courtesy how ye are hight."
In this Ferrau the damsel satisfied,
Who rarely hid himself form living wight.
"Ye will I not refuse," (subjoined the dame)
"Albeit I to meet another came."

LXXVI
— "And who?" the Spaniard said; — the maid replied,
"Rogero"; and pronounced the word with pain.
And, in so saying, her fair face was dyed
All over with the rose's crimson grain.
She after added, "Hither have I hied,
To prove how justly famed his might and main.
No other care have I, no other call,
But with that gentle youth to try a fall."

LXXVII
She spoke the word in all simplicity,
Which some already may in malice wrest.

Ferrau replied, "Assured I first must be
Which of us two is schooled in warfare best,
If what has chanced to many, falls on me,
Hither, when I return, shall be addrest,
To mend my fault, that gentle cavalier,
With whom you so desire to break a spear."

LXXVIII
Discoursing all this while, the martial maid
Spake with her beavor up, without disguise:
Ferrau, as that fair visage he surveyed,
Perceived he was half vanquished by its eyes.
And to himself, in under tone, he said,
"He seems an angel sent from Paradise;
And, though he should not harm me with his lance,
I am already quelled by that sweet glance."

LXXIX
They take their ground, and to the encounter ride,
And, like those others, Ferrau goes to ground;
His courser Bradamant retained, and cried,
"Return, and keep thy word with me as bound."
Shamed, he returned, and by his monarch's side,
Among his peers, the young Rogero found;
And let the stripling know the stranger knight,
Without the walls, defied him to the fight.

LXXX
Rogero (for not yet that warrior knows
What champion him in duel would assail)
Nigh sure of victory, with transport glows,
And bids his followers bring his plate and mail;
Nor having seen beneath those heavy blows
The rest dismounted, makes his spirit quail.
But how he armed, how sallied, what befell
That knight, in other canto will I tell.

CANTO 36

ARGUMENT
While with the fierce Marphisa at despite
Duke Aymon's daughter wages fierce affray,
One and the other host engage in fight.
With Bradamant Rogero wends his way.
With other war disturbs their great delight
Marphisa bold; but when that martial may
Has for her brother recognized the peer,
They end their every strife with joyous cheer.

I
Where'er they be, all hearts of gentle strain
Still cannot choose but courtesy pursue;
For they from nature and from habit gain
What they henceforth can never more undo.
Alike the heart that is of churlish vein,
Where'er it be, its evil kind will shew.
Nature inclines to ill, through all her range,
And use is second nature, hard to change.

II
Among the warriors of antiquity
Much gentleness and courtesy appear,
Virtues but seldom seen with us; while we
Of evil ways, on all sides, see and hear.
Hippolytus, when you, with ensignry
Won from the foe, and with his captive gear
Adorned our temples; and his galleys bore,
Laden with prey, to your paternal shore;

III
All the inhuman deeds which wrought by hand
Of Moor, or Turk, or Tartar ever were,
(Yet not by the Venetians' ill command,

That evermore the praise of justice bear,)
Were practised by that foul and evil band
Of soldiers, who their mercenaries are.
Of those so many fires not now I tell
Which on our farms and pleasant places fell.

IV

Though a foul vengeance in that blow was meant
Mainly at you, who being at Caesar's side,
When Padua by his leaguering host was pent,
'Twas known, that oft, through you, was turned aside
More than one ravening flame, and oft was spent
The fire, in fane and village blazing wide:
What time the destined mischief ye withstood,
As to your inborn courtesy seemed good.

V

This will I pass, nor their so many more
Discourteous and despiteous doings tell,
Save one alone, whereat from rock-stone hoar
Whene'er the tale is told warm tears might well.
That day you sent your family before,
Thither, my lord, where, under omens fell,
Your foes into a well protected seat,
Abandoning their barks, had made retreat.

VI

As Hector and Aeneas, mid the flood,
Fire to the banded fleet of Greece applied,
I Hercules and Alexander viewed,
Urged by too sovereign ardour, side by side,
Spurring before all others in their mood,
Even within the hostile ramparts ride;
And prick so far, the second 'scaped with pain,
And on the foremost closed the opposing train.

VII
Feruffine 'scaped, the good Cantelmo left,
What counsel, Sora's duke, was thine, what heart,
When thy bold son thou saw'st, of helm bereft,
Amid a thousand swords, when — dragged apart —
Thou saw'st his young head from his shoulders cleft,
A shipboard, on a plank? I, on my part,
Marvel, that seeing but the murder done,
Slew thee not, as the faulchion slew thy son.

VIII
Cruel Sclavonian! say, whence hast thou brought
Thy ways of warfare? By what Scythian rite
To slay the helpless prisoner is it taught,
Who yields his arms, nor fends himself in fight?
Was it a crime he for his country fought?
Ill upon thee the sun bestows his light.
Remorseless aera, which hast filled the page
With Atreus', Tantalus', Thyestes' rage!

IX
Barbarian! thou madest shorter by the head
The boldest of his age, on whom did beam
The sun 'twixt pole and pole, 'twixt Indus' bed
And where he sinks in Ocean's western stream;
Whose years and beauty might have pity bred
In Anthropophagus, in Polypheme;
Not thee; that art in wickedness outdone
By any Cyclops, any Lestrigon.

X
I ween, mid warriors in the days of yore,
No such example was; they all, in field,
Were full of gentleness and courteous lore,
Nor against conquered foe their bosom steeled.
Not only gentle Bradamant forbore

To harm the knights whom, smitten on the shield,
Her lance unhorsed; but for the vanquished crew
Detained their steeds, that they might mount anew.

XI
I of that lady fair, of mickle might,
Told you above, how she had overthrown
Serpentine of the Star in single fight,
Grandonio and Ferrau, and then upon
Their coursers had replaced each baffled knight.
I told moreover how the third was gone
Rogero to defy to the career,
Upon her call, who seemed a cavalier.

XII
Rogero heard the call in joyous vein,
And bade his arms be brought; now while in view
Of Agramant he donned the plate and chain,
Those lords the former question moved anew;
Who was the knight, that on the martial plain
The manage of the lance so quaintly knew?
And of Ferrau, who spake with him whilere,
Craved, if to him was known that cavalier.

XIII
"Be ye assured," to them Ferrau replied,
"He is not one of those I hear you cite
To me (for I his open face descried).
Rinaldo's youthful brother seemed the knight.
But since his doughty valour I have tried,
And wot not such is Richardetto's might,
I ween it is his sister, who, I hear,
Resembles much in mien that martial peer.

XIV
"The damsel equals well, so Rumour tells,
Rinaldo, and every paladin in fray.

But brother she and cousin both excels,
Measured by that which I have seen to-day."
Hearing him, while upon her praise he dwells,
As the sky reddens with the morning ray,
Rogero's face is flushed with crimson hue,
And his heart throbs, nor knows he what to do.

XV Stung, at these tidings, by the amorous dart — Within, new fire inflames the cavalier; And strait, together with the burning smart, Shoots through his bones a chill, produced by fear; Fear, that new wrath had stifled in her heart That mighty love, wherewith she burned whilere. Confused he stands, irresolute and slow, And undecided if to stay or go.

XVI
Now fierce Marphisa, who was there, and prest
By huge desire to meet the stranger wight,
And armed withal (for, save in iron vest,
Her seldom would you find by day or night).
Hearing Rogero is in armour drest,
Fearing to lose the honour of the fight,
If first that champion with the stranger vies;
Thinks to prevent the youth and win the prize.

XVII
She leapt upon her horse, and thither hied
Where Aymon's daughter on the listed plain,
With palpitating heart, upon her side,
Waited Rogero; whom the damsel fain
Would make her prisoner, and but schemed to guide
Her lance in mode the stripling least to pain.
Marphisa from the city portal fares,
And on her gallant helm a phoenix wears.

XVIII
Whether the maid would publish, in her pride,
That she was single in the world, for might;
Or whether by that symbol signified,

That she would live, exempt from bridal rite.
Her closely Aymon's martial daughter eyed;
When seeing not those features, her delight,
She craves the damsel's name before they move,
And hears that it is she who joys her love:

XIX
Or rather she, that gentle lady thought,
Had joyed her love; and whom she hated so,
Her to Death's door her anger would have brought,
Unless she venged her sorrow on the foe.
She wheeled her courser round, with fury fraught,
Less with desire to lay her rival low,
Than with the lance to pierce her in mid breast,
And put her every jealousy at rest.

XX
Parforce to ground must go the royal maid,
To prove it hard or soft the listed plain,
And be with such unwonted scorn appaid,
That she is nearly maddened by disdain.
Scarce was she thrown, before her trenchant blade
She bared, and hurried to avenge the stain.
Cried Aymon's daughter, no less proud of heart,
"What art thou doing? Thou my prisoner art."

XXI
"Though I have courtesy for others, none"
(She said) "from me, Marphisa, shalt thou find.
Since evermore I hear of thee, as one
To pride and every churlishness inclined."
Marphisa, at these words, was heard to groan,
As roars in some sea-rock the prisoned wind.
She screamed an answer; but its sense was drowned
(Such rage confused that damsel) in the sound.

XXII
She whirls this while her faulchion, and would fain
Wound horse or rider in the paunch or breast;
But Aymon's watchful daughter turns the rein;
And on one side her courser leaps; possest
With furious anger and with fierce disdain,
She at her opposite her lance addrest;
And hardly touched the damsel, ere, astound,
Marphisa fell, reversed upon the ground.

XXIII
Scarce down, Marphisa started from the plain,
Intent fell mischief with her sword to do,
Bradamant couched her golden spear again,
And yet again the damsel overthrew.
Yet Bradamant, though blest with might and main,
Was not so much the stronger of the two
As to have flung the maid in every just,
But that such power was in the lance's thrust.

XXIV
This while some knights (some knights upon our side,
I say) forth issuing from the city, go
Towards the field of strife, which did divide
The squadrons, here and there, of either foe
— Not half a league of one another wide —
Seeing their knight such mighty prowess show;
Their knight, but whom no otherwise they knew
Than as a warrior of the Christian crew.

XXV
Troyano's generous son, who had espied
This band approaching to the city-wall,
For due defence would every means provide,
And every peril, every case forestall:
And orders many to take arms, who ride

Forth from the ramparts, at the monarch's call.
With them Rogero goes, in armour cased,
Balked of the battle by Marphisa's haste.

XXVI
The enamoured youth, with beating heart, intent,
Stood by, the issue of the just to view.
For his dear cousin fearing the event,
In that he well Marphisa's valour knew;
— At the beginning I would say — when, bent
On mischief, fiercely closed the furious two:
But when that duel's turn the stripling eyes,
He stands amazed and stupid with surprize;

XXVII
And when he saw unfinished was the fight,
At the first onset, like the justs whilere,
Misdoubting some strange accident, in sprite,
Sore vexed, this while remained the cavalier.
To either maid wished well that youthful knight;
For both were loved, but not alike were dear.
For this the stripling's love was fury, fire;
For that 'twas rather fondness than desire.

XXVIII
If so Rogero could with honour do,
He willingly the warriors would divide;
But his companions, in the fear to view
Victory with King Charles's knight abide,
Esteeming him the better of the two,
Break in between and turn their arms aside;
Upon the other part, the Christian foes
Advance, and both divisions come to blows.

XXIX
On this side and that other, rings the alarm,
Which in those camps is sounded every day,

Bidding the unmounted mount, the unarmed arm,
And all their standards seek, without delay,
Where, under separate flags, the squadrons swarm,
More than one shrilling trump is heard to bray;
And as their rattling notes the riders call,
Rousing the foot, beat drum and ataball.

XXX

As fierce as thought could think, 'twixt either host
Kindled the fell and sanguinary fray.
The daring damsel, fair Dordona's boast,
Sore vexed and troubled, that in the affray
She cannot compass what she covets most,
— Marphisa with avenging steel to slay, —
Now here, not there, amid the medley flies,
Hoping to see the youth for whom she sighs.

XXXI

By the eagle argent on the shield of blue
She recognized Rogero, mid the rest.
With eyes and thought intent, she stops to view
The warrior's manly shoulders and his breast,
Fair face and movements full of graceful shew;
And then the maid, with mickle spite possest,
Thinking another joys the stripling's love,
Thus speaks, as sovereign rage and fury move.

XXXII

"Shall then another kiss those lips so bright
And sweet, if those fair lips are lost to me?
Ah! never other shall in thee delight;
For it not mine, no other's shalt thou be.
Rather than die alone and of despite,
I with this hand will slay myself and thee,
That if I lose thee here, at least in hell
With thee I to eternity may dwell.

XXXIII
"If thou slay'st me, there is good reason, I
The comfort too of vengeance should obtain;
In that all edicts and all equity
The death of him that causes death ordain;
Nor, since you justly, I unjustly, die,
Deem I that thine is equal to my pain.
I him who seeks my life, alas! shall spill,
Thou her that loves and worships thee wouldst kill.

XXXIV
"My hand, why hast thou not the hardiment
To rive with steel the bosom of my foe,
That me so many times to death has shent,
Under the faith of love, in peaceful show;
Him, who to take my life can now consent,
Nor even have pity of my cruel woe?
Dare, valiant heart, this impious man to slay,
And let his death my thousand deaths appay!"

XXXV
So said, she spurred at him amid the throng;
But, first — "Defend thee, false Rogero!" — cried.
"No more, if I have power, in spoil and wrong,
Done to a virgin heart, shalt thou take pride."
Hearing that voice the hostile ranks among,
He deems — and truly deems — he hears his bride;
Whose voice the youth remembers in such wise,
That mid a thousand would he recognize.

XXXVI
Her further meaning well did he divine,
Weening that him she in that speech would blame,
For having broke their pact; and — with design,
The occasion of his failure to proclaim, —
Of his desire for parley made a sign:

But she, with vizor closed, already came,
Raging and grieved, intent, with vengeful hand,
To fling the youth; nor haply upon sand.

XXXVII
Rogero, when he saw her so offended,
Fixed himself firmly in his arms and seat,
He rests his lance, but holds the stave suspended,
So that it shall not harm her when they meet,
She that to smite and pierce the Child intended,
Pitiless, and inflamed with furious heat,
Has not the courage, when she sees him near,
To fling, or do him outrage with the spear.

XXXVIII
Void of effect, 'tis thus their lances go;
And it is well; since Love with burning dart,
Tilting this while at one and the other foe,
Has lanced the enamoured warriors in mid-heart.
Unable at the Child to aim her blow,
The lady spent her rage in other part,
And mighty deeds achieved, which fame will earn,
While overhead the circling heavens shall turn.

XXXIX
Above three hundred men in that affray
In little space by her dismounted lie,
Alone that warlike damsel wins the day;
From her alone the Moorish people fly.
To her Rogero, circling, threads his way,
And says: "Unless I speak with you I die.
Hear me, for love of heaven! — what done I done,
Alas! that ever mine approach ye shun?"

XL
As when soft southern breezes are unpent,
Which with a tepid breath from seaward blow,

The snows dissolve, and torrents find a vent,
And ice, so hard erewhile, is seen to flow;
At those entreaties, at that brief lament,
Rinaldo's sister's heart is softened so;
Forthwith compassionate and pious grown;
Which anger fain had made more hard than stone.

XLI
Would she not, could she not, she nought replied,
But spurred aslant the ready Rabicane,
And, signing to Rogero, rode as wide
As she could wend from that embattled train;
Then to a sheltered valley turned aside,
Wherein embosomed was a little plain.
In the mid lawn a wood of cypress grew,
Whose saplings of one stamp appeared to view.

XLII
Within that thicket, of white marble wrought,
Is a proud monument, and newly made;
And he that makes enquiry, here is taught
In few brief verses who therein is laid.
But of those lines, methinks, took little thought,
Fair Bradamant, arriving in that glade.
Rogero spurred his courser, and pursued
And overtook that damsel in the wood.

XLIII
But turn we to Marphisa, that anew
During this space was seated on her steed,
And sought again the valiant champion, who
At the first onset cast her on the mead;
And saw, how from the mingling host withdrew
Rogero, after that strange knight to speed;
Nor deemed the youth pursued in love; she thought
He but to end their strife and quarrel sought.

XLIV
She pricks her horse behind the two, and gains,
Well nigh as soon as they, that valley; how
Her coming thither either lover pains,
Who lives and loves, untaught by me, may know:
But sorest vext sad Bradamant remains;
Beholding her whence all her sorrows flow.
Who shall persuade the damsel but that love
For young Rogero brings her to that grove?

XLV
And him perfidious she anew did name.
— "Perfidious, was it not enough (she said)
That I should know thy perfidy from fame,
But must the witness of thy guilt be made?
I wot, to drive me from thee is thine aim;
And I, that thy desires may be appaid,
Will die; but strive, in yielding up my breath,
She too shall die, the occasion of my death."

XLVI
Angrier than venomed viper, with a bound,
So saying, she upon Marphisa flies;
And plants so well the spear, that she, astound,
Fell backward on the champaigne in such guise,
Nigh half her helm was buried in the ground:
Nor was the damsel taken by surprise:
Nay, did her best the encounter to withstand;
Yet with her helmed head she smote the sand.

XLVII
Bradamant who will die, or in that just
Will put to death Marphisa, rages so,
She has no mind again with lance to thrust,
Again that martial maid to overthrow:
But thinks her head to sever from the bust,

Where it half buried lies, with murderous blow:
Away the enchanted lance that damsel flings,
Unsheathes the sword, and from her courser springs.

XLVIII
But is too slow withal; for on her feet
She finds Marphisa, with such fierce disdain
Inflamed, at being in that second heat
So easily reversed upon the plain,
She hears in vain exclaim, in vain entreat,
Rogero, who beholds their strife with pain.
So blinded are the pair with spite and rage,
That they with desperate fury battle wage.

XLIX
At half-sword's engage the struggling foes;
And — such their stubborn mood — with shortened brand
They still approach, and now so fiercely close,
They cannot choose but grapple, hand to hand.
Her sword, no longer needful, each foregoes;
And either now new means of mischief planned.
Rogero both implores with earnest suit:
But supplicates the twain with little fruit.

L When he entreaties unavailing found, The youth prepared by force to part the two; Their poniards snatched away, and on the ground, Beneath a cypress-tree, the daggers threw. When they no weapons have wherewith to wound, With prayer and threat, he interferes anew: But vainly; for, since better weapons lack, Each other they with fists and feet attack.

LI
Rogero ceased not from his task; he caught,
By hand or arm, the fiercely struggling pair,
Till to the utmost pitch of fury wrought
The fell Marphisa's angry passions were.
She, that this ample world esteemed at nought,

Of the Child's friendship had no further care.
Plucked from the foe, she ran to seize her sword,
And fastened next upon that youthful lord.

LII
"Like a discourteous man and churl ye do,
Rogero, to disturb another's fight;
A deed (she cried) this hand shall make ye rue,
Which I intend, shall vanquished both." The knight
Sought fierce Marphisa's fury to subdue
With gentle speech; but full of such despite
He found her, and inflamed with such disdain,
All parley was a waste of time and pain.

LIII
At last his faulchion young Rogero drew;
For ire as well had flushed that cavalier:
Nor is it my belief, that ever shew
Athens or Rome, or city whatsoe'er
Witnessed, which ever so rejoiced the view,
As this rejoices, as this sight is dear
To Bradamant, when, through their strife displaced,
Every suspicion from her breast is chased.

LIV
Bradamant took her sword, and to descry
The duel of those champions stood apart.
The god of war, descended from the sky,
She deemed Rogero, for his strength and art:
If he seemed Mars, Marphisa to the eye
Seemed an infernal Fury, on her part.
'Tis true, that for a while the youthful knight
Against that damsel put not forth his might.

LV
He knew the virtues of that weapon well,
Such proof thereof the knight erewhile had made.

Where'er it falls parforce is every spell
Annulled, or by its stronger virtue stayed.
Hence so Rogero smote, it never fell
Upon its edge or point, but still the blade
Descended flat: he long this rule observes;
Yet once he from his patient purpose swerves.

LVI
In that, a mighty stroke Marphisa sped,
Meaning to cleave the brainpan of her foe:
He raised the buckler to defend his head,
And the sword smote upon its bird of snow,
Nor broke nor bruised the shield, by spell bested;
But his arm rang astounded by the blow;
Nor aught but Hector's mail the sword had stopt,
Whose furious blow would his left arm have lopt;

LVII
And had upon his head descended shear,
Whereat designed to strike the savage fair.
Scarce his left arm can good Rogero rear;
Can scarce the shield and blazoned bird upbear.
All pity he casts off, and 'twould appear
As in his eyes a lighted torch did glare.
As hard as he can smite, he smites; and woe
To thee, Marphisa, if he plants the blow!

LVIII
I cannot tell you truly in what wise,
That faulchion swerves against a cypress-stock,
In such close-serried ranks the saplings rise,
Buried above a palm within the block.
As this the mountain and the plain that lies
Beneath it, with a furious earthquake rock;
And from that marble monument proceeds
A voice, that every mortal voice exceeds.

LIX

The horrid voice exclaims, "Your quarrel leave;
For 'twere a deed unjust and inhumane,
That brother should of life his sister reave,
Or sister by her brother's hand be slain.
Rogero and Marphisa mine, believe!
The tale which I deliver is not vain.
Seed of one father, on one womb ye lay;
And first together saw the light of day.

LX

"Galaciella's children are ye, whom
She to Rogero, hight the second, bare.
Whose brothers, having, by unrighteous doom,
Of your unhappy sire deprived that fair,
Not heeding that she carried in her womb
Ye, who yet suckers of their lineage are,
Her in a rotten carcase of a boat,
To founder in mid ocean, set afloat.

LXI

"But Fortune, that had destined you whilere,
And yet unborn, to many a fair emprize,
Your mother to that lonely shore did steer,
Which overright the sandy Syrtes lies.
Where, having given you birth, that spirit dear
Forthwith ascended into Paradise.
A witness of the piteous case was I,
So Heaven had willed, and such your destiny!

LXII

"I to the dame as descent burial gave
As could be given upon that desert sand.
Ye, well enveloped in my vest, I save,
And bear to Mount Carena from the strand;
And make a lioness leave whelps and cave,

And issue from the wood, with semblance bland.
Ye, twice ten months, with mickle fondness bred,
And from her paps the milky mother fed.

LXIII
"Needing to quit my home upon a day,
And journey through the country, (as you can
Haply remember ye) we are on our way,
Were overtaken by an Arab clan.
Those robbers thee, Marphisa, bore away:
While young Rogero 'scaped, who better ran.
Bereaved of thee, they woful loss I wept,
And with more watchful care thy brother kept.

LXIV
"Rogero, if Atlantes watched thee well,
While yet he was alive, thou best dost know.
I the fixed stars had heard of thee foretell,
That thou shouldst perish by a treacherous foe
In Christian land; and still their influence fell
Was ended, laboured to avert the blow;
Nor having power in fine thy will to guide,
I sickened sore, and of my sorrow died.

LXV
"But here, before my death, for in this glade
I knew thou should'st with bold Marphisa fight,
I with huge stones, amassed by hellish aid,
Had this fair monument of marble dight;
And I to Charon with loud outcries said;
I would not he should hence convey my sprite,
Till here, prepared in deadly fray to strive,
Rogero and his sister should arrive.

LXVI
"Thus has my spirit for this many a day
Waited thy coming in these beauteous groves;

So be no more to jealous fears a prey,
O Bradamant, because Rogero loves.
But me to quit the cheerful realms of day,
And seek the darksome cloisters it behoves."
Here ceased the voice; which in the Child amazed
And those two damsels mighty marvel raised.

LXVII
Gladly a sister in the martial queen
Rogero, she in him a brother knows;
Who now embrace, nor move her jealous spleen,
That with the love of young Rogero glows;
And citing what, and when, and where had been
Their childish deeds, as they to memory rose,
In summing up past times, more sure they hold
The things whereof the wizard's spirit told.

LXVIII
Rogero from Marphisa does not hide,
How Bradamant to him at heart is dear;
And by what obligations he is tied
In moving words relates the cavalier;
Nor ceases till he has, on either side,
Turned to firm love the hate they bore whilere.
When, as a sign of peace, and discord chased,
They, at his bidding, tenderly embraced.

LXIX
Marphisa to Rogero makes request
To say what sire was theirs, and what their strain;
And how he died; by banded foes opprest,
Or at close barriers, was the warrior slain?
And who it was had issued the behest
To drown their mother in the stormy main?
For of the tale, if ever heard before,
Little or nothing she in memory bore.

LXX

"Of Trojan ancestors are we the seed,
Through famous Hector's line," (Rogero said,)
"For after young Astyanax was freed,
From fierce Ulysses and the toils he spread,
Leaving another stripling in his stead,
Of his own age, he out of Phrygia fled.
Who, after long and wide sea-wandering, gained
Sicily's shore, and in Messina reigned.

LXXI

"Part of Calabria within Faro held
The warrior's heirs, who after a long run
Of successors, departed thence and dwelled
In Mars' imperial city: more than one
Famed king and emperor, who that list have swelled,
In Rome and other part has filled the throne;
And from Constantius and good Constantine,
Stretched to the son of Pepin, is their line.

LXXII

"Rogero, Gambaron, Buovo hence succeed;
And that Rogero, second of the name,
Who filled our fruitful mother with his seed;
As thou Atlantes may'st have heard proclaim.
Of our fair lineage many a noble deed
Shalt thou hear blazed abroad by sounding Fame."
Of Agolant's inroad next the stripling told,
With Agramant and with Almontes bold;

LXXIII

And how a lovely daughter, who excelled
In feats of arms, that king accompanied;
So stout she many paladins had quelled;
And how, in fine, she for Rogero sighed;
And for his love against her sire rebelled;

And was baptized, and was Rogero's bride;
And how a traitor loved (him Bertram name)
His brother's wife with an incestuous flame;

LXXIV
And country, sire, and brethren two betrayed,
Hoping he so the lady should have won;
How Risa open to the foe he laid,
By whom all scathe was on those kinsmen done;
How Agolant's two furious sons conveyed
Their mother, great with child, and six months gone,
Aboard a helmless boat, and with its charge,
In wildest winter, turned adrift the barge.

LXXV
Valiant Marphisa, with a tranquil face,
Heard young Rogero thus his tale pursue,
And joyed to be descended of a race
Which from so fair a font its waters drew:
Whence Clermont, whence renowned Mongrana trace
Their noble line, the martial damsel knew;
Blazoned through years and centuries by Fame,
Unrivalled, both, in arms of mighty name.

LXXVI
When afterwards she from her brother knew
Agramant's uncle, sire, and grandsire fell,
In treacherous wise, the first Rogero slew
And brought to cruel pass Galacielle,
Marphisa could not hear the story through:
To him she cries, "With pardon, what you tell,
Brother, convicts you of too foul a wrong,
In leaving thus our sire unvenged so long.

LXXVII
"Could'st thou not in Almontes and Troyane,
As dead whilere, your thirsty faulchion plant,

By you those monarch's children might be slain.
Are you alive, and lives King Agramant?
Never will you efface the shameful stain,
That ye, so often wronged, not only grant
Life to that king, but as your lord obey;
Lodge in his court, and serve him for his pay?

LXXVIII
"Here heartily in face of Heaven I vow,
That Christ my father worshipped, to adore;
And till I venge my parents on the foe
To wear this armour, and I will deplore
Your deed, Rogero, and deplore even now,
That you should swell the squadrons of the Moor,
Or other follower of the Moslem faith,
Save sword in hand, and to the paynim's scathe."

LXXIX
Ah! how fair Bradamant uplifts again
Her visage at that speech, rejoiced in sprite!
Rogero she exhorts in earnest vein
To do as his Marphisa counsels right;
And bids him seek the camp of Charlemagne,
And have himself acknowledged in his sight,
Who so reveres and lauds his father's worth,
He even deems him one unmatched on earth.

LXXX
In the beginning so he should have done,
(Warily young Rogero answer made,)
But, for the tale was not so fully known,
As since, the deed had been too long delaid.
Now, seeing it was fierce Troyano's son
That had begirt him with the knightly blade,
He, as a traitor, well might be abhorred,
If he slew one, accepted as his lord.

LXXXI

But, as to Bradamant whilere, he cries,
He will all measures and all means assay,
Whereby some fair occasion may arise
To leave the king; and had there been delay,
And he whilere had done in otherwise,
She on the Tartar king the fault must lay:
How sorely handled that redoubted foe
Had left him in their battle, she must know;

LXXXII

And she, that every day had sought his bed,
Must of this truth the fittest witness be.
Much upon this was answered, much was said,
Between those damsels, who at last agree;
And as their last resolve, last counsel read,
He should rejoin the paynim's ensignry,
Till he found fair occasion to resort
From Agramant's to Charles's royal court.

LXXXIII

To Bradamant the bold Marphisa cries:
"Let him begone, nor doubt am I, before
Many days pass, will manage in such wise,
That Agramant shall be his lord no more."
So says the martial damsel, nor implies
The secret purpose which she has in store.
Making his congees to the friendly twain,
To join his king Rogero turns the rein.

LXXXIV

When a complaint is heard from valley near:
All now stand listening, to the noise attent;
And to that plaintive voice incline their ear,
A woman's (as 'twould seem) that makes lament.
But I this strain would gladly finish here,

And, that I finish it, be ye content:
For better things I promise to report,
If ye to hear another strain resort.

CANTO 37

ARGUMENT
Lament and outcry loud of some that mourn,
Attract Rogero and the damsels two.
They find Ulania, with her mantle shorn
By Marganor, amid her moaning crew.
Upon that felon knight, for his foul scorn,
A fierce revenge Marphisa takes: a new
Statute that maid does in the town obtain,
And Marganor is by Ulania slain.

I
If, as in seeking other gift to gain,
(For Nature, without study, yieldeth nought)
With mighty diligence, and mickle pain,
Illustrious women day and night have wrought;
And if with good success the female train
To a fair end no homely task have brought,
So — did they for such other studies wake —
As mortal attributes immortal make;

II
And, if they of themselves sufficient were
Their praises to posterity to show,
Nor borrowed authors' aid, whose bosoms are
With envy and with hate corroded so,
That oft they hide the good they might declare,
And tell in every place what ill they know,
To such a pitch would mount the female name,
As haply ne'er was reached by manly fame.

III
To furnish mutual aid is not enow,
For many who would lend each other light.
Men do their best, that womankind should show
Whatever faults they have in open sight;
Would hinder them of rising from below,
And sink them to the bottom, if they might;
I say the ancients; as if glory, won
By woman, dimmed their own, as mist the sun.

IV
But hands or tongue ne'er had, nor has, the skill,
Does voice or lettered page the thought impart,
Though each, with all its power, increase the ill,
Diminishing the good with all its art,
So female fame to stifle, but that still
The honour of the sex survives in part:
Yet reacheth not its pitch, nor such its flight,
But that 'tis far below its natural height.

V
Not only Thomyris and Harpalice,
And who brought Hector, who brought Turnus aid,
And who, to build in Lybia crost the sea,
By Tyrian and Sidonian band obeyed;
Not only famed Zenobia, only she
Who Persian, Indian, and Assyrian frayed;
Not only these and some few others merit
Their glory, that eternal fame inherit:

VI
Faithful, chaste, and bold, the world hath seen
In Greece and Rome not only, but where'er
The Sun unfolds his flowing locks, between
The Hesperides and Indian hemisphere;
Whose gifts and praise have so extinguished been,

We scarce of one amid a thousand hear;
And this because they in their days have had
For chroniclers, men envious, false, and bad.

VII
But ye that prosper in the exercise
Of goodly labours, aye your way pursue;
Nor halt, O women, in your high emprise,
For fear of not receiving honour due:
For, as nought good endures beneath the skies,
So ill endures no more; if hitherto
Unfriendly by the poet's pen and page,
They now befriend you in our better age.

VIII
Erewhile Marullo and Pontante for you
Declared, and — sire and son — the Strozzi twain;
Capello, Bembo, and that writer, who
Has fashioned like himself the courtier train;
With Lewis Alamanni, and those two,
Beloved of Mars and Muses, of their strain
Descended, who the mighty city rule,
Which Mincius parts, and moats with marshy pool.

IX
One of this pair (besides that, of his will,
He honours you, and does you courtesies;
And makes Parnassus and high Cynthus' hill
Resound your praise, and lift it to the skies)
The love, the faith, and mind, unconquered still,
Mid threats of ruin, which in stedfast wise
To him his constant Isabel hath shown,
Render yet more your champion than his own.

X
So that he never more will wearied be
With quickening in his verse your high renown;

And, if another censures you, than he
Prompter to arm in your defence is none;
Nor knight, in this wide world, more willingly
Life in the cause of virtue would lay down:
Matter as well for other's pen he gives,
As in his own another's glory lives;

XI
And well he merits, that a dame so blest,
(Blest with all worth, which in this earthly round
Is seen in them who don the female vest,)
To him hath evermore been faithful found;
Of a sure pillar of pure truth possest
In her, despising Fortune's every wound.
Worthy of one another are the twain;
Nor better ere were paired in wedlock's chain.

XII
New trophies he on Oglio's bank has shown;
For he, mid bark and car, amid the gleam
Of fire and sword, such goodly rhymes hath strown,
As may with envy swell the neighbouring stream.
By Hercules Bentivoglio next is blown
The noble strain, your honour's noble theme;
Reynet Trivulzio and Guidetti mine,
And Molza, called of Phoebus and the Nine.

XIII
There's Hercules of the Carnuti, son
Of my own duke, who spreads his every plume
Soaring and singing, like harmonious swan,
And even to heaven uplifts your name; with whom
There is my lord of Guasto, not alone
A theme for many an Athens, many a Rome;
In his high strain he promises as well,
Your praise to all posterity to tell.

XIV
And beside these and others of our day,
Who gave you once, or give you now renown,
This for yourselves ye may yourselves purvey:
For many, laying silk and sampler down,
With the melodious Muses, to allay
Their thirst at Aganippe's well, have gone,
And still are going; who so fairly speed,
That we more theirs than they our labour need.

XV
If I of these would separately tell,
And render good account and honour due,
More than one page I with their praise should swell,
Nor ought beside would this day's canto shew;
And if on five or six alone I dwell,
I may offend and anger all the crew.
What then shall I resolve? to pass all by?
Or choose but one from such a company?

XVI
One will I choose, and such will choose, that she
All envy shall so well have overthrown,
No other woman can offend be,
If, passing others, her I praise alone:
Nor joys this one but immortality,
Through her sweet style (and better know I none):
But who is honoured in her speech and page,
Shall burst the tomb, and live through every age.

XVII
As Phoebus to his silvery sister shows
His visage more, and lends her brighter fires,
Than Venus, Maja, or to star that glows
Alone, or circles with the heavenly quires;
So he with sweeter eloquence than flows

From other lips, that gentle dame inspires;
And gives her word such force, a second sun
Seems in our days its glorious course to run.

XVIII
Mid victories born, Victoria is her name,
Well named; and whom (does she advance or stay)
Triumphs and trophies evermore proclaim,
While Victory heads or follows her array.
Another Artemisia is the dame,
Renowned for love of her Mausolus, yea
By so much greater, as it is more brave
To raise the dead, than lay them in the grave.

XIX
If chaste Laodamia, Portia true,
Evadne, Argia, Arria, and many more
Merited praise, because that glorious crew
Coveted burial with their lords of yore,
How much more fame is to Victoria due?
That from dull Lethe, and the river's shore,
Which nine times hems the ghosts, to upper light
Has dragged her lord, in death and fate's despite.

XX
If that loud-voiced Maeonian trump whilere
The Macedonian grudged Achilles, how,
Francis Pescara, O unconquered peer,
Would he begrudge thee, were he living now,
That wife, so virtuous and to thee so dear,
Thy well-earned glory through the world should blow;
And that thy name through her should so rebound,
Thou needst not crave a clearer trumpet's sound!

XXI
If all that is to tell, and all I fain
Would of that lady tell, I wished to unfold,

Though long, yet not so long, would be the stain,
But that large portion would be left untold,
While at a stand the story would remain
Of fierce Marphisa and her comrades bold;
To follow whom I promised erst, if you
Would but return to hear my song anew.

XXII
Now, being here to listen to my say,
Because I would not break my promise, I
Until my better leisure, will delay
Her every praise at length to certify.
Not that I think she needs my humble lay,
Who with such treasure can herself supply:
But simply to appay my single end,
That gentle dame to honour and commend.

XXIII
Ladies, in fine I say, that every age
Worthy of story, many a dame supplies;
But that, through jealous authors' envious rage,
Unchronicled by fame, each matron dies;
But will no more; since in the historic page
Your virtues ye, yourselves, immortalize.
Had those two damsels in this art been read,
Their every warlike deed had wider spread.

XXIV
Bradamant and Marphisa would I say,
Whose bold, victorious deeds, in battle done,
I strive to bring into the light of day;
But nine in ten remain to me unknown.
I what I know right willingly display;
As well, that all fair actions should be shown,
As well that, gentle ladies, I am bent
Ye whom I love and honour, to content.

XXV

As said, in act to go Rogero stood;
And, having taken leave, the cavalier
Withdraws his trenchant faulchion from the wood,
Which holds no more the weapon, as whilere.
When, sounding loud amid that solitude,
A cry, not distant far, arrests the peer.
Then thitherward he with those damsels made,
Prompt, if 'twere needed, to bestow his aid.

XXVI

They rode an-end; and louder waxed the sound,
And plainer were the plaintive words they heard:
When in a valley they three women found
Making that plaint, who in strange garb appeared:
For to the navel were those three ungowned,
— Their coats by some uncourteous varlet sheared —
And knowing not how better to disguise
Their shame, they sate on earth, and dared not rise.

XXVII

As Vulcan's son, that sprang (as it is versed)
Out of the dust, without a mother made,
Whom — so Minerva bade — Aglauros nursed
With sovereign care, too bold and curious maid,
Seated in car, by him constructed first
To hide his hideous feet, was erst conveyed;
So that which never is to sight revealed,
Sitting, those mournful damsels kept concealed.

XXVIII

At that dishonest sight and shameful, glows
Each martial damsel's visage, overspread
With the rich dyes of Paestum's crimson rose,
When vernal airs their gentle influence shed.
Bradamant marked them; and that one of those

Was Ulany, the damsel quickly read;
Ulany, that was sent with solemn train
From the LOST ISLE to royal Charlemagne;

XXIX
And recognised the other two no less;
From them she saw, when she saw Ulany;
But now to her directed her address.
As the most honoured of those ladies three,
Demanding, who so full of wickedness,
So lawless was and so unmannerly,
That he those secrets to the sight revealed,
Which Nature, as she could, 'twould seem, concealed.

XXX
Ulany, that in Bradamant descried,
— Known both by voice and ensignry — the maid,
Who some few days before those knights of pride
With her victorious lance on earth had laid,
How, in a town not far remote — replied —
An evil race, by pity never swayed,
Besides that they their raiment thus had shorn,
Had beat them, and had done them other scorn.

XXXI
What of the shield became, she cannot say,
Nor knows she those three monarchs' destiny,
Who guided her so long upon her way;
If killed, or led into captivity;
And says that she herself has ta'en her way,
Albeit to fare a-foot sore irksome be,
To appeal to royal Charlemagne, assured
By him such outrage will not be endured.

XXXII
To hear, yet more to see, so foul a wrong,
Disturbed the Child and damsels' placid air

And beauteous visage, whose bold hearts and strong
No less compassionate than valiant were.
They now, all else forgetting, ere the tongue
Of Ulany prefers demand, or prayer,
That they would venge them on their cruel foe,
In haste towards the felon's castle go.

XXXIII
With one constant, the maids and cavalier,
By their great goodness moved, from plate and mail
Had stript their upper vests, well fitting gear
Those miserable ladies' shame to veil.
Bradamant suffers not, that, as whilere,
Sad Ulany shall tramp by hill and dale;
But seats her on her horse's croup; so do
Her comrades by those other damsels two.

XXXIV
To gentle Bradamant Ulania showed
The nearest way to reach the castle height;
While comfort Bradamant on her bestowed,
Promising vengeance for that foul despite.
They leave the vale, and by a crooked road
And long ascend, now wheeling left, now right:
Nor till the sun is hidden in the sea,
Upon their weary way repose the three.

XXXV
They to a hamlet on the summit wound,
Scaling the mountain's steep and rugged side;
And such good shelter and good supper found,
As could by such rude quarters be supplied.
Arriving there, they turned their eyes around,
And full of women every place espied,
Some old, some young; nor, mid so large a clan,
Appeared the visage of a single man.

XXXVI

Not more bold Jason wondered, and the train
Which sailed with him, that Argonautic crew,
Seeing those dames that had their husbands slain,
Fathers and sons and brethren, — so that through
All Lemnos' pleasant isle, by hill or plain,
Of manly visage they beheld not two —
Than here Rogero, and the rest who go
With good Rogero, wonder at this show.

XXXVII

The martial damsels bid for Ulany,
And those who came with her, provide attire;
And gowns that eve are furnished for the three,
If meaner than their own, at least entire.
To him a woman of that villagery
Valiant Rogero summons, to inquire
Where are the men; in that he none descries;
And thus to him that village wife replies:

XXXVIII

"What haply is to you a wonderment,
This crowd of womankind, where man is none,
To us is grave and grievous punishment,
Who, banished here, live wofully alone;
And, that such exile us may more torment,
From those so loved, as brother, father, son,
A long divorce and cruel we sustain,
As our fell tyrant pleases to ordain.

XXXIX

"Sent to these confines from his land, which lies
But two leagues distant thence, where we were born,
Us in this place the fell barbarian sties,
Having first done us many a brutal scorn;
And has with death and all extremities

Threatened our kinsmen and ourselves forlorn,
If they come hither, or he hears report
We harbour them, when hither they resort.

XL
"He to our name is such a deadly foe,
He will not have us nearer than I shewed,
Now have us of our kin approached, as though
Infection from the female sex ensued.
Already have the greenwood trees laid low
Their leafy honours twice, and twice renewed,
Since our lord's fury to such pitch arose,
Now is there one his phrensy to oppose.

XLI
"For he has spread such passing fear among
The people, death can cause no worse affright;
In that, beside his natural love of wrong,
He is endowed with more than human might.
He than a hundred other men more strong,
In body is of a gigantic height:
Nor us his vassals he molests alone;
But worse by him to stranger dame is done.

XLII
"If your own honour, sir, and of those three,
Beneath your charge, to you in aught is dear,
'Twill safer, usefuller, and better be
To leave this road, and by another steer.
This leads you to his tower, described by me,
To prove the savage use that cruel peer
Has there established, to the shame and woe
Of dame or cavalier, who thither go.

XLIII
"This castellain or tyrant, Marganor
(So name the felon knight) than whom more fell

Nero was not, nor other heretofore,
If other be, whose actions Fame doth swell,
Thirsts for man's blood, but thirsts for woman's more
Than wolf for blood of lambs; and bids expel
With shame all females, that, in evil hour,
Their fortune has conducted to his tower."

XLIV
How in that impious man such fury grew,
Asked young Rogero and those damsels twain,
And prayed she would in courtesy pursue,
Yea, rather from the first her tale explain.
"That castle's lord, fierce, and inhumane,
Yet for a while his wicked heart concealed,
Nor what he was so suddenly revealed.

XLV
"For in the lifetime of his sons, a pair
That differed much from the paternal style,
(Since they the stranger loved; and loathers were
Of cruelty and other actions vile)
Flourished the courtesies and good customs there,
And there were gentle deeds performed this while:
For. albeit avaricious was the sire,
He never crossed the youths in their desire.

XLVI
"The cavaliers and dames who journeyed by
That castle, there so well were entertained,
That they departed, by the courtesy
Of those two kindly brothers wholly gained.
In the holy orders of fair chivalry
Alike the youthful pair had been ordained.
Cylander one, Tanacro hight the other;
Bold, and of royal mien each martial brother;

XLVII

"And truly were, and would have been alway
Worthy of every praise and fame, withal
Had they not yielded up themselves a prey
To that uncurbed desire, which Love we call;
By which they were seduced from the right way
Into foul Error's crooked maze; and all
The good that by those brethren had been wrought,
Waxed, in a moment, rank, corrupt and naught.

XLVIII

"It chanced, that in their father's fortilage,
A knight of the Greek emperor's court did lie;
With him his lady was; of manners sage;
Nor fairer could be craved by wishful eye:
For her Cylander felt such amorous rage,
He deemed, save he enjoyed her, he should die;
He deemed that, when the lady should depart,
His soul as well would from his body part:

XLIX

"And, for he knew 'twas useless to entreat,
Devised to make her his by force of hand;
Armed, and in silence, near his father's seat,
Where must pass knight and lady, took his stand.
Through natural daring and through amorous heat,
He with too little thought the matter planned;
So that, when he beheld the knight advance,
He issued, to assail him, lance to lance.

L

"To overthrow him, at first shock he thought,
And to win dame and palm in the career;
But that Greek knight, in warlike strife well-taught,
Shivered, like glass, his breastplate with the spear.
The bitter tidings to the sire were brought,

Who bade bear home the stripling on a bier:
He, finding he was dead, loud mourning made,
And him in earth, beside his fathers, layed.

LI
"Yet harbourage and welcome as before
Had he who sought it; neither more nor less:
Because Tanacro in his courteous lore
Equalled his brother as in gentleness.
Thither that very year, from foreign shore,
A baron and his wife their steps address:
A marvel he of valour, and as fair
As could be said, is she, and debonnair.

LII
"No fairer was the dame than chaste and right,
And well deserving every praise; the peer
Derived of generous stock, and bold in fight,
As ever champion, of whose fame we hear;
And 'tis well fitting, that such valiant wight
Should joy a thing so excellent and dear,
Olindro he, the lord of Lungavilla,
And she, his lady wife, yclept Drusilla.

LIII
"No less for her the young Tanacro glows,
Than for that other burned Cylander sore;
Who brought erewhile to sad and bitter close
The wicked love he to that lady bore.
The holy, hospitable laws he chose
To violate no less than he, before
He would endure, that him, with venomed sting,
His new desire to cruel death should bring.

LIV
"But he, because he has before his eyes
The example of his elder brother slain,

Thinks to bear off the lady in such wise,
That bold Olindro cannot venge the stain.
Straight spent in him, not simply weakened, lies
The virtue, wont Tancaro to sustain
Above that flood of vice, in whose profound
And miry waters Marganor lay drowned.

LV
"That night, he in deep silence bade array
A score of armed men; and next conveyed
Into some caverns, bordering on the way,
And distant from the tower, his ambuscade.
The roads were broken, and the following day
Olindro from all sides was overlaid;
And, though he made a brave defence and long,
Of wife and life was plundered by that throng.

LVI
"Olindro slain, they led his lady fair
A captive thence, o'erwhelmed with sorrow so,
That she refused to live, and made her prayer,
Tanacro, as a grace, would death bestow:
Resolved to die, she leapt, in her despair,
From a high bank into a vale below;
But death was to the wretched dame refused;
Who lay with shattered head and sorely bruised.

LVII
"She could not to the castle be conveyed
In other guise than borne upon a bier:
Her (so Tanacro bids) prompt leeches aid;
Because he will not lose a prey so dear;
And while to cure Drusilla they essayed,
Busied about their spousals was the peer:
In that so chaste a lady and so fair,
A wife's and not a leman's name should wear.

LVIII
"He had no other thought, no other aim,
No other care, nor spake beside of ought;
Saw he had wronged her, and took all the blame,
And, as he could, to amend his error wrought:
But all was vain; the more he loved the dame,
The more be to appease her anger sought,
So much more was her hate; so much more will,
So much more thirst had she that youth to kill.

LIX
"Yet hatred blinded not her judgment so,
But what the dame could clearly comprehend,
That she, if she would strike the purposed blow,
Must feign, and secret snares for him extend.
And her desire beneath another show
(Which is but how Tanacro to offend)
Must mask; and make him think, that overblown
Is her first love, and turned to him alone.

LX
"Her face speaks peace; while vengeance inwardly
Her heart demands, and but to this attends:
She many things revolves, accepts, puts by;
Or, as of doubtful issue, some suspends.
Deeming she can, if she resolves to die,
Compass her scheme, with this resolve she ends;
And better how can she expend her breath
Than in avenging dear Olindro's death?

LXI
"She showed herself all joyful, on her part,
And feigned that she desired those nuptials sore;
Nor only showed an unreluctant heart;
But all delay and hindrance overbore.
Painted and tired above the rest with art,

'Twould seem, she of her husband thinks no more:
But 'tis her will, that in her country's wise
Tanacro shall their wedding solemnize.

LXII
"The custom howsoever was not true,
Which as her country's use she certified;
But, because never thought within her grew
Which she could spend on any thing beside,
A falsehood she devised, whence hope she drew
Of killing him by whom her husband died;
And told Tanacro — and the manner said —
How in her country's fashion she would wed.

LXIII
" `The widow that a husband's bed ascends,
Ere she approach the bridegroom (said that fair)
The spirit of the dead, whom she offends,
Must soothe with solemn office, mass and prayer;
In the holy temple making her amends,
Where her first husband's bones entombed are.
— That sacrifice performed — to bind their vows
The nuptial ring the bridegroom gives the spouse.

LXIV
" `But the holy priest, while this shall be about,
Upon wine, thither for that purpose sped,
His orisons, appropriate and devout,
Blessing withal the liquor, shall have said;
Then from the flask into a cup pour out,
And give the blessed wine to them that wed.
But 'tis the spouse's part to take the cup;
And first that vessel's cordial beverage sup.'

LXV
"The unsuspecting youth, who takes no heed
What nuptials, ordered in her wise, import,

At her own pleasure bids the dame proceed,
So that she cut his terms of waiting short;
Nor does the miserable stripling read
She would avenge Olindro in that sort;
And on one object is so sore intent,
He sees but that, on that alone is bent.

LXVI
"An ancient woman, seized with her whilere,
And left, withal, obeyed Drusilla, who
That beldam called and whispered in her ear,
So as that none beside could hear the two —
A poison of quick power for me prepare,
Such as, I know, thou knowest how to brew;
And bottle it; for I have found a way
The traitorous son of Marganor to slay;

LXVII
" `And me and thee no less can save,' (she said,)
`And this at better leisure will explain.'
The woman went her ways, the potion made,
And to the palace bent her steps again:
A flask of Candian sweet wine she purveyed,
Wherewith Drusilla sheathed that deadly bane;
And kept the beverage for the nuptial day;
For now had ceased all hindrance and delay.

LXVIII
"On the fixt day she seeks the temple, dight
With precious jewels and with goodly gear;
Where her lord's tomb, befitting such a knight,
Built by her order, two fair pillars rear.
The holy office there, with solemn rite,
Is sung, which men and women troop to hear;
And — gay, beyond his usage — with his heir,
Begirt by friends, Sir Marganor is there.

LXIX

"When the holy obsequies at last were o'er,
And by the priest was blest the poisoned draught,
He into a fair golden cup did pour
The wine, as by Drusilla had been taught,
She drank what sorted with her sex; nor more
Than would effect the purpose which she sought:
Then to the bridegroom, with a jocund eye,
Handed the draught, who drained the goblet dry.

LXX

"The cup returned — Tanacro, blithe and gay,
Opened his arms Drusilla to embrace.
Then altered was her sweet and winning way,
And to a tempest that long calm gave place.
She thrust him back, she motioned him away;
She seemed to kindle in her eyes and face;
And to the youth, with broken voice and dread,
— `Traitor, stand off,' — the furious lady said; —

LXXI

" `Shalt thou then joy and solace have from me,
I tears from thee, and punishment and woe?
Now these mine hands shall make an end of thee.
This, if thou know'st it not, for poison know.
Much grieve I that thou should'st too honoured be
By the executioner who deals the blow;
Should'st die a death too easy: since I wot,
For thee too shameful hand or pain is not.

LXXII

" `In seeing this thy death, it gives me pain,
My sacrifice should be completed ill;
For could I do by thee as I were fain,
Nothing should lack that purpose to fulfill.
May my sweet consort not the work disdain,

And for the imperfect deed accept the will!
That, without power to compass what I would,
I have been fain to slay thee as I could!

LXXIII
" `And that deserved punishment, which I
Cannot, as I desire, on thee bestow,
I hope thy soul shall have; hope to be nigh,
To see thee suffer, in the realms of woe.'
Her turbid eyes then raising to the sky,
With joyous face all over in a glow,
(She cried) `Olindro, take this victim's life,
With the good will of thine avenging wife;

LXXIV
" `And of our lord for me the grace obtain,
To be this day in paradise with thee,
If he reply, none cometh to your reign,
Without desert; say such I bring with me,
Who this fell impious monster, in his fane,
Offer, as my first-fruits; and what can be
A greater merit than to have suppress
Such loathsome and abominable pest?'

LXXV
"Her life, together with her speech, was spent;
And, even dead, her face appeared to glow
With joy, at having dealt such punishment
To him, that laid her cherished husband low.
If fierce Tanacro's spirit did prevent,
Of follow hers, I wiss not; but, I trow,
Prevented, for on him that venom rank
Yet faster wrought, because he deeper drank.

LXXVI
"Marganor, who beheld his only son
Fall and expire, his outstretched arms between,

Well nigh had with Tanacro died, o'erthrown
By that so sudden grief and unforeseen.
Two sons he had, and now was left alone;
Brought to that pass he by two wives had been;
This was the cause one spent his vital breath
With her own hand, that dealt the other death.

LXXVII
"Love, pity, sorrow, anger, and desire
Of death and vengeance, all together rend
And rack the childless and unhappy sire,
Who groans like sea, when wind and waves contend:
Towards the dame, with vengeful thoughts afire,
He goes, but sees that life is at an end;
And, goaded by his rage and hatred hot,
Seeks to offend her corse that feels it not.

LXXVIII
"As serpent, by the pointed spear pinned down,
Fixes his teeth in it, with fruitless spire;
Or as the mastiff runs towards a stone,
Which has been flung by some wayfaring wight,
And gnaws it in his rage, nor will be gone
Until he venge himself; 'tis so the knight,
Than any mastiff, any serpent, worse
Offends Drusilla's cold and lifeless corse.

LXXIX
"And, for he venteth not, nor slakes his mood,
By foul abuse upon the carcase done,
Among the women, a large multitude,
He springs, and there shows mercy unto none.
Mown are we with his impious sword, as strewed
Is grass with scythe, when dried by summer sun.
There is no 'scape; for straightways of our train
Are full a hundred maimed, and thirty slain.

LXXX

"He of his vassals is so held in dread,
There is no man who dares to lift his eyes:
The women with the meaner sort are fled,
And whosoever can, the temple flies.
His friends against the furious fit make head,
At last, with kind constraint and suppliant cries;
And, leaving every thing in tears below,
Him in his castle on the rock bestow.

LXXXI

"His wrath enduring still, to send away
The wretch determines all the female band:
In that, his will us utterly to slay
His people and his friends, with prayer, withstand;
And he bids punish, on that very day,
An order for us all to leave his land;
Placed such his pleasures on these confines: woe
To them that nearer to his castle go!

LXXXII

"Thus husbands from their wives divided are,
Mothers from sons: if hither to resort,
Despite that order, any one should dare,
Let none know this, who might the deed report!
For sorely mulcted for the transgression were
Many, and many slain in cruel sort.
A statute for his town next made the peer:
Of fouler law we neither read nor hear.

LXXXIII

"It wills, all women found within the vale,
(For thither even yet will some descend,)
His men with rods shall on the shoulders whale,
And into exile from those countries send;
But first their gowns shall clip, and parts unveil

That decency and natural shame offend;
And if with escort of an armed knight
Any wend thither, they are slain outright.

LXXXIV
"Those that an armed warrior's escort have,
By this ill man, to piety a foe,
Are dragged as victims to his children's grave,
Where his own hand inflicts the murderous blow.
Stript ignominiously of armour, glaive,
And steed, their champions to his prisons go;
And this can he compel; for, night and day,
A thousand men the tyrant's hest obey.

LXXXV
"And I will add, moreover, 'tis his will,
Does he free any one, he first shall swear
Upon the holy wafer, that he still
To woman, while he lives, will hatred bear.
If then these ladies and yourself to spill
Seem good to you, to yonder walls repair;
And put to proof withal, if prowess more
Or cruelty prevails in Marganor."

LXXXVI
So saying, in those maids of martial might
First she such pity moved and then disdain,
That they (had it been day instead of night)
Would then have gone against that castellain.
There rest the troop; and when Aurora's light
Serves as a signal to the starry train,
That they should all before the sun recede,
They don the cuirass and remount the steed:

LXXXVII
And now, in act to go, that company
Behind them hear the stony road resound

With a long trample, when those warlike three
Look down the vale and roll their eyes around;
And they from thence, a stone's-throw distant, see
A troop, which through a narrow pathway wound:
A score they are perhaps in number, who
On horseback, or on foot, their way pursue.

LXXXVIII
They with them on a horse a woman haul,
(Whom stricken sore in years her visage shows,)
In guise wherein some doleful criminal
Condemned to gallows, fire, or prison goes;
Who, notwithstanding that wide interval,
Is by her features known, as well as clothes:
They of the village, mid the cavalcade,
Know her for fair Drusilla's chamber maid.

LXXXIX
The chamber wench, made prisoner with his prize,
By the rapacious stripling, as I shewed,
Who being trusted with that ill emprize,
The poisoned draught of foul effect had brewed.
From the others she and those solemnites
Had kept away, suspecting what ensued:
Yea, this while, from that lordship had she fled,
Where she in safety hoped to hide her head.

XC
News being after to her foeman brought,
That she retired in Ostericche lay,
He, with intent to burn the woman, sought
To have her in his power by every way;
And finally unhappy Avarice, bought
By costly presents, and by proffered pay,
Wrought on a lord, assured upon whose lands
The beldam lived, to put her in his hands.

XCI

He on a sumpter horse the prisoner sent
To Constance-town, like merchandise addrest;
Fastened and bound in manner to prevent
The use of speech, and prisoned in a chest.
From whence that rabble, his ill instrument,
Who has all pity banished from his breast,
Had hither brought her, that his impious rage
That cruel man might on the hag assuage.

XCII

As the flood, swoln with Vesulo's thick snows,
The farther that it foams upon its way,
And, with Ticino and Lambra, seaward goes,
Ada, and other streams that tribute pay,
So much more haughty and impetuous flows;
Rogero so, the more he hears display
Marganor's guilt, and so that gentle pair
Of damsels filled with fiercer choler are.

XCIII

Them with such hatred, them with such disdain
Against the wretch so many crimes incense,
That they will punish him, despite the train
Or armed men arraid in his defence:
But speedy death appears too kind a pain,
And insufficient for such foul offence.
Better they deem, mid pangs prolonged and slow,
He all the bitterness of death should know.

XCIV

But first 'tis right that woman to unchain,
She whom the hangman-crew to death escort;
And the quick rowel and the loosened rein
Made the quick coursers make that labour short.
Never had those assaulted to sustain

Encounter of so fell and fierce a sort;
Who held it for a grace, with loss of shield,
Harness and captive dame, to quit the field;

XCV
Even as the wolf, who, laden with his prey,
Is homeward to his secret cavern bound,
And, when he deems that safest is the way,
Beholds it crost by hunter and by hound,
Flings down his load, and swiftly darts away,
Where most o'ergrown with brushwood is the ground.
Nor quicker are that band to void the vale,
Than those bold three are quicker to assail.

XCVI
Not only they the dame and martial gear,
But many horses they as well forsook;
And, as the surest refuge in their fear,
Cast themselves down from bank and caverned nook:
Which pleased the damsels and the youthful peer;
Who three of those forsaken horses took,
To mount those three, whom, through the day before,
Upon their croups the three good coursers bore.

XCVII
Thence, lightened thus, their way they thither bend,
Where that despiteous, shameful, lordship lies;
Resolved the beldam in their band shall wend,
To see Drusilla venged; in vain denies
That woman, who misdoubts the adventure's end,
And grieves, and shrieks, and weeps in piteous wise:
For flinging her upon Frontino's croup,
Rogero bears her off amid the troop.

XCVIII
They reached a summit, and from thence espied
A town with many houses, large and rich;

With nought to stop the way on any side,
As neither compassed round by wall or ditch.
A rock was in the middle, fortified
With a tall tower, upon its topmost pitch.
Fearlessly thither pricked the warriors, who
Marganor's mansion in that fortress knew.

XCIX
As soon as in the town that cavalcade
Arrived, some footmen, who kept watch and ward,
Behind those warriors closed a barricade;
While that, before, they found already barred.
And lo! Sir Marganor, with men arraid,
Some foot, some horsemen! armed was all the guard;
Who to the strangers, in few words, but bold,
The wicked custom of his lordship told.

C
Marphisa, who had planned the thing whilere
With Aymon's daughter and the youthful knight,
For answer, spurred against the cavalier;
And, valiant as she was and full of might,
Not putting in the rest her puissant spear,
Or baring that good sword, so famed in fight,
So smote him with her fist upon the head,
That on his horse's neck he fell half dead.

CI
The maid of France is with Marphisa gone,
Nor in the rear it seen Rogero's crest;
Who with those two his course so bravely run,
That, though his lance he raised not from the rest,
Six men he slew; transfixed the paunch of one,
Another's head, of four the neck or breast;
I' the sixth he broke it, whom in flight he speared:
It pierced his spine and at his paps appeared.

CII

As many as are touched, so many lie
On earth, by Bradamant's gold lance o'erthrown;
She seems a bolt, dismist form burning sky,
Which, in its fury, shivers and beats down
Whatever it encounters, far and nigh.
Some fly to plain, or castle from the town,
Others to sheltering church and house repair;
And none, save dead, are seen in street or square.

CIII

Meanwhile the hands of Marganor, behind
His back, the fierce Marphisa had made fast,
And to Drusilla's maid the wretch consigned,
Well pleased that such a care on her was cast.
To burn the town 'twas afterwards designed,
Save it repented of its errors past,
Repealed the statute Marganor had made,
And a new law, imposed by her, obeyed.

CIV

Such end to compass is no hard assay;
For, besides fearing lest Marphisa yearn
To execute more vengeance, — lest she say,
— She one and all will slaughter and will burn, —
The townsmen all were advised to the sway
And cruel statute of that tyrant stern;
But did, as others mostly do, that best
Obey the master whom they most detest.

CV

Since none dares trust another, nor his will,
— Out of suspicion — to his comrades break,
They let him banish one, another kill,
From this his substance, that his honour take.
But the heart cries to Heaven, that here is still,

Till God and saints at length to vengeance wake:
Who, albeit they due punishment suspend,
By mighty pain the long delay amend.

CVI
The rabble, full of rage and enmity,
Now seeks the wretch with word and deed to grieve;
As, it is said, all strip the fallen tree,
Which from its roots and wintry winds upheave:
Let rulers in his sad example see,
Ill doers in the end shall ill receive.
To view fell Marganor's disastrous fall,
Fit penance for his sins, pleased great and small.

CVII
Many, of whom the sister had been slain,
The mother, or the daughter, or the wife,
Seeking no more their rebel wrath to rein,
Hurry, with their own hands to take his life;
And young Rogero and the damsels twain
Can scarce defend the felon in that strife;
Whom those illustrious three had doomed to die,
Mid trouble, fear, and lengthened agony.

CVIII
To the hag, who bore such hatred to that wight,
As woman to an enemy can bear,
They give their prisoner naked, bound so tight,
He will not at one shake the cordage tear;
And she, her pains and sorrow to requite,
Crimsons the wretch's body, here and there,
With a sharp goad, which, mid that village band,
A peasant churl had put into her hand.

CIX
Nor she the courier maid, nor they that ride
With her, aye mindful how they had been shent,

Now let their hands hang idle by their side;
No less than that old crone on vengeance bent:
Such was their fierce desire, it nullified
The power to harm; but rage must have its vent.,
Him one with stones, another with her nails,
This with her teeth, with needles that, assails.

CX

As torrent one while foams in haughty tide,
When fed with mighty rain or melted snow;
And, rending form the mountain's rugged side
Tree, rock, and crop and field, the waters go:
Then comes a season when its crested pride
Is vanished, and its vigour wasted so,
A child, a woman, everywhere may tread,
And often dry-shod cross, its rugged bed.

CXI

So Marganor whilere each bound and bourn
Made tremble, whereso'er his name was heard:
Now one is come to bruise the tyrant's horn;
And now his prowess is so little feared,
That even the little children work him scorn:
Some pluck his hair and others pluck his beard.
Thence young Rogero and the damsels twain
Towards his rock-built castle turn the rein.

CXII

This without contest its possessors yield,
And the rich goods preserved in that repair.
These the friends partly spoiled, and partly dealed
To Ulany and that attendant pair.
With them, recovered was the golden shield,
And those three monarchs that were prisoned there;
Who, without arms, afoot, towards that hold
Had wended, as meseems whilere was told.

CXIII
For from the day that they were overthrown
By Bradamant, afoot, they evermore,
Unarmed, in company with her had gone,
That hither came from her so distant shore.
I know not, I, if it was better done
Or worse, by her, that they their arms forbore;
Worse, touching her defence; but better far,
If they were losers in the doubtful war.

CXIV
For she would have been dragged, — like others, whom
Armed men had thither brought beneath their guide,
(Unhappy women) to the brothers' tomb, —
And by the sacrifice knife have died.
Death, sure, is worse, and more disastrous doom
Than showing that which modesty would hide;
And they who can to force ascribe the blame,
Extinguish this and every other shame.

CXV
Before they hence depart, the martial twain
Assemble the inhabitants, to swear,
They to their wives the rule of that domain
Will leave, as well as every other care;
And that they will chastise, with heavy pain,
Whoever to oppose this law shall dare.
— In fine, man's privileges, whatsoe'er,
They swear, shall be conferred on woman here:

CXVI
Then make them promise never to bestow
Harbourage on whosoever thither sped,
Footman or cavalier, nor even allow
Any beneath a roof to hide his head,
Unless he swore by God and saints, or vow

Yet stronger made — if stronger could be said —
That he the sex's cause would aye defend,
Foe to their foes, and woman's faithful friend;

CXVII
And, if he then were wived, or ever were
— Sooner or later — linked in nuptial noose,
Still to his wife he would allegiance bear,
Nor e'er compliance with her will refuse.
Marphisa says, within the year, she there
Will be, and ere the trees their foliage lose;
And, save she find her statute in effect,
That borough fire and ruin may expect.

CXVIII
Nor hence they part ill from the filthy place,
Wherein it lay, Drusilla's corse is borne;
Her with her lord they in a tomb encase,
And, with what means the town supplies, adorn.
Drusilla's ancient woman, in this space,
Marganor's body with her goad has torn.
Who only grieves she has not wind enow,
No respite to his torture to allow.

CXIX
Beside a church, the martial damsels twain
Behold a pillar, standing in the square;
Whereon the wicked lord of the domain
Had graved that mad and cruel law; the pair,
In imitation, his helm, plate, and chain,
And shield, in guise of trophy fasten there;
And afterwards upon the pillar trace
That law they had enacted for the place.

CXX
Within the town the troop set up their rest,
Until the law is graved, of different frame

From that before upon the stone imprest,
Which every woman doom'd to death and shame.
With the intention to replace her vest,
Here from that band divides the Islandick dame;
Who deems, at court 'twere shameful to appear,
Unless adorned and mantled as whilere.

CXXI
Here Ulany remained, and in her power
Remained the wicked tyrant Marganor:
She, lest he any how, in evil hour,
Should break his bonds and injure damsel more,
Made him, one day, leap headlong from a tower,
Who never took so still a leap before.
No more of her and hers! I of the crew
That journey toward Arles, the tale pursue.

CXXII
Throughout all that and the succeeding day,
Till the forenoon, proceed those banded friends;
And, where the main-road branches, and one way
Towards the camp, to Arles the other tends,
Again embrace the lovers, and oft say
A last farewell, which evermore offends.
The damsels seek the camp; to Arles is gone
Rogero; and my canto I have done.

CANTO 38

ARGUMENT
To Arles the Child, to Charles Marphisa wends,
To be baptized, with Bradamant for guide.
Astolpho from the holy realm descends;
Through whom with sight the Nubian is supplied:
Agramant's land he with his troop offends;

But he is of his Africk realm so wide,
With Charles he bargains, that, on either side,
Two knights by strife their quarrel should decide.

I
Ye courteous ladies, who unto my strain
Kind audience lend — I read it in your cheer —
That good Rogero should depart again
So suddenly, from her that held him dear,
Displeases ye, and scarce inflicts less pain
Than that which Bradamant endured whilere:
I read you also argue, to his shame,
That feebly burned in him the amorous flame.

II
If from her side for other cause had gone,
Against that lady's will, the youthful lord;
Though in the hope more treasure to have won
Than swelled rich Croesus' or rich Crassus' hoard,
I too should deem the dart, by Cupid thrown,
Had not the heart-core of Rogero gored.
For such a sovereign joy, a prize so high
No silver and no gold could ever buy.

III
Yet to preserve our honour not alone
Deserves excuse, it also merits praise:
This to preserve, I say, when to have done
In other wise, might shame and scandal raise;
And had fair Bradamant reluctance shown,
And obstinately interposed delays,
This, as a certain sign, had served to prove
That lady's little wit or little love.

IV

For if his life, whom gentle woman loves,
As her own life she values, or before;
(I speak of one at whom young Cupid roves
With arrows which beneath the mantle gore)
His honour to his pleasure it behoves
That woman to prefer, by so much more,
As man beyond his life his honour treasures,
Esteemed by him above all other pleasures.

V

His duty good Rogero satisfied,
Following the royal lord with whom he came;
For having no fair cause to quit his side,
He could not leave the Paynim without shame;
And, if his sire had by Almontes died,
In this, King Agramant was not to blame;
Who for his parents' every past offence
Had made Rogero mighty recompense.

VI

He will perform his duty to repair
To his liege-lord; so did that martial maid;
Who had not with reiterated prayer
(As so she might have done) Rogero stayed.
The stripling may appay the warlike fair
In other season, if not now appaid;
But twice two hundred years will not atone
The crying sin of honour once foregone.

VII

To Arles-town whither had his king conveyed
His remnant of a host, he pricked anew;
While they that, since their kindred was displayed,
Had a close friendship formed — the damsels two —
Thither together go where Charles had made

His mightiest effort, with the Christian crew;
Hoping by siege or fight to break the foe,
And free his kingdom form so long a woe.

VIII
Bradamant, when she in the camp appeared,
Was greeted with a welcome warm and kind.
On all sides was she hailed, by all was cheered;
And she in this or that her head inclined.
Rinaldo, when he of her coming heard,
Met her; nor young Richardo stayed behind;
Nor Richardet; nor others of her race;
And all received the maid with joyful face.

IX
When next 'tis known, the second of the twain
Is that Marphisa, so in arms renowned,
Who from Catay unto the bounds of Spain
Had journeyed, with a thousand laurels crowned,
Nor rich nor poor within their tents remain:
The curious crowd, encompassing them round,
Press, harm, and heave each other here and there,
In the sole wish to see so bright a pair.

X
By them was Charles saluted reverently,
And the first day was this (has Turpin shown)
Marphisa had been seen to bend her knee:
For Pepin's royal son to her, alone,
Deserving of such duty seemed to be,
Mid emperors or kings that filled a throne,
Baptized or infidel, of all those named
For mighty riches, or for valour famed.

XI
Her kindly Charlemagne received, and wide
Of the pavilions met, in open view;

And, above king, and prince, and peer, beside
Himself the monarch placed that damsel true.
Who go not, are dismist; so none abide
In little time, except the good and few.
The Paladins and lords remain; without,
Is left the unrespected rabble-rout.

XII
Marphisa first began in grateful strain:
"Unconquered Caesar, glorious and august,
Who, to Alcides' strait from Indian main,
Mak'st Scythian's pale and Aethiop's race adust
Revere thy Christian cross of snowy grain,
— Of earthly monarchs thou most sage and just —
Hither thy glory, which no limits bound,
Has brought me from the world's extremest ground;

XIII
"And (to avow the truth) in jealous mood
Alone I came, alone with thee to fight;
Because I grudged that king so puissant shou'd
Exist on earth, save he observed my rite.
Hence reek they ravaged fields with Christian blood;
And yet with greater rancour and despite,
Like cruel foe, I purposed to offend,
But that it chanced, one changed me to a friend.

XIV
"When to worst harm and scaith thy bands I doom,
I find (as at my leisure I will show)
Rogero of Risa was my father, whom
An evil brother traitorously laid low.
Me my sad mother carried in her womb
Beyond the sea, and bore in want and woe.
Till my seventh year by wizard nourished, I
Was stolen from him by thieves of Araby.

XV

"They to a king in Persia vended me,
That after died beneath my faulchion, who
Would fain have taken my virginity.
When grown, that king and all his court I slew;
Chased his ill race, and seized his royalty;
And — such my fortune — by a month or two,
I eithteen years had not o'erpast, before
I added to my realm six kingdoms more;

XVI

"And, moved by envy of thy glorious fame
I in my heart resolved (as thou hast heard)
To abate the grandeur of they mighty name:
I haply so had done; I haply erred.
But now a chance has served that will to tame,
And clip my fury's wings; the having heard
Since I arrived in Christendom, how we
Are bound by ties of consanguinity;

XVII

"And, for my father thee, as kinsman, served,
So thou a kin and servant hast in me;
And I that envy, that fierce hate, which nerved
Mine arm whilere, now blot from memory.
Nay, these for evil Agramant reserved,
And for his sire's and uncle's kin shall be;
They who were whilom guilty of the death
Of that unhappy pair, who gave me breath."

XVIII

She adds, the Christian faith she will receive,
And, after having spent king Agramant,
Will home return, with royal Charles's leave,
Her kingdom to baptize in the Levant,
And war upon whatever nation cleave

To cheating Mahound or to Termagant;
Promising that whate'er her arms obtain
Shall be the Christian faith's and empire's gain.

XIX
Charles, no less eloquent upon his side,
Than bold in deed and prudent in design,
Much that illustrious lady magnified,
And much her father, much her noble line:
He courteously to every point replied;
And of his heart his open front was sign.
As his last words, that he received the maid
As kinswoman and child, the monarch said.

XX
Then rose and locked her in a new embrace,
And kissed her, like a daughter, on the brow.
Morgana and Clermont's kin, with joyful face,
All thither troop; 'twere tedious to tell how
Rinaldo did the gentle damsel grace;
For he had oftentimes espied ere now
Her martial prowess, tried by goodly test,
When they with girding siege Albracca pressed.

XXI
'Twere long to tell how, with those worthies met,
Guido rejoiced to see Marphisa there;
Gryphon and Aquilant, and Sansonet,
That with her in the cruel city were;
Vivian, and Malagigi, and Richardet;
Who, when Maganza's traitors made repair,
With those ill purchasers of Spain to trade,
Found such a faithful comrade in the maid.

XXII
They deck the ground for the ensuing day;
And Charlemagne takes care himself to see

That they the place shall sumptuously array,
Wherein Marphisa's baptism is to be.
Bishops are gathered, learned clerks, and they
Who ken the laws of Christianity;
That taught in all its doctrine by their care
And holy skill may be that martial fair.

XXIII
In sacred stole, pontifical, arraid,
Her the archbishop Turpin did baptize;
Charlemagne from the healthful font the maid
Uplifted with befitting ceremonies.
But it is time the witless head to aid
With that, which treasured in the phial lies,
Wherewith Astolpho, from the lowest star,
Descended in Elias' fiery car.

XXIV
The duke descended from the lucid round,
On this our earthly planet's loftiest height.
Wither he with that blessed vase was bound,
Which was the mighty champion's brain to right.
A herb of sovereign virtue on that ground
The apostle shows, and with it bids the knight
The Nubian's eyeballs touch, when him anew
He visits, and restore that sovereign's view.

XXV
That he, for this and for his first desert,
May give him bands, Biserta to assail;
And shows him how that people inexpert
He may to battle train, in plate and mail;
And how to pass the deserts, without hurt,
Where men are dazzled by the sandy gale.
The order that throughout should be maintained
From point to point, the sainted sire explained;

XXVI

Then made him that plumed beast again bestride,
Rogero's and Atlantes' steed whilere.
By sainted John dismist, his reverend guide,
Those holy regions left the cavalier;
And coasting Nile, on one or the other side,
Saw Nubia's realm before him soon appear;
And there, in its chief city, to the ground
Descended, and anew Senapus found.

XXVII

Great was the joy, and great was the delight,
Wherewith that king received the English lord;
Who well remembered how the gentle knight
Had from the loathsome harpies freed his board.
But when the humour, that obscured his sight,
Valiant Astolpho scaled, and now restored
Was the blind sovereign's eyesight as before,
He would that warrior as a god adore.

XXVIII

So that not only those whom he demands
For the Bisertine war, he gives in aid;
But adds a hundred thousand from his bands,
And offer of his royal person made.
Scarce on the open plain embattled stands,
— All foot — the Nubian host, for war arraid.
For few the horses which that region bore;
Of elephants and camels a large store.

XXIX

The night before the day, when on its road
The Nubian force should march, Astolpho rose,
And his winged hippogryph again bestrode:
Then, hurrying ever south, in fury goes
To a high hill, the southern wind's abode;

Whence he towards the Bears in fury blows:
There finds a cave, through whose strait entrance breaks
The fell and furious Auster, when he wakes.

XXX
He, as his master erst instruction gave,
With him an empty bladder had conveyed;
Which, at the vent of that dim Alpine cave,
Wherein reposed the wearied wind, was laid
Quaintly and softly by the baron brave;
And so unlooked for was the ambuscade,
That, issuing forth at morn, to sweep the plains,
Auster imprisoned in the skin remains.

XXXI
To Nubia he, rejoicing in his prey,
Returns; and with that very light the peer,
With the black host, sets out upon his way,
And lets the victual follow in his rear.
Towards Mount Atlas with his whole array
In safety goes the glorious cavalier.
Through shifting plains of powdery sand he past,
Nor dreaded danger from the sultry blast;

XXXII
And having gained the mountain's hither side,
Whence are discerned the plain, and distant brine,
He chooses from the swarm he has to guide
The noblest and most fit for discipline;
And makes them, here and there, in troops divide,
At a hill's foot, wherewith the plains confine;
Then leaves his host and climbs the hill's ascent,
Like one that is on lofty thoughts intent.

XXXIII
After he, lowly kneeling in the dust,
His holy master had implored, in true

Assurance he was heard, he downward thrust
A heap of stones. O what things may he do
That in the Saviour wholly puts his trust!
The stones beyond the use of nature grew;
Which rolling to the sandy plain below,
Next, neck and muzzle, legs and belly show.

XXXIV
They, neighing shrill, down narrow paths repair,
With lusty leaps; and lighting on the plain,
Uplift the croup, like coursers as they are,
Some bay, some roan, and some of dapple stain.
The crowds that waiting in the valleys were,
Layed hands on them, and seized them by the rein.
Thus in a thought each soldier had his horse,
Born ready reined and saddled for the course.

XXXV
He fourscore thousand of his Nubian power,
One hundred and two footmen, in a day
To horsemen changes, who wide Afric scour,
And, upon every side, sack, burn, and slay.
Agramant had intrusted town and tower,
Till his return, to king Branzardo's sway,
To Fersa's king, and him of the Algaziers;
And these against Astolpho lead their spears.

XXXVI
Erewhile a nimble bark, with sail and oar,
They had dispatched, which, stirring feet and wings,
News of the Nubian monarch's outrage bore
To Agramant from his vicegerent kings,
That rests not, night nor day, till to the shore
Of Provence she her doleful tiding brings;
And finds her monarch half subdued in Arles,
For camped within a mile was conquering Charles.

XXXVII
Agramant, hearing in what peril lies
His realm, through his attack on Pepin's reign,
Him in this pressing peril to advise,
Calls kings and princes of the paynim train;
And when he once or twice has turned his eyes
On sage Sobrino and the king of Spain,
— Eldest and wisest they those lords among —
The monarch so bespeaks the assembled throng:

XXXVIII
"Albeit if fits not captain, as I know,
To say, `on this I thought not,' this I say;
Because when from a quarter comes the blow,
From every human forethought far away,
'Tis for such fault a fair excuse, I trow;
And here all hinges; I did ill to lay
Unfurnished Africk open to attack,
If there was ground to fear the Nubian sack.

XXXIX
"But who could think, save only God on high
Prescient of all which is to be below,
That, from land, beneath such distant sky,
Such mighty host would come, to work us woe?
'Twixt shifting sands, which restless whirlwinds blow:
Yet they their camp have round Biserta placed,
And laid the better part of Africk waste.

XL
"I now on this, O peers! your counsel crave.
If, bootless, homeward I should wend my way,
Or should not such a fair adventure wave,
Till Charles with me a prisoner I convey;
Or how I may as well our Africk save,

And ruin this redoubted empire, say.
Who can advise, is prayed his lore to shew,
That we may learn the best, and that pursue."

XLI
He said; and on Marsilius seated nigh
Next turned his eyes, who in the signal read,
That it belonged to him to make reply
To what the king of Africa had said.
The Spaniard rose, and bending reverently
To Agramant the knee as well as head,
Again his honoured seat in council prest,
And in these words the Moorish king addrest:

XLII
"My liege, does Rumour good or ill report,
It still increases them; hence shall I ne'er,
Under despondence, lack for due support,
Nor bolder course than is befitting steer,
For what may chance, of good or evil sort;
Weighing in even balance hope and fear,
O'errated still; and which we should not mete
By what I hear so many tongues repeat;

XLIII
"Which should so much more doubtfully be viewed,
As it seems less with likelihood to stand.
Now it is seen, if there be likelihood,
That king who reigns in so remote a land,
Followed by such a mighty multitude,
Should set his foot on warlike Africk's strand;
Traversing sands, to which in evil hour
Cambyses trusted his ill-omened power.

XLIV
"I well believe, that from some neighbouring hill
The Arabs have poured down, to waste the plain;

Who, for the country was defended ill,
Have taken, burnt, destroyed and sacked and slain;
And that Branzardo, who your place doth fill,
As viceroy and lieutenant of the reign,
Has set down thousands, where he tens should write;
The better to excuse him in your sight.

XLV
"The Nubian squadrons, I will even yield,
Have been rained down on Africk from the skies;
Or haply they have come, in clouds concealed,
In that their march was hidden from all eyes:
Think you, because unaided in the field,
Your Africk from such host in peril lies?
Your garrisons were sure of coward vein,
If they were scared by such a craven train.

XLVI
"But will you send some frigates, albeit few,
(Provided that unfurled your standards be)
No sooner shall they loose from hence, that crew
Of spoilers shall within their confines flee;
— Nubians are they, or idle Arabs — who,
Knowing that you are severed by the sea
From your own realm, and warring with our band,
Have taken courage to assail your land.

XLVII
"Now take your time for vengeance, when the son
Of Pepin is without his nephew's aid.
Since bold Orlando is away, by none
Of the hostile sect resistance can be made.
If, through neglect or blindness, be foregone
The glorious Fortune, which for you has stayed,
She her bald front, as now her hair, will show,
To our long infamy and mighty woe."

XLVIII
Thus warily the Spanish king replied,
Proving by this and other argument,
The Moorish squadrons should in France abide,
Till Charlemagne was into exile sent.
But King Sobrino, he that plainly spied
The scope whereon Marsilius was intent,
To public good preferring private gain,
So spake in answer to the king of Spain:

XLIX
"My liege, when I to peace exhorted you,
Would that my prophecy had proved less just!
Of, if I was to prove a prophet true,
Ye in Sobrino had reposed more trust,
Than in King Rodomont and in that crew,
Alzirdo, Martasine and Marbalust!
Whom I would here see gladly, front to front;
But see most gladly boastful Rodomont.

L
"To twit that warrior with his threat to do
By France, what by the brittle glass is done;
And throughout heaven and hell your course pursue,
Yea (as the monarch said) your course outrun.
Yet lapt in foul and loathsome ease, while you
So need his help, lies Ulien's lazy son;
And I, that as a coward was decried
For my true prophecy, am at your side;

LI
"And ever will be while this life I bear;
Which, albeit 'tis with yours sore laden, still
Daily for you is risked with them that are
The best of France; and — be he who he will —
There is not mortal living, who will dare

To say Sobrino's deeds were ever ill:
Yea, many who vaunt more, amid your host,
Have not so much, nay lighter, cause for boast.

LII
"I speak, these words to show that what whilere
I said and say again, has neither sprung
From evil heart, nor is the fruit of fear;
But that true love and duty move my tongue.
You homeward with what haste you may to steer,
I counsel, your assembled bands among;
For little is the wisdom of that wight,
Who risks his own to gain another's right.

LIII
"If there be gain, ye know, Late thirty-two,
Your vassal kings, with you our sails we spread;
Now, if we pause to sum the account anew,
Hardly a third survives; the rest are dead.
May it please Heaven no further loss ensue!
But if you will pursue your quest, I dread
Lest not a fourth nor fifth will soon remain;
And wholly spent will be your wretched train.

LIV
"Orlando's absence so far aids, that where
Our troops are few, there haply none would be;
But not through this removed our perils are,
Though it prolongs our evil destiny.
Behold Rinaldo! whom his deeds declare
No less than bold Orlando; of his tree
There are the shoots; with paladin and peer,
Our baffled Saracens' eternal fear;

LV
"And the other Mars (albeit against my heart
It goes to waste my praise upon a foe);

I speak of the redoubted Brandimart,
Whose feats no less than fierce Orlando's show;
Whose mighty prowess I have proved in part,
In part, at others' cost I see and know.
Then many days Orlando has been gone;
Yet we have lost more fields than we have won.

LVI
"I fear, if heretofore our band has lost,
A heavier forfeit will henceforth be paid.
Blotted is Mandricardo from our host;
Martial Gradasso hath withdrawn his aid;
Marphisa, at our worst, has left her post;
So Argier's lord; of whom it may be said,
Where he as true as strong, we should not need
Gradasso and the Tartar king, to speed.

LVII
"While aids like these are lost to our array,
While on our side such slaughtered thousands lie,
Those looked-for are arrived, nor on her way
Is any vessel fraught with new supply —
Charles has been joined by four, that, as they say,
Might with Orlando or Rinaldo vie;
With reasons, for from hence to Bactrian shore,
Ill would you hope to find such other four.

LVIII
"I know not if you know who Guido are,
Sansonet, and the sons of Olivier.
For these I more respect, more fear I bear,
Than any warlike duke or cavalier,
Of Almayn's or of other lineage fair,
Who for the Roman empire rests the spear,
Though I misrate not those of newer stamp,
That, to our scathe, are gathered in their camp.

LIX
"As often as ye issue on the plain,
Worsted so oft, or broken, shall you be.
If oft united Africa and Spain
Were losers, when sixteen to eight were we,
What will ensue, when banded with Almayn
Are England, Scotland, France, and Italy?
When with our six twice six their weapons cross,
What else can we expect but shame and loss?

LX
"You lose your people here, and there your reign,
If you in this emprize are obstinate;
— Returning — us, the remnant of your train,
You save, together with your royal state.
It were ill done to leave the king of Spain,
Since all for this would hold you sore ingrate;
Yet there's a remedy in peace; which, so
It pleases but yourself, will please the foe.

LXI
"But, if, as first defeated, on your part
It seems a shame to offer peace, and ye
Have war and wasteful battle more at heart,
Waged hitherto with what success you see,
At least to gain the victory use art,
Which may be yours, if you are ruled by me.
Lay all our quarrel's trial on one peer,
And let Rogero be that cavalier.

LXII
"Such our Rogero is, ye know and I,
That — pitted one to one in listed fight —
Not Roland, not Rinaldo stands more high,
Nor whatsoever other Christian knight.
But would ye kindle warfare far and nigh,

Though superhuman be that champion's might,
The warrior is but one mid many spears,
Matched singly with a host of martial peers.

LXIII
"Meseemeth, if to you it seemeth good,
Ye should propose to Charles the war to end;
And that, to spare the constant waste of blood,
Which his, and countless of your warriors spend,
He — by a knight of yours to be withstood —
A champion, chosen from his best should send;
And those two all the warfare wage alone,
Till one prevails, and one is overthrown;

LXIV
"On pact the king, whose champion in the just
Is loser, tribute to that other pay.
Nor will this pact displease King Charles, I trust,
Though his was the advantage in the fray.
Then of his arms Rogero so robust
I deem, that he will surely win the day;
Who would prevail (so certain is our right)
Though Mars himself should be his opposite."

LXV
With these and other sayings yet more sound,
So wrought Sobrino, he his end obtained;
And on that day interpreters were found,
And they that day to Charles their charge explained.
Charles, whom such matchless cavaliers surround.
Believes the battle is already gained;
And chooses good Rinaldo for the just,
Next to Orlando in his sovereign's trust.

LXVI
In this accord like cause for pleasure find,
As well the Christian as the paynim foe:

For, harassed sore in body and in mind,
Those warriors all were weary, all were woe.
Each in repose and quietude designed
To pass what time remained to him below:
Each cursed the senseless anger and the hate
Which stirred their hearts to discord and debate.

LXVII
Rinaldo felt himself much magnified,
That Charles, for what in him so strong weighed,
More trusted him than all his court beside,
And glad the honoured enterprise assayed:
Rogero he esteemed not in his pride,
And thought he ill could keep him from his blade.
Nor deemed the Child could equal him in fight,
Albeit he slew in strife the Tartar knight.

LXVIII
Rogero, though much honoured, on his part,
That him his king has chosen from the rest,
To whom a trust so weighty to impart,
As of his many martial lords the best,
Yet shows a troubled face; not that the heart
Of that good knight unworthy fears molest;
Not only none Rinaldo would have bred;
Him, with Orlando leagued, he would not dread —

LXIX
But because sister of the Christian knight
(He knows) is she, his consort true and dear;
That to the stripling evermore did write,
As one sore injured by that cavalier.
Now, if to ancient sins he should unite
A mortal combat with Montalban's peer,
Her, although loving, will he anger so,
Not lightly she her hatred will forego.

LXX

If silently Rogero made lament
That he in his despite must battle do;
In sobs his consort dear to hers gave vent,
When shortly to her ears the tidings flew.
She beat her breast, her golden tresses rent:
Fast, scalding tears her innocent cheeks bedew:
She taxes young Rogero as ingrate,
And aye cries out upon her cruel fate.

LXXI

Nought can result to Bradamant but pain,
Whatever is the doubtful combat's end.
She will not think Rogero can be slain;
For this, 'twould seem, her very heart would rend;
And should our Lord the fall of France ordain,
That kingdom for more sins than one to amend,
The gentle maid, beside a brother's loss,
Would have to weep a worse and bitterer cross.

LXXII

For, without shame and scorn, she never may,
Not without hatred of her kin combined,
To her loved lord return in such a way
As that it may be known of all mankind;
As, thinking upon this by night and day,
She oftentimes had purposed in her mind;
And so by promise both were tied withal,
Room for repentance and retreat was small.

LXXIII

But she, that ever, when things adverse were,
With faithful succour Bradamant had stayed,
I say the weird Melissa, could not bear
To hear the wailings of the woeful maid;
She hurried to console her in her care,

And proffered succour in due time and said,
She would disturb that duel 'twixt the twain,
The occasion of such grief and cruel pain.

LXXIV
Meanwhile their weapons for the future fray
Rogero and Duke Aymon's son prepared;
The choice whereof with that good warrior lay,
The Roman empire's knight by Charles declared;
And he, like one that ever from the day
He lost his goodly steed afoot had fared,
Made choice, afoot and fenced with plate and mail,
His foe with axe and dagger to assail.

LXXV
Whether Chance moved Mountalban's martial lord,
Or Malagigi, provident and sage,
That knew how young Rogero's charmed sword
Cleft helm and hauberk in its greedy rage,
One and the other warrior made accord,
(As said) without their faulchions to engage.
The place of combat chosen by that twain
Was near old Arles, upon a spacious plain.

LXXVI
Watchful Aurora hardly from the bower
Of old Tithonus hath put forth her head,
To give beginning to the day and hour
Prefixed and ordered for that duel dread,
When deputies from either hostile power,
On this side and on that forth issuing, spread
Tents at each entrance of the lists; and near
The two pavillions, both, an altar rear.

LXXVII
After short pause, was seen upon the plain
The paynim host in different squadrons dight.

Rich in barbarick pomp, amid that train,
Rode Africk's monarch, ready armed for fight:
Bay was the steed he backed, with sable mane;
Two of his legs were pied, his forehead white
Fast beside Agramant, Rogero came,
And him to serve Marsilius thought no shame.

LXXVIII
The casque that he from Mandricardo wrung
In single combat with such travel sore,
The casque that (as in loftier strain is sung)
Cased Hector's head, a thousand years before,
Marsilius carried, by his side, among
Princes and lords, that severally bore
The other harness of Rogero bold,
Enriched with precious pearls and rough with gold.

LXXIX
On the other part, without his camp appears
Charles, with his men at arms in squadrons dight;
Who in such order led his cavaliers,
As they would keep, if marshalled for the fight.
Fenced is the monarch with his famous peers,
And with him wends, all armed, Montalban's knight,
Armed, save his helmet, erst Mambrino's casque;
To carry which is Danish Ogier's task;

LXXX
And, of two axes, hath Duke Namus one,
King Salamon the other: Charlemagne
Is to this side, with all his following, gone,
To that wend those of Africk and of Spain.
In the mid space between the hosts is none;
Empty remains large portion of the plain;
For he is doomed to death who thither goes,
By joint proclaim, except the chosen foes.

LXXXI
After the second choice of arms was made
By him, the champion of the paynim clan,
Thither two priests of either sect conveyed
Two books; that, carried by one holy man,
— Him of our law — Christ's perfect life displayed;
Those others' volume was their Alcoran.
The emperor in his hands the Gospel took,
The king of Africa that other book.

LXXXII
Charlemagne, at his altar, to the sky
Lifted his hands, "O God, that for our sake"
(Exclaimed the monarch) "wast content to die,
Thyself a ransom for our sins to make;
— O thou that found such favour in his eye,
That God from thee the flesh of man did take,
Borne for nine months within thy holy womb,
While aye thy virgin flower preserved its bloom,

LXXXIII
"Hear, and be witnesses of what I say,
For me and those that after me shall reign,
To Agramant and those that heir his sway,
I twenty loads of gold of perfect grain
Will every year deliver, if to-day
My champion vanquished in the lists remain;
And vow I will straightway from warfare cease,
And from henceforth maintain perpetual peace;

LXXXIV
"And may your joint and fearful wrath descend
On me forthwith, if I my word forego!
And may it me and mine alone offend,
And none beside, amid this numerous show!
That all in briefest time may comprehend,

My breach of promise has brought down the woe."
So saying, in his hand the holy book
Charles held, and fixed on heaven his earnest look.

LXXXV
This done, they seek that altar, sumptuously
Decked for the purpose, by the pagan train;
Where their king swears, that he will pass the sea,
With all his army, to his Moorish reign,
And to King Charles will tributary be;
If vanquished, young Rogero shall remain;
And will observe the truce for evermore
Upon the pact declared by Charles before;

LXXXVI
And like him, nor in under tone, he swears,
Calling on Mahound to attest his oath;
And on the volume which his pontiff bears,
To observe what he has promised plights his troth.
Then to his side each hastily repairs;
And mid their several powers are harboured both.
Next these, to swear arrive the champions twain;
And this the promise which their oaths contain.

LXXXVII
Rogero pledges first his knightly word,
Should his king mar, or send to mar, the fray,
He him no more as leader or as lord
Will serve, but wholly Charlemagne obey.
— Rinaldo — if in breach of their accord,
Him from the field King Charles would bear away,
Till one or the other is subdued in fight,
That he will be the Moorish monarch's knight.

LXXXVIII
When ended are the ceremonies, here
And there, to seek their camps the two divide.

Nor long, therein delayed; when trumpets clear
The time for their encounter signified:
Now to the charge advanced each cavalier,
Measuring with cautious care his every stride.
Lo! the assault begins; now low, now high,
That pair the sounding steel in circles ply.

LXXXIX
Now with the axe's blade, now with its heel
Their strokes they at the head or foot address;
And these so skilfully and nimbly deal,
As needs must shock all credence to express.
The Child, that at her brother aims the steel,
Who doth his miserable soul possess,
Evermore with such caution strikes his blow,
That he is deemed less vigorous than his foe.

XC
Rather to parry then to smite intent,
He know not what to wish; that low should lie
Rinaldo, would Rogero ill content,
Nor willingly the Child by him would die.
But here I am at my full line's extent,
Where I must needs defer my history.
In other canto shall the rest appear,
If you that other canto please to hear.

CANTO 39

ARGUMENT
Agramant breaks the pact, is overthrown,
And forced fair France for Afric to forego.
Meanwhile Astolpho in Biserta's town
Having with numerous host besieged the foe,
By hazard there arrives bold Milo's son,

To whom the duke, instructed how to do,
Restores his wits. At sea does Dudon meet
King Agramant, and sore annoys his fleet.

I

Than that fell woe which on Rogero weighs
Harder, and bitterer pain forsooth is none,
Which upon flesh and more on spirit preys:
For of two deaths there is no scaping one.
Him, if in strife o'erlaid, Rinaldo slays,
Bradamant, if Rinaldo is outdone:
For if he killed her brother, well he knew
Her hate, than death more hateful, would ensue.

II

Rinaldo, unimpeded by such thought,
Strove in all ways Rogero to o'erthrow;
Fierce and despiteous whirled his axe, and sought
Now in the arms, now head, to wound the foe.
Rogero circled here and there, and caught
Upon his weapon's shaft the coming blow;
And, if ever smote, aye strove to smite
Where he should injure least Montalban's knight.

III

To most of them that led the paynim bands,
But too unequal seemed the fierce assay.
Too slowly young Rogero plied his hands;
Too well Rinaldo kept the Child at bay.
With troubled face the king of Afric stands:
He sighed, and breathless gazed upon the fray;
And all the blame of that ill counsel flung
On King Sobrino's head, from whom it sprung.

IV
Meanwhile the weird Melissa, she — the font
Of all that wizards or enchanters know —
Had by her art transformed her female front,
And taken Argier's mighty shape; in show
And gesture she appeared as Rodomont,
And seemed, like him, in dragon's hide to go:
Such was her belied sword and such her shield;
Nor aught was wanting which he wore afield.

V
She towards Troyano's mournful son did guide,
In form of courser, a familiar sprite,
And with a troubled visage loudly cried,
"My liege, this is too foul an oversight,
A stripling boy in peril yet untried,
Against a Gaul, so stout and famed in fight,
Your champion in so fierce a strife to make;
Where Afric's realm and honour are at stake.

VI
"Let not this battle be pursued, my lord,
In that 'twould cost our Moorish cause too dear.
Let sin of broken faith and forfeit word
Fall upon Rodomont! take thou no fear!
Let each now show the metal of his sword,
Each for a hundred stands when I am here."
So upon Agramant this counsel wrought,
That king pressed forward without further thought.

VII
He, thinking that the monarch of Algiers
Is with him, of the pact has little care;
And would not rate a thousand cavaliers
So high, if handed in his aid they were.
Hence steeds reined-in and spurred, hence levelled spears

Are seen in one short instant here and there.
Melissa, when the hosts are mixed in fight
By her false phantoms, vanishes from sight.

VIII
The champions two, that, against all accord,
Against all faith, disturbed their duel see,
No longer strive in fight, but pledge their word
— Yea, put aside all hostile injury —
That they, on neither part, will draw the sword,
Until they better certified shall be
Who broke the pact, established by that twain,
Young Agramant, or aged Charlemagne.

IX
They sweat anew, the king who had o'erthrown
That truce, and broken faith, as foe to treat.
The field of combat is turned upside down;
Some hurry to the charge, and some retreat.
Who most deserved disgrace, who most renown,
Was seen, on both hands, in the selfsame feat;
All ran alike: but, 'mid that wild affray,
These ran to meet the foe, those ran away.

X
As greyhound in the slip, that the fleet hare
Scowering about and circling him discerns,
Nor with the other dogs a part can bear
(For him the hunter holds), with anger burns;
Torments himself and mourns in his despair,
And whines, and strives against the leash, by turns;
Such till that moment had the fury been
Of Aymon's daughter and the martial queen.

XI
They till that hour upon the spacious plain,
Had watched so rich a prize throughout the day;

And, as obliged by treaty to refrain
From laying hands upon the costly prey,
Had sore lamented and had grieved in vain,
Gazing with longing eyes on that array.
Now seeing truce and treaty broke, among
The Moorish squadrons they rejoicing sprung.

XII
Marphisa piercing her first victim's breast,
(Two yards beyond his back the lance did pass)
In briefer time than 'tis by me exprest,
Broke with her sword four helms which flew like glass;
No less did Bradamant upon the rest;
But them her spear reduced to other pass.
All touched by that gold lance she overthrew;
Doubling Marphisa's score; yet none she slew.

XIII
They witness to each others' exploits are,
(Those maids to one another are so near)
Then, whither fury drives, the martial pair,
Dividing, through the Moorish ranks career.
Who could each several warrior's name declare,
Stretched on the champaign by that golden spear?
Or reckon every head Marphisa left
Divided by her horrid sword, or cleft?

XIV
As when benigner winds more swiftly blow,
And Apennine his shaggy back lays bare,
Two turbid torrents with like fury flow,
Which, in their fall, two separate channels wear,
Uproot hard rocks, and mighty trees which grow
On their steep banks, and field and harvest bear
Into the vale, and seem as if they vied
Which should do mightiest damage on its side:

XV

So those high-minded virgin warriors two,
Scowering the field in separate courses, made
Huge havock of the Moors; whom they pursue
One with couched lance, and one with lifted blade.
Hardly King Agramant his Africk crew
From flight, beneath his royal banners stayed:
In search of Rodomont, he vainly turned;
Nor tidings of the missing warrior learned.

XVI

He at his exhortation (so he trowed)
Had broke the treaty made in solemn wise,
To witness which the gods were called aloud;
Who then so quick vanished from his eyes:
Nor sees he King Sobrino; disavowed
By King Sobrino is the deed, who flies
To Arles, and deems that day some vengeance dread
Will fall on Agramant's devoted head.

XVII

Marsilius too is fled into the town:
So has that monarch holy faith at heart.
'Tis hence, that feebly King Troyano's son
Resists the crew, that war on Charles's part,
Italians, English, Germans; of renown
Are all; and, scattered upon every part,
Are mixed the paladins, those barons bold,
Glittering like jewels on a cloth of gold;

XVIII

And, with those peers, is more than one confest
As perfect as is earthly cavalier,
Guide the savage, that intrepid breast,
And those two famous sons of Olivier.
I will not now repeat what I exprest

Of that fierce, daring female twain whilere;
Who on the field so many Moors extend,
No number is there to the slain or end.

XIX
But, putting this affray some while aside,
Without a pinnace will I pass the sea.
To them of France so fast I am not tied,
But that Astolpho should remembered be:
Of the grace given him by his holy guide
I told erewhile, and told (it seems to me)
Branzardo and the king of Algaziers
Against the duke had mustered all their spears.

XX
Such as the monarchs could in haste engage,
Raked from all Africa, that host contained;
Whether of fitting or of feeble age:
Scarce from impressing women they refrained,
Resolved his thirst of vengeance to assuage,
Agramant twice his Africa had drained.
Few people in the land were left, and they
A feeble and dispirited array.

XXI
So proved they; for the foe was scarce in view,
Before that levy broke in panic dread:
Like sheep, their quailing bands Astolpho slew,
Charging at his more martial squadrons' head;
And with the slain filled all that champaign; few
Into Biserta from the carnage fled.
A prisoner valiant Bucifar remained;
The town in safety King Branzardo gained;

XXII
More grieved as Bucifaro's loss alone,
Than had he lost the rest in arms arrayed.

Wide and in want of ramparts is the town;
And these could ill be raised without his aid.
While fain to ransom him, he thinks upon
The means, and stands afflicted and dismayed,
He recollects him how the paladin,
Dudon, has many a month his prisoner been.

XXIII
Him under Monaco, upon the shore,
In his first passage, Sarza's monarch took.
Thenceforth had been a prisoner evermore
Dudon, who was derived of Danish stock.
The paladin against the royal Moor
Branzardo thought, in this distress, to truck;
And knowing through sure spy, Astolpho led
The Nubians, to that chief the offer sped.

XXIV
A paladin himself, Astolpho knows
He gladly ought a paladin to free;
And when that case the Moorish envoy shows,
To King Branzardo's offer does agree.
Dudon from prison loosed, his thanks bestows;
And whatsoe'er pertains to land or sea,
Bestirs him to accomplish, in accord
With his illustrious chief, the English lord.

XXV
Astolpho leading such a countless band
As might have well seven Africas opprest,
And recollecting 'twas the saint's command,
Who upon him whilere imposed the quest,
That fair Provence and Aquamorta's strand
He from the reaving Saracen should wrest,
Made through his numerous host a second draught
Of such as least inapt for sea he thought;

XXVI

And filling next as full as they could be
His hands with many different sorts of leaves,
Plucked from palm, olive, bay and cedar tree,
Approached the shore, and cast them on the waves.
Oh blessed souls! Oh great felicity!
O grace! which rarely man from God receives;
O strange and wondrous miracle, which sprung
Out of those leaves upon the waters flung!

XXVII

They wax in number beyond all esteem;
Becoming crooked and heavy, long, and wide.
Into hard timber turn and solid beam,
The slender veins that branch on either side:
Taper the masts; and, moored in the salt stream,
All in a thought transformed to vessels, ride;
And of as diverse qualities appear,
As are the plants, whereon they grew whilere.

XXVIII

It was a miracle to see them grown
To galliot, galley, frigate ship, and boat;
Wondrous, that they with tackling of their own,
Are found as well as any barks afloat.
Nor lack there men to govern them, when blown
By blustering winds — from islands not remote —
Sardinia or Corsica, of every rate,
Pilot and patron, mariner and mate.

XXIX

Twenty-six thousand were the troop that manned
Those ready barks of every sort and kind.
To Dudon's government, by sea or land
A leader sage, the navy was consigned;
Which yet lay anchored off the Moorish strand,

Expecting a more favourable wind,
To put to sea; when, freighted with a load
Of prisoners, lo! a vessel made the road.

XXX
She carried those, whom at the bridge of dread,
— On that so narrow place of battle met —
Rodomont took, as often has been said.
The valiant Olivier was of the set,
Orlando's kin, and, with them, prisoners led,
Were faithful Brandimart and Sansonet,
With more; to tell whereof there is no need;
Of German, Gascon, or Italian seed.

XXXI
The patron, yet unweeting he should find
Foes in the port, here entered to unload;
Having left Argier many miles behind,
Where he was minded to have made abode;
Because a boisterous, overblowing, wind
Had driven his bark beyond her destined road;
Deeming himself as safe and welcome guest,
As Progne, when she seeks her noisy nest.

XXXII
But when, arrived, the imperial eagle spread,
And pards and golden lilies he descries,
With countenance as sicklied o'er by dread,
He stands, as one that in unwary guise,
Has chanced on fell and poisonous snake to tread,
Which, in the grass, opprest with slumber lies;
And, pale and startled, hastens to retire
From that ill reptile, swoln with bane and ire.

XXXIII
But no retreat from peril is there here,
Nor can the patron keep his prisoners down:

Him thither Brandimart and Olivier,
Sansonet and those others drag, where known
And greeted are the friends with joyful cheer,
By England's duke and Danish Ogier's son;
Who read that he who brought them to that shore
Should for his pains be sentenced to the oar.

XXXIV
King Otho's son kind welcome did afford
Unto those Christian cavaliers, as said:
Who — honoured at his hospitable board —
With arms and all things needful were purveyed.
His going, for their sake, the Danish lord
Deferred, who deemed his voyage well delayed,
To parley with those peers, though at the cost
Of one or two good days, in harbour lost.

XXXV
Of Charles, and in what state, what order are
The affairs of France they gave advices true;
Told where he best could disembark, and where
To most advantage of the Christian crew.
While so the cavaliers their news declare,
A noise is heard; which ever louder grew,
Followed by such a fierce alarm withal,
As to more fears than one gave rise in all.

XXXVI
The duke Astolpho and the goodly throng,
That in discourse with him were occupied,
Armed in a moment, on their coursers sprung,
And hurried where the Nubians loudest cried;
And seeking wherefore that wide larum rung,
Now here, now there — those warlike lords espied
A savage man, and one so strong of hand,
Naked and sole he troubled all that band.

XXXVII
The naked savage whirled a sapling round,
So hard, so heavy, and so strong of grain,
That every time the weapon went to ground,
Some warrior, more than maimed, opprest the plain.
Above a hundred dead are strewed around;
Nor more defence the routed hands maintain;
Save that a war of distant parts they try;
For there is none will wait the champion nigh.

XXXVIII
Astolpho, Brandimart, the Danish knight,
Hastening towards that noise with Olivier,
Remain astounded at the wondrous might
And courage, which in that wild man appear.
When, posting thither on a palfry light,
Is seen a damsel, clad in sable gear.
To Brandimart in haste that lady goes,
And both her arms about the warrior throws.

XXXIX
This was fair Flordelice, whose bosom so
Burned with the love of Monodantes' son,
She, when she left him prisoner to his foe
At that streight bridge, had nigh distracted gone.
From France had she past hither — given to know —
By that proud paynim, who the deed had done,
How Brandimart, with many cavaliers,
Was prisoner in the city of Algiers.

XL
When now she for that harbour would have weighed,
An eastern vessel in Marseilles she found,
Which thither had an ancient knight conveyed:
Of Monodantes' household; a long round
To seek his Brandimart that lord had made,

By sea, and upon many a distant ground.
For he, upon his way, had heard it told,
How he in France should find the warrior bold.

XLI
She knowing old Bardino in that wight,
Bardino who from Monodantes' court
With little Brandimart had taken flight,
And reared his nursling in THE SYLVAN FORT;
Then hearing what had thither brought the knight,
With her had made him loosen from the port;
Relating to that elder, by what chance
Brandimart had to Africk passed from France.

XLII
As soon as landed, that Biserta lies
Besieged by good Astolpho's band, they hear;
That Brandimart is with him in the emprize,
They learn, but learn not as a matter clear.
Now in such haste to him the damsel flies,
When she beholds her faithful cavalier,
As plainly shows her joy; which woes o'erblown
Had made the mightiest she had ever known.

XLIII
The gentle baron no less gladly eyed
His faithful and beloved consort's face;
Her whom he prized above all things beside;
And clipt and welcomed her with loving grace;
Nor his warm wishes would have satisfied
A first, a second, or a third embrace,
But that he spied Bardino, he that came
From France, together with that faithful dame.

XLIV
He stretched his arms, and would embrace the knight;
And — wherefore he was come — would bid him say:

But was prevented by the sudden flight
Of the sacred host, which fled in disarray,
Before the club of that mad, naked wight,
Who with the brandished sapling cleared his way.
Flordelice viewed the furious man in front;
And cried to Brandimart, "Behold the count!"

XLV
At the same time, withal, Astolpho bold
That this was good Orlando plainly knew,
By signs, whereof those ancient saints had told,
In the earthly paradise, as tokens true.
None of those others, who the knight behold,
The courteous baron in the madman view;
That from long self-neglect, while wild he ran,
Had in his visage more of beast than man.

XLVI
With breast and heart transfixed with pity, cried
Valiant Astolpho — bathed with many a tear —
Turning to Danish Dudon, at this side,
And afterwards to valiant Olivier;
"Behold Orlando!" Him awhile they eyed,
Straining their eyes and lids; then knew the peer;
And, seeing him in such a piteous plight,
Were filled with grief and wonder at the sight.

XLVII
So grieve and so lament the greater part
Of those good warriors, that their eyes o'erflow.
" `Tis time" (Astolpho cried) "to find some art
To heal him, not indulge in useless woe";
And from his courser sprang: bold Brandimart,
Olivier, Sansonet and Dudon so
All leap to ground, and all together make
At Roland, whom the warriors fain would take.

XLVIII
Seeing the circle round about him grow,
Levels his club that furious paladin,
And makes fierce Dudon feel (who — couched below
His buckler — on the madman would break in)
How grievous is that staff's descending blow;
And but that Olivier, Orlando's kin,
Broke in some sort its force, that stake accurst
Had shield and helmet, head and body burst.

XLIX
It only burst the shield, and in such thunder
Broke on the casque, that Dudon prest the shore:
With that, Sir Sansonet cut clean asunder
The sapling, shorn of two cloth-yards and more,
So vigorous was that warrior's stroke, while under
His bosom, Brandimart girt Roland sore
With sinewy arms about his body flung;
And to the champion's legs Astolpho clung.

L
Orlando shook himself, and England's knight,
Ten paces off, reversed upon the ground;
Yet loosed not Brandimart, who with more might
And better hold had clasped the madman round.
To Olivier, too forward in that fight,
He dealt so furious and so fell a wound,
With his clenched fist, that pale the marquis fell;
And purple streams from eyes and nostrils well;

LI
And save his morion had been more than good,
Bold Olivier had breathed his last, who lies,
So battered with his fall, it seemed he wou'd
Bequeath his parting soul to paradise.
Astolpho and Dudon, that again upstood

(Albeit swoln were Dudon's face and eyes)
And Sansonet, who plied so well his sword,
All made together at Anglantes' lord.

LII
Dudon Orlando from behind embraced,
And with his foot the furious peer would throw:
Astolpho and others seize his arms; but waste
Their strength in all attempts to hold the foe.
He who has seen a bull, by mastiffs chased
That gore his bleeding ears, in fury lowe,
Dragging the dogs that bait him there and here,
Yet from their tusks unable to get clear;

LIII
Let him imagine, so Orlando drew
Astolpho and those banded knights along.
Meanwhile upstarted Oliviero, who
By that fell fistycuff on earth was flung;
And, seeing they could ill by Roland do
That sought by good Astolpho and his throng,
He meditates, and compasses, a way
The frantic paladin on earth to lay.

LIV
He many a hawser made them thither bring,
And running knots in them he quickly tied;
Which on the count's waist, arms, and legs, they fling;
And then, among themselves, the ends divide,
Conveyed to this or that amid the ring,
Compassing Roland upon every side.
The warriors thus Orlando flung parforce,
As farrier throws the struggling ox or horse.

LV
As soon as down, they all upon him are,
And hands and feet more tightly they constrain:

He shakes himself, and plunges here and there;
But all his efforts for relief are vain.
Astolpho bade them hence the prisoner bear;
For he would heal (he said) the warrior's brain.
Shouldered by sturdy Dudon is the load,
And on the beach's furthest brink bestowed.

LVI
Seven times Astolpho makes them wash the knight;
And seven times plunged beneath the brine he goes.
So that they cleanse away the scurf and blight,
Which to his stupid limbs and visage grows.
This done, with herbs, for that occasion dight,
They stop his mouth, wherewith he puffs and blows.
For, save his nostrils, would Astolpho leave
No passage whence the count might air receive.

LVII
Valiant Astolpho had prepared the vase,
Wherein Orlando's senses were contained,
And to his nostrils in such mode conveys,
That, drawing-in his breath, the county drained
The mystic cup withal. Oh wondrous case!
The unsettled mind its ancient seat regained;
And, in its glorious reasonings, yet more clear
And lucid waxed his wisdom than whilere.

LVIII
As one, that seems in troubled sleep to see
Abominable shapes, a horrid crew;
Monsters which are not, and which cannot be;
Or seems some strange, unlawful thing to do,
Yet marvels at himself, from slumber free.
When his recovered senses play him true;
So good Orlando, when he is made sound,
Remains yet full of wonder, and astound.

LIX
Aldabelle's brother, Monodantes' son,
And him that on his brain such cure had wrought,
He wondering marked, but word he spake to none;
And when and how he was brought thither, thought.
He turned his restless eyes now up now down,
Nor where he was withal, imagined aught,
Marvelling why he there was naked cast,
And wherefore tethered, neck and heels, so fast.

LX
Then said, as erst Silenus said — when seen,
And taken sleeping the cave of yore —
SOLVITE ME, with visage so serene,
With look so much less wayward than before,
That him they from his bonds delivered clean,
And raiment to the naked warrior bore;
All comforting their friend, with grief opprest
For that delusion which had him possest.

LXI
When to his former self he was recovered,
Of wiser and of manlier mind than e'er,
From love as well was freed the enamoured lord;
And she, so gentle deemed, so fair whilere,
And by renowned Orlando so adored,
Did but to him a worthless thing appear.
What he through love had lost, to reacquire
Was his whole study, was his whole desire.

LXII
Meanwhile Bardino told to Brandimart,
How Monodantes, his good sire, was dead,
And, on his brother, Gigliantes' part,
To call him to his kingdom had he sped,
As well as from those isles, which most apart

From other lands, in eastern seas are spread,
That prince's fair inheritance; than which
Was none more pleasant, populous, or rich.

LXIII
He said, mid many reasons which he prest,
That home was sweet, and — were the warrior fain
To taste that sweet — he ever would detest
A wandering life; and Brandimart again
Replies, through all that war, he will not rest
From serving Roland and King Charlemagne;
And after, if he lives to see its end,
To his own matters better will attend.

LXIV
Upon the following day, for Provence steer
The shipping under Danish Dudon's care;
When with the duke retired Anglantes' peer,
And heard that lord the warfare's state declare:
Then prest with siege Biserta, far and near,
But let good England's knight the honour wear
Of every vantage; while Astolpho still
In all was guided by Orlando's will.

LXV
The order taken to attack the town
Of huge Biserta, when, and on what side;
How, at the first assault, the walls are won,
And with Orlando who the palm divide,
Lament not that I now shall leave unshown,
Since for short time I lay my tale aside.
In the meanwhile, how fierce an overthrow
The Moors received in France, be pleased to know.

LXVI
Well nigh abandoned was their royal lord
In his worst peril; for to Arles again

Had gone, with many of the paynim horde,
The sage Sobrino and the king of Spain;
Who, for the deemed the land unsafe, aboard
Their barks sought refuge, with a numerous train,
Barons and cavaliers, that served the Moor;
Who moved by their example put from shore.

LXVII
Yet royal Agramant the fight maintains;
But when he can no longer make a stand,
Turns from the combat, and directly strains
For Arles, not far remote, upon the strand.
Him Rabican pursues, with flowing reins,
Whom Aymon's daughter drives with heel and hand.
Him would she slay, through whom so often crost,
That martial maid had her Rogero lost.

LXVIII
Marphisa by the same desire was stirred,
Who had her thoughts on tardy vengeance placed,
For her dead sire; and as she fiercely spurred,
Made her hot courser feel his rider's haste.
But neither martial maid, amid that herd
Of flying Moors, so well the monarch chased,
As to o'ertake him in his swift retreat,
First into Arles, and then aboard his fleet.

LXIX
As two fair generous pards, that from some crag
Together dart, and stretch across the plain;
When they perceive that vigorous goat or stag,
Their nimble quarry, is pursued in vain,
As if ashamed they in that chase did lag,
Return repentant and in high disdain:
So, with a sigh, return those damsels two,
When they the paynim king in safety view:

LXX

Yet therefore halt not, but in fury go
Amid that crowd, which flies, possest with dread;
Feeling, now here, now there, at every blow,
Many that never more uprear their head.
To evil pass was brought the broken foe;
For safety was not even for them that fled:
Since Agramant, a sure retreat to gain,
Bade shut the city-gate which faced the plain;

LXXI

And bade on Rhone break all the bridges down.
Unhappy people, ever held as cheap
— Weighed with the tyrant's want who wears a crown —
As worthless herd of goats or silly sheep!
These in the sea, those in the river drown;
And those with blood the thirsty fallows steep.
The Franks few prisoners made, and many slew;
For ransom in that battle was for few.

LXXII

Of the great multitude of either train,
Christened or paynim, killed in that last fight,
Though in unequal parts (for, of the slain,
By far more Saracens were killed in flight,
By hands of those redoubted damsels twain),
Signs even to this day remain in sight:
For, hard by Arles, where sleeps the lazy Rhone,
The plain with rising sepulchres is strown.

LXXIII

Meanwhile his heavy ships of deepest draught
King Agramant had made put forth to sea,
Leaving some barks in port — his lightest craft —
For them that would aboard his navy flee:
He stays two days, while they the stragglers waft,

And, for the winds are wild and contrary,
On the third day, to sail he give command,
In trust to make return to Africk's land.

LXXIV
Royal Marsilius, in that fatal hour,
Fearing the costs will fall upon his Spain,
And that the clouds, which big with tempest lower,
In the end will burst upon his fields and grain,
Makes for Valentia; where he town and tower
Begins to fortify with mickle pain;
And for that war prepares, which after ends
In the destruction of himself and friends.

LXXV
King Agramant his sails for Africk bent:
His barks ill-armed and almost empty go;
Empty of men, but full of discontent,
In that three-fourths had perished by the foe.
As cruel some, as weak and proud some shent
Their king, and (as still happens in like woe)
All hate him privily; but, for they fear
His fury, in his presence mute appear.

LXXVI
Yet sometimes two or three their lips unclose,
— Some knot of friends, where each on each relies —
And their pent choler and their rage expose:
Yet Agramant beneath the illusion lies,
That each will love and pity overflows;
And this befalls, because he still espies
False faces, hears but voices that applaud,
And nought but adulation, lies and fraud.

LXXVII
Not in Biserta's port his host to land
Was the sage king of Africa's intent,

Who had sure news that shore by Nubia's band
Was held, but he so far above it meant
To steer his Moorish squadron, that the strand
Should not be steep or rugged for descent:
There would he disembark, and thence would aid
Forthwith his people, broken and dismaid.

LXXVIII
But favoured not by his foul destiny
Was that intention, provident and wise;
Which willed the fleet, from leaves of greenwood tree,
Produced upon the beach in wondrous guise,
That, bound for France, now ploughed the foaming sea,
Should meet the king at night; that from surprise
In that dark, dismal hour, amid his crew
Worse panic and disorder might ensue.

LXXIX
Not yet to him have tidings been conveyed,
That squadrons of such force the billows plow:
Nor would he have believed in him who said,
A hundred barks had sprung from one small bough;
And hence for Africa the king had weighed,
Not fearing to encounter hostile prow;
Nor has he watchmen in his tops to spy,
And make report of what they hence descry.

LXXX
`Twas so those ships, by England's peer supplied
To Dudon, manned with good and armed crew,
Which see that Moorish fleet at eventide,
And that strange armament forthwith pursue,
Assailed them unawares, and, far, and wide,
Among those barks their grappling-irons threw,
And linked by chains, to their opponents clung,
When known for Moors and foemen by their tongue.

LXXXI
In bearing down, impelled by winds that blow
Propitious to the Danish chief's intent,
Those weighty ships so shocked the paynim foe,
That many vessels to the bottom went;
Then, taxing wits and hands, to work them woe,
Them with fire, sword, and stones the Christians shent;
Which on their ships in such wide ruin pour,
Like tempest never vext the sea before.

LXXXII
Bold Dudon's men, to whom unwonted might
And daring was imparted from on high,
(Since the hour was come the paynims to requite
For more than one ill deed,) from far and nigh,
The Moors so pestilently gall and smite,
Agramant finds no shelter; from the sky
Above, thick clouds of whistling arrows strike;
Around gleam hook and hatchet, sword and pike.

LXXXIII
The king hears huge and heavy stones descend,
From charged machine or thundering engine sent,
Which, falling, poop and prow and broadside rend,
Opening to ravening seas a mighty vent;
And more than all the furious fires offend,
Fires that are quickly kindled, slowly spent,
The wretched crews would fain that danger shun,
And ever into direr peril run.

LXXXIV
One headlong plunged, pursued by fire and sword,
And perished mid the waters, one who wrought
Faster with arms and feet, his passage oared
To other barque, already overfraught:
But she repulsed the wretch that fain would board;

Whose hand, which too importunately sought
To clamber, grasped the side, while his lopt arm
And body stained the wave with life-blood warm.

LXXXV
Him, that to save his life i' the waters thought,
Or, at the worst, to perish with less pain,
(Since swimming profited the caitiff nought,
And he perceived his strength and courage drain)
To the hungry fires from which the refuge sought,
The fear of drowning hurries back again:
He grasps a burning plank, and in the dread
Of dying either death, by both is sped.

LXXXVI
This vainly to the sea resorts, whom spear
Or hatchet, brandished close at hand, dismay;
For stone or arrow following in his rear,
Permit the craven to make little way.
But haply, while it yet delights your ear,
'Twere well and wisely done to end my lay,
Rather than harp upon the theme so long
As to annoy you with a tedious song.

CANTO 40

ARGUMENT
To fly the royal Agramant is fain,
And sees Biserta burning far away;
But landing finds the royal Sericane,
Who of his faith gives goodly warrant; they
Defy Orlando, backed by champions twain;
Whom bold Gradasso firmly trusts to slay.
For seven kings' sake, fast prisoners to their foes,
Rogero and the Dane exchange rude blows.

I

The diverse chances of that sea-fight dread,
Here to rehearse would take a weary while;
And to discourse to you upon this head,
Great son of Hercules, were to Samos' isle
To carry earthen vessels, as 'tis said,
To Athens owls, and crocodiles the Nile.
In that, my lord, by what is vouched to me,
Such things you saw, such things made others see.

II

Your faithful people gazed on a long show,
That night and day, wherein they crowded stood,
As in a theatre, and hemmed on Po
Twixt fire and sword, the hostile navies viewed.
What outcries may be heard, what sounds of woe,
How rivers may run red with human blood,
In suchlike combat, in how many a mode
Men die, you saw, and you to many showed.

III

I saw not, I, who was compelled to course,
Evermore changing nags, six days before,
To Rome, in heat and haste, some helpful force
Of him our mighty pastor to implore.
But, after, need was none of foot or horse,
For so the lion's beak and claws you tore,
From that day unto this I hear not said
That he more trouble in your land has bread.

IV

But Trotto, present at this victory,
Afranio, Moro, Albert, Hannibal,
Zerbinat, Bagno, the Ariostos three,
Assured me of the mighty feat withal,
Certified after by that ensignry,

Suspended from the holy temple's wall,
And fifteen galleys at our river-side,
Which with a thousand captive barks I spied.

V
He that those wrecks and blazing fires discerned,
And such sore slaughter, under different shows,
Which — venging us for hall and palace burned —
While bark remained, raged wide among the foes,
Might also deem how Africk's people mourned,
With Agramant, mid diverse deaths and woes,
On that dark night, when the redouted Dane
Assaulted in mid sea the Moorish train.

VI
'Twas night, nor gleam was anywhere descried,
When first the fleets in furious strife were blended;
But when lit sulphur, pitch and tar from side
And poop and prow into the sky ascended,
And the destructive wild-fire, scattered wide,
Fed upon ship and shallop ill defended,
The things about them all descried so clear
That night was changed to day, as 'twould appear.

VII
Hence Agramant, that by the dark deceived,
Had rated not so high the foes' array,
Nor to encounter such a force believed,
But would, if 'twere opposed, at last give way,
When that wide darkness cleared, and he perceived
(What least he weened upon the first affray)
That twice as many were the ships he fought,
As his own Moorish barks, took other thought.

VIII
Into a boat he with some few descends,
Brigliador and some precious things, to flee;

And so, twixt ship and ship, in silence wends,
Until he finds himself in safer sea,
Far from his own; whom fiery Dudon shends,
Reduced to sad and sore extremity;
Them steel destroys, fires burn, and waters drown;
While he, that mighty slaughter's cause, is flown.

IX
Agramant flies, and with him old Sobrine,
Agramant grieving he had not believed,
What time that sage foresaw with eye divine,
And told the woe wherewith he is aggrieved.
But turn me to the valiant paladine,
Who, before other aid can be received,
Counsels the duke Biserta to destroy;
That it no more may Christian France annoy.

X
And hence in public order was it said,
The camp should to its arms the third day stand;
For this, it was with many barks bested;
For all were placed not at the Dane's command.
That fleet the worthy Sansonetto led,
(As good a warrior he by sea as land)
Which a mile off the port, and overight
Biserta, now was anchored by the knight.

XI
Orlando and the duke, like Christians true,
Which dare no danger without God for guide,
That fast and prayer be made their army through,
Ordain by proclamation to be cried;
And that upon the third day, when they view
The signal, all shall bown them, far and wide,
Biserta's royal city to attack,
Which they, when taken, doom to fire and sack.

XII
And so, when now devoutly have been done
Vigil and vow, and holy prayer and fast,
Kin, friends, and those to one another known,
Together feast; who, when with glad repast
Their wasted bodies were refreshed, begun
To embrace and weep; and acts and speeches past,
Upon the banquet's close, amid those crews
Such as best friends, about to sever, use.

XIII
The holy priests within Biserta's wall,
Pray with their grieving people, and in tears,
Aye beat their bosoms, and for succour call
Upon their Mahomet, who nothing hears.
What vigils, offerings, and what gifts withal
Were promised silently, amid their fears!
What temples, statues, images were vowed,
In memory of their bitter woes, aloud!

XIV
And, when the cadi hath his blessing said,
The people arms and to the rampart hies.
As yet reposing in her Tithon's bed
Aurora was, and dusky were the skies;
When to their posts, their several troops to head,
Here Sansonetto, there Astolpho flies.
And when they hear Orlando's signal blown
Assault with furious force Biserta's town.

XV
Washed by the sea, upon two quarters, were
The city walls, two stood on the dry shore,
Of a construction excellent and rare,
Wherein was seen the work of days of yore:
Of other bulwarks was the town nigh bare;

For since Branzardo there the sceptre bore;
Few masons at command, and little space
That monarch had to fortify the place.

XVI
The Nubian king is charged by England's peer,
With sling and arrow so the Moors to gall,
That none upon the works shall dare appear;
And that, protected by the ceaseless fall
Of stone and dart, in safety cavalier
And footman may approach the very wall;
Who loaded, some with plank, with rock-stone some,
And some with beam, or weightier burden, come.

XVII
This and that other thing the Nubians bore,
And by degrees filled-up that channel wide,
Whose waters were cut off the day before,
So that in many parts the ooze was spied.
Filled is the ditch in haste from shore to shore,
And forms a level to the further side.
Cheering the footmen on the works to mount,
Stand Olivier, Astolpho, and the Count.

XVIII
The Nubian upon hope of gain intent,
Impatient of delay, nor heeding how
With pressing perils they were compassed, went
Protected by the sheltering boar and sow.
With battering ram, and other instrument,
To break the gate and make the turret bow,
Speedily to the city wall they post,
Nor unprovided find the paynim host.

XIX
For steel, and fire, and roof, and turret there,
In guise of tempest on the Nubians fell,

Which plank and beam from those dread engines tear,
Made for annoyance of the infidel.
In the ill beginning, and while dim the air,
Much injury the christened host befell;
But when the sun from his rich mansion breaks,
Fortune the faction of the Moor forsakes.

XX

The assault is reinforced on every side,
By Count Orlando, both by sea and land:
The fleet, with Sansonetto for its guide,
Entered the harbour, and approached the strand;
And sorely they with various engines plied,
With arrows and with slings, the paynim band;
And sent the assailants scaling-ladder, spear,
And naval stores, and every needful gear.

XXI

Orlando, Oliviero, Brandimart,
And he, in air so daring heretofore,
Do fierce and furious battle on that part,
Which lies the furthest inland from the shore:
Each leads a portion of those Aethiops swart,
Ordered in equal bands beneath the four,
Who at the walls, the gateways, or elsewhere,
All give of prowess shining proofs and rare.

XXII

So better could be seen each warrior's claim,
That in confused in combat there and here.
Who of reward is worthy, who of shame,
To a thousand and to watchful eyes is clear.
Dragged upon wheels are towers of wooden frame,
And others well-trained elephants uprear,
Which so o'ertop the turrets of the foe,
Those bulwarks stand a mighty space below.

XXIII

Brandimart to the walls a ladder brought,
Climbed, and to climb withal to others cried:
Many succeed, with bold assurance fraught,
For none can fear beneath so good a guide:
Nor was there one who marked, nor one who thought
Of marking, if such weight it would abide.
Brandimart only, on the foes intent,
Clambered and fought, and grasped a battlement.

XXIV

Here clang with hand and foot the daring knight,
Sprang on the embattled wall, and whirled his sword;
And, showing mickle tokens of his might,
The paynims charged, o'erthrew, hewed down and gored:
But all at once, o'erburthened with that weight,
The ladder breaks beneath the assailing horde;
And, saving Brandimart, the Christians all
Into the ditch with headlong ruin fall.

XXV

Not therefore blenched the valiant cavalier,
Nor thought he of retreat, albeit was none
Of his own band that followed in his rear;
Although he was a mark for all the town.
Of many prayed, the warrior would not hear
The prayer to turn; but mid the foes leapt down;
I say, into the city took a leap,
Where the town-wall was thirty cubits deep.

XXVI

He, without any harm on the hard ground,
As if on feathers or on straw, did light;
And, like cloth shred and shorn, the paynims round
In fury shreds and shears the valiant knight.
Now springs on these, now those, with vigorous bound;

And these and those betake themselves to flight.
They that without have seen the leap he made,
Too late to save him deem all human aid.

XXVII
Throughout the squadrons a deep rumour flew,
A murmur and a whisper, there and here,
From mouth to mouth, the Fame by motion grew,
And told and magnified the tale of fear:
For upon many quarters stormed that crew,
Where good Orlando was, where Olivier,
Where Otho's son, she flew on pinions light,
Nor ever paused upon her nimble flight.

XXVIII
Those warriors, and Orlando most of all,
Who love and prize the gentle Brandimart,
Hearing, should they defy upon that call,
They would from so renowned a comrade part,
Their scaling-ladders plant, and mount the wall
With rivalry, which shows the kingly heart;
Who carry all such terror in their look,
That, at the very sight, their foemen shook.

XXIX
As on loud ocean, lashed by boisterous gale
The billows the rash bark assault, and still —
Now threatening poop, now threatening prow — assail,
And, in their rage and fury, fain would fill;
The pilot sighs and groans, dismaid and pale,
— He that should aid, and has not heart or skill —
At length a surge the pinnace sweeps and swallows,
And wave on wave in long succession follows;

XXX
Thus when those win the wall, they leave a space
So wide, that who beneath their conduct go,

Safely may follow them; for at its base,
A thousand ladders have been reared below.
Meanwhile the battering rams, in many a place,
Have breached that wall, and with such mighty blow,
The bold assailant can, from many a part,
Bear succour to the gallant Brandimart.

XXXI
Even with that rage wherewith the stream that reigns,
The king of rivers — when he breaks his mound,
And makes himself a way through Mantuan plains —
The greasy furrows and glad harvests, round,
And, with the sheepcotes, flock, and dogs and swains
Bears off, in his o'erwhelming waters drowned;
Over the elm's high top the fishes glide,
Where fowls erewhile their nimble pinions plied;

XXXII
Even with that rage rushed in the impetuous band,
Where many breaches in the wall were wrought,
To slay with burning torch and trenchant brand,
That people, which to evil pass were brought.
Murder and rapine there, and violent hand
Dipt deep in blood and plunder, in a thought,
Destroy that sumptuous and triumphant town,
Which of all Africk wore the royal crown.

XXXIII
Filled with dead bodies of the paynim horde,
Blood issued from so many a gaping wound,
A fouler fosse was formed and worse to ford
Than girdles the infernal city round.
From house to house the fire in fury poured;
Mosque, portico, and palace, went to ground;
And spoiled and empty mansions with the clang,
Of beaten breast, and groan and outcry rang.

XXXIV

The victors, laden with their mighty prey,
From that unhappy city's gates are gone,
One with fair vase, and one with rich array,
Or silver plate from ancient altar won.
The mother this, that bore the child away;
Rapes and a thousand evil things were done.
Of much, and what they cannot hinder, hear
Renowned Orlando and fair England's peer.

XXXV

By Olivier, amid that slaughter wide,
Fell Bucifaro of the paynim band;
And — every hope and comfort cast aside —
Branzardo slew himself with his own brand;
Pierced with three wounds whereof he shortly died,
Folvo was taken by Astolpho's hand;
The monarchs three, intrusted to whose care
Agramant's African dominions were.

XXXVI

Agramant, who had left without a guide
His fleet this while, and with Sobrino fled,
Wept over his Biserta when he spied
Those fires that on the royal city fed.
When nearer now the king was certified,
How in that cruel strife his town had sped,
He thought of dying, and himself had slain,
But that Sobrino's words his arm restrain.

XXXVII

"What victory, my lord," (Sobrino cries)
"Could better than thy death the Christian cheer,
Whence he might hope to joy in quiet wise
Fair Africa, from all annoyance clear?
Thy being yet alive this hope denies;

Hence shall he evermore have cause for fear.
For well the foeman knows, save thou art gone,
He for short time will fill thine Africk throne.

XXXVIII
"Thy subjects by thy death deprived will be
Of hope, the only good they have in store,
Thou, if thou liv'st, I trust, shalt set us free,
Redeem from trouble, and to joy restore.
Captives for ever, if thou diest, are we;
Africk is tributary evermore.
Although not for thyself, yet not to give
My liege, annoyance to thy followers, live.

XXXIX
"The soldan, he thy neighbour, will be won,
Surely with men and money thee to aid:
By him with evil eye King Pepin's son,
So strong in Africa, will be surveyed.
All efforts to restore thee to thy throne
By Norandine, thy kinsman, will be made.
Turk, Persian and Armenian, Arab, Mede,
If prayed, will all assist thee in thy need."

XL
In such and such like words, with wary art,
With hope of quickly winning back his reign,
Sobrino soothed the king, while in his heart
He other thought perchance did entertain.
Well knows he to what pass, what evil mart
That lord is brought; how often sighs in vain,
Whoe'er foregoes the sceptre which he swayed,
And to barbarians hath recourse for aid.

XLI
Jugurtha, martial Hannibal, and more
In ancient times, good proof of this afford:

In our own era, Lewis, hight the Moor,
Delivered into other Lewis' ward.
Your brother, Duke Alphonso, wiser lore
Learned from their fate; — I speak to you, my lord —
Wont them as very madmen to decry,
That more on others than themselves rely;

XLII
And therefore aye, throughout that warfare drear
Waged by the pontiff, in his fierce disdain,
Albeit upon his feeble powers the peer
Could ill depend, though from Italian plain
Was driven the friend that aided him whilere,
And by the foe possessed was Naples' reign,
He against menace, against promise steeled,
Ne'er to another would his dukedom yield.

XLIII
Eastward King Agramant had turned his prow;
And seaward steered his bark, of Africk wide;
When from the land a wicked wind 'gan blow,
And took the reeling vessel on one side:
The master, seated at the helm, his brow
Raised towards heaven, and to the monarch cried:
"I see so fell and fierce a tempest form,
Our pinnace cannot face the pelting storm.

XLIV
"If you, my lords, will listen to my lore,
An isle is on our left-hand; and to me
It seems that it were well to make that shore
Till overblown the tempest's fury be."
To his advice assents the royal Moor,
And makes the larboard land, from peril free;
Which, for the sailor's weal, when tempests rise,
'Twixt Vulcan's lofty forge and Africk lies.

XLV
With juniper and myrtle overgrown,
Of habitations is that islet bare;
A pleasing solitude; and where alone
Harbour wild stag and roebuck, deer and hare;
And, save to fishermen, is little known,
That oftentimes on the shorn brambles there
Hang their moist nets; meanwhile, untroubled sleep
The scaly fishes in their quiet deep.

XLVI
Here other vessel, sheltered from the main,
They found, by tempest tost upon that land,
Which had conveyed the king of Sericane
Erewhile from Arles; on one and the other hand,
In reverent wise and worthy of the twain,
Those valiant kings embraced upon the strand:
For friends the monarchs were, and late before
The walls of Paris, arms together bore.

XLVII
With much displeasure Sericana's knight
Heard by King Agramant his griefs displaid;
Then him consoled, and in his cause to fight,
Like courteous king, the kindly offer made:
But brooked nat, that to Egypt's people, light
And lacking faith, he should resort for aid.
"That thither it is perilous to wend,
Exiles (he said) are warned by Pompey's end.

XLVIII
"And for Senapus' Aethiopian crew
Have come beneath Astolpho, as ye show,
To wrest your fruitful Africa from you,
And burnt and laid her chiefest city low.
And with their squadrons is Orlando, who

Was wandering void of wit, short while ago,
The fittest cure for all, whereby to scape
Out of this trouble I, meseems, can shape.

XLIX
"I, for your love, will undertake the quest,
The Count in single combat to appear;
He vainly would, I wot, with me contest,
If wholly made of copper or of steel.
I rate the Christian church, were he at rest,
As wolf rates lambs, when hungering for his meal.
Next have I thought how of the Nubian band
— A brief and easy task — to free your land.

L
"I will make other Nubians, they that hold
Another faith, divided by Nile's course,
And Arabs and Macrobians (rich in gold
And men are these, and those in herds of horse),
Chaldaean, Perse, and many more, controlled
By my good sceptre, in such mighty force,
Will make them war upon the Nubians' reign,
Those reavers shall not in your land remain."

LI
Gradasso's second offer seemed to be
Most opportune to King Troyano's son;
And much he blest the chances of the sea,
Which him upon that desert isle had thrown:
Yet would not upon any pact agree,
— Nay, not to repossess Biserta's town —
Gradasso should for him in fight contend;
Deeming too sore his honour 'twoud offend.

LII
"If Roland is to be defied, more due
The battle is to me (that king replies)

I am prepared for it; and let God do
His will by me, in good or evil wise."
" — Follow my mode; another mode and new,
Which comes into my mind" (Gradasso cries),
"Let both of us together wage this fight
Against Orlando and another knight."

LIII
"So not left out, I care not, if I be
The first or last (said Agramant): I know
In arms no better can I find than thee,
Though I should seek a comrade, high or low,
And what (Sobrino cried) becomes of me?
I should be more expert if old in show;
And evermore in peril it is good,
Force should have Counsel in his neighbourhood."

LIV
Stricken in years, yet vigorous was the sage,
And well had proved himself with sword and spear;
And said, he found himself in gray old age,
Such as in green and supple youth whilere.
They own his claim, and for an embassage
Forthwith a courier find, then bid him steer
For Africa, where camped the Christians lie,
And Count Orlando on their part defy;

LV
With equal number of armed knights to be,
Matching his foes, on Lampedosa's shore;
Where on all quarters that circumfluent sea,
By which they are inisled, is heard to roar.
The paynim messenger unceasingly,
Like one in needful haste, used sail and oar,
Till he found Roland in Biserta, where
The host beneath his eye their plunder share.

LVI

From those three monarchs to the cavalier
The invitation was in public told;
So pleasing to Anglante's valiant peer,
To the herald he was liberal of his gold:
From his companions had he heard whilere
That Durindane was in Gradasso's hold:
Hence, to retrieve that faulchion from the foe,
To India had the Count resolved to go:

LVII

Deeming he should not find that king elsewhere,
Who, so he heard, had sailed from the French shore.
A nearer place is offered now; and there
He hopes Gradasso shall his prize restore;
Moved also by Almontes' bugle rare,
To accept the challenge which the herald bore;
Nor less by Brigliadoro; since he knew
In Agramant's possession were the two.

LVIII

He chose for his companions in the fight
The faithful Brandimart and Olivier:
Well has he proved the one and the other's might;
Knows he alike to both is passing dear.
Good horses and good armour seeks the knight
And goodly swords and lances, far and near,
For him and his; meseems to you is known
How none of those three warriors had his own.

LIX

Orlando (as I oft have certified)
In fury, his had scattered wide and far;
Rodomont took the others', which beside
The river, locked in that high turret are.
Few throughout Africa could they provide;

As well because to France, in that long war,
King Agramant had born away the best,
As because Africa but few possest.

LX
What could be had of armour, rusted o'er
And brown with age, Orlando bids unite;
Meanwhile with his companions on the shore,
He walks, discoursing on the future fight.
So wandering from their camp three miles and more,
It chanced that, turning towards the sea their sight,
Under full sail approaching, they descried
A helmless barque, with nought her course to guide.

LXI
She, without pilot, without crew, alone,
As wind and fortune ordered it, was bound:
The vessel neared the shore, with sails full-blown,
Furrowing the waves, until she took the ground.
But ere of these three warriors more be shown,
The love wherewith I to the Child am bound,
To his story brings me back, and bids record
What past 'twixt him and Clermont's warlike lord.

LXII
I spake of that good pair of warriors, who
Had both retreated from the martial fray,
Beholding pact and treaty broken through,
And every troop and band in disarray.
Which leader to his oath was first untrue,
And was occasion of such evil, they
Study to learn of all the passing train;
King Agramant or the Emperor Charlemagne.

LXIII
Meanwhile a servant of the Child's, at hand,
— Faithful, expert and wary was the wight,

Nor in the shock of either furious band,
Had ever of his warlike lord lost sight —
To bold Rogero bore his horse and brand,
That he might aid his comrades now in flight.
Rogero backed the steed and grasped the sword;
But not in battle mixed that martial lord.

LXIV
Thence he departed; but he first renewed
His compact with Montalban's knight — that so
His Agramant convinced of perjury stood —
Him and his evil sect he would forego.
That day no further feats of hardihood
Rogero will perform against the foe:
He but demands of all that make for Arles,
Who first broke faith, King Agramant or Charles?

LXV
From all he hears repeated, far and near,
That Agramant had broke the promise plight:
He loves that king, and from his side to veer,
For this, believes would be no error light.
The Moors were broke and scattered (this whilere
Has been rehearsed) and from the giddy height
Of HER revolving wheel were downward hurled,
Who at her pleasure rolls this nether world.

LXVI
Rogero ponders if he should remain,
Or rather should his sovereign lord attend:
Love for his lady fits him with a rein
And bit, which lets him not to Africk wend;
Wheels him, and to a counter course again
Spurs him, and threats his restive mood to shend,
Save he maintains the treaty, and the troth
Pledged to the paladin with solemn oath.

LXVII
A wakeful, stinging care, on the other side
Scourges and goads no less the cavalier;
Lest, if he now from Agramant divide,
He should be taxed with baseness or with fear.
If many deem it well he should abide,
To many and many it would ill appear:
Many would say, that oaths unbinding are,
Which 'tis unlawful and unjust to swear.

LXVIII
He all that day and the ensuing night
Remains alone, and so the following day;
Forever sifting in his doubtful sprite,
If it be better to depart or stay:
Lastly for Agramant decides the knight;
To him in Africk will he wend his way:
Moved by his love for his liege-lady sore,
But moved by honour and by duty more.

LXIX
He made for Arles, where yet he hoped would ride
The fleet which him to Africa might bear;
Nor in the port nor offing ships espied,
Nor Saracens save dead beheld he there.
For Agramant had swept the roadstead wide,
And burnt what vessels in the haven were.
Rogero takes the road, when his hope fails,
Along the sea-beat shore toward Marseilles.

LXX
Upon some boat he hoped to lay his hand,
Which him for love or force should thence convey.
Already Ogier's son had made the land,
With the barbarians' fleet, his captive prey.
You could not there have cast a grain of sand

Between those vessels; moored closely lay
The mighty squadrons to that harbour brought,
With conquerors these, and those with prisoners fraught.

LXXI
The vessels of the Moor that were not made
The food of fire and water on that night
(Saving some few that fled) were all conveyed
Safe to Marseilles by the victorious knight
Seven of those kings, that Moorish sceptres swayed,
Who, having seen their squadron put to flight,
With their seven ships had yielded to the foe,
Stood mute and weeping, overwhelmed with woe.

LXXII
Dudon had issued forth upon dry land,
Bent to find Charlemagne that very day;
And of the Moorish spoil and captive band
Made in triumphal pomp a long display.
The prisoners all were ranged upon the strand,
And round them stood their Nubian victors gay;
Who, shouting in his praise, with loud acclaim,
Made all that region ring with Dudon's name.

LXXIII
Rogero, when from far the ships he spied,
Believed they were the fleet of Agramant,
And, to know further, pricked his courser's side;
Then, nearer, mid those knights of mickle vaunt,
Nasamon's king a prisoner he desired,
Agricalt, Bambirago, Farurant,
Balastro, Manilardo, and Rimedont;
Who stood with weeping eyes and drooping front.

LXXIV
In their unhappy state to leave that crew
The Child, who loved those monarchs, cannot bear;

That useless is the empty hand he knew;
That where force is not, little profits prayer.
He couched his lance, their keeper overthrew,
Then proved his wonted might with faulchion bare;
And in a moment stretched upon the strand
Above a hundred of the Nubian band.

LXXV
The noise Sir Dudon hears, the slaughter spies,
But knows not who the stranger cavalier:
He marks how, put to rout, his people flies;
With anguish, with lament and mighty fear;
Quickly for courser, shield, and helmet cries,
(Bosom, and arms, and thighs, were mailed whilere)
Leaps on his horse, nor — having seized his lance —
Forgets he is a paladin of France.

LXXVI
He called on every one to stand aside,
And with the galling spur his courser prest;
Meanwhile a hundred other foes have died,
And filled with hope was every prisoner's breast;
And as Rogero holy Dudon spied
Approach on horseback, (footmen were the rest,)
Esteeming him their head, he charged the knight,
Impelled by huge desire to prove his might.

LXXVII
Already, on his part, had moved the Dane;
But when he saw the Child without a spear,
He flang is own far from him, in disdain
To take such vantage of the cavalier.
Admiring at Sir Dudon's courteous vein,
"Belie himself he cannot," said the peer,
"And of those perfect warriors must be one
That as the paladins of France are known.

LXXVIII
"If I my will can compass, he shall shew
His name, to me, ere further deed be done."
He made demand; and in the stranger knew
Dudon, the Danish Ogier's valiant son:
He from Rogero claimed an equal due,
And from the Child as courteous answer won.
— Their names on either side announced — the foes
A bold defiance speak, and come to blows.

LXXIX
Bold Dudon had with him that iron mace,
Which won him deathless fame in many a fight:
Wherewith he proved him fully of the race
Of that good Danish warrior, famed for might.
That best of faulchions, which through iron case
Of cuirass or of casque was wont to bite,
Youthful Rogero from the scabbard snatched,
And with the martial Dane his valour matched.

LXXX
But for the gentle youth was ever willed
To offend his lady-love the least he could,
And knew he should offend her, if he spilled,
In that disastrous battle, Dudon's blood
(Well in the lineage of French houses skilled
He wist of Beatrice's sisterhood,
— Bradamant's mother she — with Armelline,
The mother of the Danish paladine).

LXXXI
He therefore never thrust in that affray,
And rarely smote an edge on plate and chain.
Now warding off the mace, now giving way,
Before the fall of that descending bane.
Turpin believes it in Rogero lay

Sir Dudon in few sword-strokes to have slain.
Yet never when the Dane his guard foregoes,
Save on the faulchion's flat descend the blows.

LXXXII
The flat as featly as the edge he plies,
Of that good faulchion forged of stubborn grain;
And, at strange blindman's bluff, in weary wise,
Hammers on Dudon with such might and main,
He often dazzles so the warrior's eyes,
That hardly he his saddle can maintain.
But to win better audience for my rhyme,
My canto I defer to other time.

CANTO 41

ARGUMENT
His prisoners to the Child the Danish peer
Consigns, who, homeward bound, are wrecked at sea;
By swimming he escapes, and a sincere
And faithful servant now of Christ is he.
Meanwhile bold Brandimart, and Olivier,
And Roland fiercely charge the hostile three.
Sobrino is left wounded in the strife;
Gradasso and Agramant deprived of life.

I
The odour which well-fashioned bear or hair,
Of that which find and dainty raiment steeps
Of gentle stripling, or of damsel fair,
— Who often love awakens, as she weeps —
If it ooze forth and scent the ambient air,
And which for many a day its virtue keeps,
Well shows, by manifest effects and sure,
How perfect was its first perfume and pure.

II
The drink that to his cost good Icarus drew
Of yore his sun-burned sicklemen to cheer,
And which ('tis said) lured Celts and Boi through
Our Alpine hills, untouched by toil whilere,
Well shows that cordial was the draught, when new;
Since it preserves its virtue through the year.
The tree to which its wintry foliage cleaves,
Well shows that verdant were its spring tide leaves.

III
The famous lineage, for so many years
Of courtesy the great and lasting light,
Which ever, brightening as it burns, appears
To shine and flame more clearly to the sight,
Well proves the sire of Este's noble peers
Must, amid mortals, have shone forth as bright
In all fair gifts which raise men to the sky,
As the glad sun mid glittering orbs on high.

IV
As in his every other feat exprest,
Rogero's valiant mind and courteous lore
Were showed by tokens clear and manifest,
And his high mindedness shone more and more;
— So toward the Dane those virtues stood confest,
With whom (as I rehearsed to you before)
He had belied his mighty strength and breath;
For pity loth to put that lord to death.

V
The Danish warrior was well certified,
No wish to slay him had the youthful knight,
Who spared him now, when open was his side;
Now, when so wearied he no more could smite.
When finally he knew, and plain descried

Rogero scrupled to put forth his might,
If with less vigour and less prowess steeled,
At least in courtesy he would not yield.

VI
"Pardi, sir, make we peace;" (he said) "success
In this contention cannot fall to me —
Cannot be mine; for I myself confess
Conquered and captive to thy courtesy."
To him Rogero answered, "And no less
I covet peace, than 'tis desired by thee.
But this upon condition, that those seven
Are freed from bondage, and to me are given."

VII
With that he showed those seven whereof I spake,
Bound and with drooping heads, a sad array;
Adding, he must to him no hindrance make,
Who would those kings to Africa convey.
And Dudon thus allowed the Child to take
Those seven, and him allowed to bear away
A bark as well; what likes him best he chooses,
Amid those vessels, and for Africk looses.

VIII
He looses bark and sail; and in bold wise
Trusting the fickle wind, to seaward stood.
At first on her due course the vessel flies,
And fills the pilot full of hardihood.
The beach retreats, and from the sailors' eyes
So fades, the sea appears a shoreless flood.
Upon the darkening of the day, the wind
Displays its fickle and perfidious kind.

IX
It shifts from poop to beam, from beam to prow,
And even there short season doth remain:

The reeling ship confounds the pilot; now
Struck fore, now aft, now on her beam again.
Threatening the billows rise, with haughty brow,
And Neptune's white herd lows above the main.
As many deaths appear to daunt that rout,
As waves which beat their troubled bark about.

X

Now blows the wind in front, and now in rear,
And drives this wave an-end, that other back;
Others the reeling vessel's side o'erpeer;
And every billow threatens equal wrack.
The pilot sighs, confused and pale with fear;
Vainly he calls aloud to shift the tack,
To strike or jibe the yard; and with his hand,
Signs to the crew the thing he would command.

XI

But sound or signal little boots; the eye
Sees not amid the dim and rainy night;
The voice unheard ascends into the sky, —
The sky, which with a louder larum smite
The troubled sailors' universal cry,
And roar of waters, which together fight.
Unheard is every hest, above, below,
Starboard or larboard, upon poop or prow.

XII

In the strained tackle sounds a hollow roar,
Wherein the struggling wind its fury breaks;
The forked lightning flashes evermore,
With fearful thunder heaven's wide concave shakes.
One to the rudder runs, one grasps an oar;
Each to his several office him betakes.
One will make fast, another will let go;
Water into the water others throw.

XIII
Lo! howling horribly, the sounding blast,
Which Boreas in his sudden fury blows,
Scourges with tattered sail the reeling mast:
Almost as high as heaven the water flows:
The oars are broken; and so fell and fast
That tempest pelts, the prow to leeward goes;
And the ungoverned vessel's battered side
Is undefended from the foaming tide.

XIV
Fallen on her starboard side, on her beam ends,
About to turn keel uppermost, she lies.
Meanwhile, his soul to Heaven each recommends,
Surer than sure to sink, with piteous cries.
Scathe upon scathe malicious Fortune sends,
And when one woe is weathered, others rise.
O'erstrained, the vessel splits; and through her seams
In many a part the hostile water streams.

XV
A fierce assault and cruel coil doth keep
Upon all sides that wintry tempest fell.
Now to their sight so high the billows leap,
It seems that these to heaven above would swell;
Now, plunging with the wave, they sink so deep,
That they appear to spy the gulfs of hell.
Small hope there is or none: with faultering breath
They gaze upon inevitable death.

XVI
On a despiteous sea, that livelong night,
They drifted, as the wind in fury blew.
The furious wind that with the dawning light
Should have abated, gathered force anew.
Lo! a bare rock, ahead, appears in sight,

Which vainly would the wretched band eschew;
Whom towards that cliff, in their despite, impel
The raging tempest and the roaring swell.

XVII
Three times and four the pale-faced pilot wrought
The tiller with a vigorous push to sway;
And for the bark a surer passage sought:
But the waves snapt and bore the helm away.
To lower, or ease the bellying canvas aught
The sailors had no power; nor time had they
To mend that ill, or counsel what was best;
For them too hard the mortal peril prest.

XVIII
Perceiving now that nothing can defend
Their bark from wreck on that rude rock and bare,
All to their private aims alone attend,
And only to preserve their life have care.
Who quickest can, into the skiff descend;
But in a thought so overcrowded are,
Through those so many who invade the boat,
That, gunwale-deep, she scarce remains afloat.

XIX
Rogero, on beholding master, mate,
And men abandoning the ship with speed,
In doublet, as he is, sans mail and plate,
Hopes in the skiff, a refuge in that need:
But finds her overcharged with such a weight,
And afterwards so many more succeed,
That the o'erwhelming wave the pinnace drown,
And she with all her wretched freight goes down;

XX
Goes down, and, foundering, drags with her whoe'er
Leaving the larger bark, on her relies.

Then doleful shrieks are heard, 'mid sob and tear,
Calling for succour on unpitying skies:
But for short space that shrilling cry they rear;
For, swoln with rage and scorn, the waters rise,
And in a moment wholly stop the vent
Whence issues that sad clamour and lament.

XXI
One sinks outright, no more to reappear;
Some rise, and bounding with the billows go:
Their course, with head uplifted, others steer;
An arm, an unshod leg, those others show:
Rogero, who the tempest will not fear,
Springs upward to the surface from below;
And little distant sees that rock, in vain
Eschewed by him and his attendant train.

XXII
Himself with hands and feet the warrior rows,
Hoping by force thereof to win the shore;
Breast boldly the importunate flood, and blows
With his unwearied breath the foam before.
Waxing meanwhile, the troubled water rose,
And from the rock the abandoned vessel bore;
Quitted of those unhappy men, who die
(So curst their lot) the death from which they fly.

XXIII
Alas! for man's deceitful thoughts and blind!
The ship escaped from wreck, where hope was none;
When master and when men their charge resigned,
And let the vessel without guidance run.
It would appear the wind has changed its mind,
On seeing all that sailed in her are gone;
And blows the vessel from those shallows free,
Through better course, into a safer sea.

XXIV
She, having drifted wildly with her guide,
Without him, made directly Africk's strand,
Two or three miles of waste Biserta wide,
Upon the quarter facing Egypt's land;
And, as the sea went down and the wind died,
Stood bedded in that weary waste of sand.
Now thither Roland roved, who paced the shore;
As I in other strain rehearsed before;

XXV
And willing to discover if alone,
Laden, or light, the stranded vessel were,
He, Olivier, and Monodantes' son,
Aboard her in a shallow bark repair:
Beneath the hatchways they descend, but none
Of human kind they see; and only there
Find good Frontino, with the trenchant sword
And gallant armour of his youthful lord;

XXVI
Who was so hurried in his hasty flight
He had not even time to take his sword;
To Orlando known; which, Balisardo hight,
Was his erewhile; the tale's upon record,
And ye have read it all, as well I wite;
How Falerina lost it to that lord,
When waste as well her beauteous bowers he laid;
And how from him Brunello stole the blade;

XXVII
And how beneath Carena, on the plain
Brunello on Rogero this bestowed.
How matchless was that faulchion's edge and grain,
To him experience had already showed;
I say, Orlando; who was therefore fain,

And to heaven's king with grateful thanks o'erflowed;
And deemed, and often afterwards so said,
Heaven for such pressing need had sent the blade:

XXVIII
Such pressing need, in that he had to fight
With the redoubted king of Sericane;
And knew that he, besides his fearful might,
Was lord of Bayard and of Durindane.
Not knowing them, Anglantes' valiant knight
So highly rated not the plate and chain
As he that these had proved: they valour were,
But valued less as good than rich and fair;

XXIX
And, for of harness he had little need,
Charmed, and against all weapons fortified,
To Olivier he left the warlike weed:
Not so the sword; which to his waist he tied:
To Brandimart Orlando gave the steed:
Thus equally that spoil would he divide
With his companions twain, in equal share,
Who partners in that rich discovery were.

XXX
Against the day of fight, in goodly gear
And new, those warriors seek their limbs to deck.
Blazoned upon Orlando's shield appear
The burning bold and lofty Babel's wreck.
A lyme-dog argent bears Sir Olivier,
Couchant, and with the leash upon his neck:
The motto; TILL HE COMES: In gilded vest
And worthy of himself he will be drest.

XXXI
Bold Brandimart designed upon the day
Of battle, for his royal father's sake,

And his own honour, no device more gay
Than a dim surcoat to the field to take.
By gentle Flordelice for that dark array,
Was wrought the fairest facing she could make.
With costly jewels was the border sown;
Sable the vest, and of one piece alone.

XXXII
With her own hand the lady wrought that vest,
Becoming well the finest plate and chain,
Wherein the valiant warrior should be drest,
And cloak his courser's croup and chest and mane:
But, from that day when she herself addrest
Unto this task, till ended was her pain,
She showed no sign of gladness; nor this while,
Nor after, was she ever seen to smile.

XXXIII
The heartfelt fear, the torment evermore
Of losing Brandimart the dame pursued.
She him whilere a hundred times and more
Engaged in fierce and fearful fight had viewed;
Nor ever suchlike terror heretofore
Had blanched her cheek and froze her youthful blood;
And this new sense of fear increased her trouble,
And made the trembling lady's heart beat double.

XXXIV
The warriors to the wind their canvas rear,
When point device the three accoutred are.
Bold Sansonet is left, with England's peer,
Intrusted with the faithful army's care.
Flordelice, pricked at heart with cruel fear,
Filling the heavens with vow, lament and prayer,
As far as they by sight can followed be,
Follows their sails upon the foaming sea.

XXXV

Scarce, with much labour, the two captains led
Her, gazing on the waters, from the shore,
And to the palace drew, where on her bed
They left the lady, grieved and trembling sore.
Meanwhile upon their quest those others sped,
Whom mercy wind and weather seaward bore.
Their vessel made that island on the right;
The field appointed for so fell a fight.

XXXVI

Orlando disembarks, with his array,
His kinsman Olivier and Brandimart;
Who on the side which fronts the eastern ray,
Encamp them, and not haply without art.
King Agramant arrives that very day,
And tents him on the contrary part.
But for the sun is sinking fast, forborne
Is their encounter till the following morn.

XXXVII

Until the skies the dawning light receive,
Armed servants keep their watch both there and here.
The valiant Brandimart resorts that eve
Thitherward, where their tents the paynims rear;
And parleys, by this noble leader's leave,
With Agramant; for they were friends whilere;
And, underneath the banner of the Moor,
He into France had passed from Africk's shore.

XXXVIII

After salutes, and joining hand with hand,
Fair reasons, as a friend, the faithful knight
Pressed on the leader of the paynim band
Why he should not the appointed battle fight;
And every town — restored to his command —

Laying 'twixt Nile and Calpe's rocky height,
Vowed he, with Roland's license, should receive,
If upon Mary's Son he would believe.

XXXIX
He said: "For loved you were, and are by me,
This counsel give I; that I deem it sane,
Since I pursue it, you assured must be:
Mahound I hold but as an idol vain;
In Jesus Christ, the living God I see,
And to conduct you in my way were fain;
I' the way of safety fain would have you move
With me and all those others that I love.

XL
"In this consists your welfare; counsel none
Save this, in your disaster, can avail;
And, of all counsels least, good Milo's son
To meet in combat, clad in plate and mail;
In that the profit, if the field be won,
Weighs not against the loss, in equal scale.
If you be conqueror, little gain ensues,
Yet little loss results not, if you lose.

XLI
"Were good Orlando and we others slain,
Banded with him to conquer or to die;
Wherefore, through this, ye should your lost domain
Acquire anew, forsooth, I see not, I;
Nor is there reason hope to entertain
That, if we lifeless on the champaigne lie,
Men should be wanting in King Charles's host
To guard in Africa his paltriest post."

XLII
Thus Brandimart to Afick's cavalier;
And much would have subjoined; but, on his side,

That knight, with angry voice and haughty cheer,
The pagan interrupted, and replied:
" `Tis sure temerity and madness sheer
Moves you and whatsoever wight beside,
That counsels matter, be it good or ill,
Uncalled a counsellor's duty to fulfil;

XLIII
"And how to think, from love those counsels flow
Which once you bore and bear me, as you say,
(To speak the very truth) I do not know,
Who with Orlando see you here, this day.
I ween that, knowing you are doomed to woe,
And marked for the devouring dragon's prey,
Ye all mankind would drag to nether hell,
In your eternity of pains to dwell.

XLIV
"If I shall win or lose, remount my throne,
Or pass my future days in exile drear,
God only knows, whose purpose is unknown
To me, in turn, or to Anglantes' peer.
Befall what may, by me shall nought be done
Unworthy of a king, through shameful fear.
If death must be my certain portion, I,
Rather than wrong my princely blood, will die.

XLV
"Ye may depart, who, save ye better play
The warrior, in to-morrow's listed fight,
Then ye have plaid the embassador to-day,
In arms will second ill Anglantes' knight."
Agramant ended so his furious say;
— His angry bosom boiling with despite.
So said — the warriors parted, to repose,
Till from the neighbouring sea the day arose.

XLVI
When the first whitening of the dawn was seen,
Armed, in a moment leapt on horseback all;
Short parley past the puissant foes between.
There was no stop; there was no interval;
For they have laid in rest their lances keen:
But I into too foul a fault should fall
Meseems, my lord, if, while their deeds I tell
I let Rogero perish in the swell.

XLVII
Cleaving the flood with nimble hands and feet
He swims, amid the horrid surges' roar,
On him the threatening wind and tempest beat,
But him his harassed conscience vexes more.
Christ's wrath he fears; and, since in waters sweet
(When time and fair occasion served of yore)
He, in his folly, baptism little prized,
Fears in these bitter waves to be baptized.

XLVIII
Those many promises remembered are
Whereby he to his lady-love was tied,
Those oaths which sworn to good Rinaldo were,
And were in nought fulfilled upon his side.
To God, in hope that he would hear and spare,
That he repented, oftentimes he cried,
And, should he land, and scape that mortal scaith,
To be a Christian, vowed in heart and faith;

XLIX
And ne'er, in succour of the Moorish train,
With sword or lance, the faithful to offend;
And into France, where he to Charlemagne
Would render honour due, forthwith to wend;
Nor Bradamant with idle words again

To cheat, but bring his love to honest end.
A miracle it is that, as he vows,
He swims more lightly and his vigour grows.

L
His vigour grows; unwearied is his mind;
And still his arms from him the billow throw,
This billow followed fast by that behind;
Whereof one lifts him high, one sinks him low.
Rising and falling, vext by wave and wind,
So gains the Child that shore with labour slow;
And where the rocky hill slopes seaward most,
All drenched and dropping, climbs the rugged coast.

LI
All the others that had plunged into the flood
In the end, o'erwhelmed by those wild waters died.
Rogero, as to Providence seemed good,
Mounted the solitary islet's side.
When safe upon the barren rock he stood,
A new alarm the stripling terrified;
To be within those narrow bounds confined,
And die, with hardship and with hunger pined.

LII
Yet he with an unconquered heart, intent
To suffer what the heavens for him ordained,
O'er those hard stones, against that steep ascent,
Towards the top with feet intrepid strained;
And not a hundred yards had gone, when, bent
With years, and with long fast and vigil stained,
He worthy of much worship one espied,
In hermit's weed, descend the mountain's side;

LIII
Who cries, on his approaching him, "Saul, Saul,
Why persecutest thou my faithful seed?"

As whilom said the Saviour to Saint Paul,
When (blessed stroke!) he smote him from his steed.
"Thou thought'st to pass the sea, nor pay withal;
Thought'st to defraud the pilot of his meed.
Thou seest that God has arms to reach and smite,
When farthest off thou deem'st that God of might."

LIV
And he, that holiest anchoret, pursued,
To whom the night foregoing God did send
A vision, as he slumbered, and foreshewed
How, thither by his aid the Child should wend;
Wherein his past and future life, reviewed,
Were seen, as well as his unhappy end;
And sons, and grandsons, and his every heir,
Fully revealed to that good hermit were.

LV
That anchoret pursues, and does upbraid
Rogero first, and comforts finally:
Upbraideth him, because he had delaid
Beneath that easy yoke to bend the knee;
And what he should have done, when whilom prayed
And called of Christ — then uncompelled and free —
Had done with little grace; nor turned to God
Until he saw him threatening with the rod.

LVI
Then comforts him — that Christ aye heaven allows
To them, that late or early heaven desire;
And all those labourers of the Gospel shows,
Paid by the vineyard's lord with equal hire.
With charity and warm devotion glows,
And him instructs the venerable sire,
As toward the rocky cell where he resides
He with weak steps and slow Rogero guides.

LVII
Above that hallowed cell, on the hill's brow,
A little church receives the rising day;
Commodious is the fane and fair enow;
Thence to the beach descends a thicket gray,
Where fertile and fruit-bearing palm-trees blow,
Myrtle, and lowly juniper, and bay,
Evermore threaded by a limpid fountain,
Which falls with ceaseless murmur from the mountain.

LVIII
'Twas well nigh forty years, since on that stone
The goodly friar had fixed his quiet seat;
Which, there to live a holy life, alone,
For him the Saviour chose, as harbourage meet.
Pure water was his drink, and, plucked from one,
Or the other plant, wild berries were his meat;
And hearty and robust, of ailments clear,
The holy man had reached his eightieth year.

LIX
That hermit lit a fire, and heaped the board
With different fruits, within his small repair;
Wherewith the Child somedeal his strength restored,
When he had dried his clothes and dripping hair.
After, at better ease, to him God's word
And mysteries of our faith expounded were;
And the day following, in his fountain clear,
That anchoret baptized the cavalier.

LX
There dwells the young Rogero, well content
With what the rugged sojourn does allow;
In that the friar showed shortly his intent
To send him where he fain would turn his prow.
Meanwhile with him he many an argument

Handles and often; of God's kingdom now;
Now of things appertaining to his case;
Now to Rogero's blood, a future race.

LXI
The Lord, that every thing doth see and hear,
Had to that holiest anchoret bewrayed,
How he should not exceed the seventh year,
Dating from when he was a Christian made;
Who for the death of Pinabel whilere,
(His lady's deed, but on Rogero laid)
As well as Bertolagi's, should be slain
By false Maganza's ill and impious train;

LXII
And, how that treason should be smothered so,
No sign thereof should outwardly appear;
For where that evil people dealt the blow,
They should entomb the youthful cavalier.
For this should vengeance follow, albeit slow,
Dealt by his consort and his sister dear;
And how he by his wife should long be sought,
With weary womb, with heavy burden fraught,

LXIII
'Twixt Brenta and Athesis, beneath those hills
(Which erst the good Antenor so contented,
With their sulphureous veins and liquid rills,
And mead, and field, with furrows glad indented,
That he for these left pools which Xanthus fills;
And Ida, and Ascanius long lamented,)
Till she a child should in the forests bear,
Which little distant from Ateste are;

LXIV
And how the Child, in might and beauty grown,
That, like his sire, Rogero shall be hight,

Those Trojans, as of Trojan lineage known,
Shall for their lord elect with solemn rite;
Who next by Charles (in succour of whose crown
Against the Lombards shall the stripling fight)
Of that fair land dominion shall obtain,
And the honoured title of a marquis gain;

LXV
And because Charles shall say in Latin `Este',
(That is — be lords of the dominion round!)
Entitled in a future season Este
Shall with good omen be that beauteous ground;
And thus its ancient title of Ateste
Shall of its two first letters lose the sound.
God also to his servant had foresaid
The vengeance taken for Rogero's dead;

LXVI
Who shall, in vision, to his consort true
Appear somedeal before the dawn of day;
And shall relate how him the traitor slew,
And where his body lies to her shall say.
She and Marphisa hence, those valiant two,
With fire and sword on earth shall Poictiers lay;
Nor shall his son, when of befitting age,
Less harm Maganza in his mighty rage.

LXVII
On Azos, Alberts, Obysons, did dwell
That hermit hoar, and on their offspring bright;
Or Borso, Nicholas, and Leonel,
Alphonso, Hercules, and Hippolyte,
And. last of those, the gentle Isabel;
Then curbs his tongue and will no more recite.
He to Rogero what is fit reveals,
And what is fitting to conceal, conceals.

LXVIII
Meanwhile Orlando and bold Brandimart,
With that good knight, the Marquis Olivier,
Against the paynim Mars together start;
(Name well befitting Sericana's peer)
And the other two — that from the adverse part,
At more than a foot-pace their coursers steer;
I say King Agramant and King Sobrine:
The pebbly beach resounds, and rolling brine.

LXIX
When they encounter in mid field, pell-mell,
And to the sky flew every shivered lance,
At that loud noise, the sea was seen to swell,
At that loud noise, which echoed even to France.
Gradasso and Roland met as it befel;
And fairly balanced might appear the chance,
But for the vantage of Rinaldo's horse;
Which made Gradasso seem of greater force.

LXX
Baiardo shocked the steed of lesser might,
Backed by Orlando, with such might and main,
He made that courser stagger, left and right,
And measure next his length upon the plain:
Vainly to raise him strove Anglantes' knight,
Thrice, nay four times, with rowels and with rein;
Balked of his end, he lights upon the field,
Draws Balisarda, and uplifts his shield.

LXXI
With Agramant encounters Olivier,
Who, fitly matched, their foaming coursers gall.
Bold Brandimart unhorsed in the career
Sobrino; but it was not plain withal
If 'twas the fault of horse or cavalier;

For seldom good Sobrino used to fall.
Was it his courser's or his own misdeed,
Sobrino found himself without a steed.

LXXII
Now Brandimart, that upon earth descried
The king Sobrine, assailed no more his man;
But at Gradasso, who Anglantes' pride
Had equally unhorsed, in fury ran.
On Agramant and Oliviero's side,
Meanwhile the warfare stood as it began:
When broken on their bucklers were the spears,
With swords encountered the returning peers.

LXXIII
Roland who saw Gradasso in such guise,
As showed that to return he little cared,
— Nor can return; so Brandimart aye plies,
And presses Sericana's monarch hard,
Turns round, and, like himself, afoot descries
Sobrino, in the doubtful strife unpaired:
At him he sprang; and, at his haughty look,
Heaven, as the warrior trod, in terror shook.

LXXIV
Foreseeing the assault with wary eye,
Prepared, and at close ward, behold the Moor!
As pilot against whom, now cresting nigh,
The threatening billow comes with hollow roar,
Towards it turns his prow, and, when so high
He views the sea, would gladly be ashore.
Sobrino rears his buckler, to withstand
The furious fall of Falerina's brand.

LXXV
Of such fine steel was Balisarda's blade,
That arms against it little shelter were;

And by a person of such puissance swayed,
By Roland, singe in the world or rare,
It splits the shield, and is in nowise stayed,
Though bound about with steel the edges are:
It splits the shield, and to the bottom rends,
And on the shoulder underneath descends.

LXXVI
Upon the shoulder; nor, though twisted chain
And double plates encase the paynim foe,
These hinder much that sword of stubborn grain
From opening wide the parted flesh below.
Sobrino at Orlando smites; but vain
Against the valiant count is every blow;
To whom, for special grace, the King of heaven
A body charmed against all arms had given.

LXXVII
The valorous count, redoubling still his blows,
Thought from the trunk the monarch's head to smite.
Sobrino, who the strength of Clermont knows,
And how the shield ill boots, retired from fight,
Yet not so far, but that upon his brows
Fell the dread faulchion of Anglantes' knight:
'Twas on its flat, but such his might and main,
It crushed the helm and stupefied the brain.

LXXVIII
Stunned by that furious stroke, he pressed the shore,
And it was long ere he again did rise.
The paladin believes the warfare o'er,
And that deprived of life Sobrino lies;
And, lest Gradasso to ill pass and sore
Should bring Sir Brandimart, at him he flies:
For him the paynim overmatched in horse,
In arms and faulchion, and perhaps in force.

LXXIX
Bold Brandimart, who guides Frontino's rein,
The goodly courser, erst Rogero's steed,
So well contends with him of Sericane,
The king yet little seems his foe to exceed;
Who, if he had as tempered plate and chain
As that bold paynim lord, would better speed;
But (for he felt himself ill-armed) the knight
Often gave ground, and traversed left and right.

LXXX
Better than good Frontino horse is none
To obey upon a sign the cavalier;
'Twould seem that courser had the sense to shun
Sharp Durindana's fall, now there now here.
Meanwhile elsewhere is horrid battle done
By royal Agramant and Olivier;
Who may be deemed well matched in warlike sleight,
Nor champions differing much in martial might.

LXXXI
Orlando had left Sobrino (as I said)
On earth, and against Sericana's pride,
Desirous valiant Brandimart to aid,
Even as he was, afoot, in fury hied:
When, prompt to assail Gradasso with the blade,
He, loose and walking in mid field, espied
The goodly horse, which had Sobrino thrown;
And bowned him straight to make the steed his own.

LXXXII
He seized the horse (for none the deed gainsaid)
And took a leap, and vaulted on his prize.
This hand the bridle grasped, and that the blade.
Orlando's motions good Gradasso spies;
Nor at his coming is the king dismaid;

Who by his name the paladin defies:
With him, and both his partners in the fight,
He hopes to make it dark before 'tis night.

LXXXIII
Leaving his foe, he, facing Brava's lord,
Thrust at the collar of his shirt of mail,
All else beside the flesh the faulchion bored;
To pierce through which would every labour fail.
At the same time descends Orlando's sword,
(Where Balisarda bites no spells avail)
Shears helmet, cuirass, shield, and all below,
And cleaves whate'er it rakes with headlong blow;

LXXXIV
And in face, bosom, and in thigh it seamed,
Beneath his mail, the king of Sericane.
From whom his blood till how had never streamed
Since he that armour wore; new rage and pain
Thereat the warrior felt, and strange it seemed
Sword cut so now, nor yet was Durindane.
Had Roland struck more home, or nearer been,
From head to belly he had cleft him clean.

LXXXV
No more in arms can trust the cavalier
As heretofore; for proved those arms have been:
He with more care, more caution than whilere,
Prepares to parry with the faulchion keen.
When entered Brandimart sees Brava's peer,
Who snatched that battle from him, he between
Those other conflicts placed himself, that where
It most was needed, he might succour bear.

LXXXVI
While so the fight is balanced 'mid those foes,
Sobrino, that on earth long time had lain,

When to himself he was returned, uprose,
In face and shoulder suffering grievous pain.
He lifts his face, his eyes about him throws;
And thither, where more distant on the plain
He sees his leader, with long paces steers
So stealthily, that none his coming hears;

LXXXVII
He on the Marquis came, who had but eyes
For Agramant, and in the warrior's rear,
Wounded upon the hocks in such fierce wise
The courser of unheeding Olivier,
That he falls headlong; and beneath him lies
His valiant master, nor his foot can clear;
His left foot, which in that unthought for woe,
Was in the stirrup jammed, his steed below.

LXXXVIII
Sorbine pursued, and with back-handed blow
Thought he his head should from his neck have shorn;
But this forbids that armour, bright of show,
By Vulcan hammered, and by Hector worn.
Brandimart sees his risque, and at the foe
Is by his steed, with flowing bridle, borne.
Sobrino on the head he smote and flung;
But straight from earth that fierce old man upsprung;

LXXXIX
And turned anew to Olivier, to speed
The warrior's soul more promptly on its way;
Or at the least that baron to impede.
And him beneath his courser keep at bay:
Bold Olivier, whose better arm was freed,
And with his sword could fend him as he lay,
Meanwhile so smites and longes, there and here,
That at sword's length he holds the ancient peer.

XC

He hopes, if him but little he withstood,
He shall be straight delivered from that pain:
He sees him wholly strained and wet with blood,
And that he spills so much from open vein,
'Twould seem he speedily must be subdued,
So weak he hardly can himself sustain.
Often and oft to rise the Marquis strove,
Yet could not from beneath his courser move.

XCI

Brandimart has found out the royal Moor,
And storms about that paynim cavalier;
Upon Frontino, like a lathe, before,
Beside, or whirling in the warrior's rear.
A goodly horse the Christian champion bore;
Nor worse the southern king's in the career:
That Brigliador, Rogero's gift he crost,
Erewhile, by haughty Mandricardo lost.

XCII

Great vantage has he, on another part:
Of proof and perfect is his iron weed.
His at a venture took Sir Brandimart,
As he could have in haste in suchlike need;
But hopes (his anger puts him so in heart)
To change it for a better coat with speech;
Albeit the Moorish king, with bitter blow,
Has made the blood from his right should flow.

XCIII

Him in the flank Gradasso too had gored;
(Nor this was laughing matter) so had scanned
His vantage that redoubted paynim lord,
He found a place wherein to plant his brand;
He broke the warrior's shield, his left arm bored,

And touched him slightly in the better hand.
But this was play, was pastime (might be said),
With Roland's and Gradasso's battle weighed.

XCIV
Gradasso has Orlando half disarmed;
Atop and on both sides his helm has broke:
Fallen is his shield, his cuirass split; but harmed
The warrior is not by the furious stroke,
Which opened plate and mail; for he is charmed;
And worser vengeance on the king has wroke,
In face, throat, breast has gored that cavalier,
Beside the wounds whereof I spake whilere.

XCV
Gradasso, desperate when he descried
Himself all wet, and smeared with sanguine dye,
And Roland, all from head to foot espied,
After such mighty strokes unstained and dry,
Thinking head, breast, and belly to divide,
With both his hands upheaved his sword on high;
And, even as he devised, upon the front,
Smote with mid blade Anglantes' haughty count.

XCVI
And would by any other so have done;
— Would to the saddle-tree have cleft him clean:
But the good sword, as if it fell upon
Its flat, rebounds again, unstained and sheen.
The furious stroke astounded Milo's son
By whom some scattered stars on earth were seen.
He drops the bridle and would drop the brand,
But that a chain secures it to his hand.

XCVII
So by the noise was scared the horse that bore
Upon his back Anglantes' cavalier.

The courser scowered about the powdery shore,
Showing how good his speed in the career:
The County by that stroke astounded sore,
Has not the power the frightened horse to steer.
Gradasso follows and will reach him, so
That he but little more pursues the foe;

XCVIII
But turning round, beholds the royal Moor
To the utmost peril in that battle brought;
For by the shining helmet which he wore,
With the left hand, him Brandimart had caught;
Already had unlaced the casque before,
And with his dagger would new ill have wrought:
Nor much defence could make the Moorish lord;
For Brandimart as well had reft his sword.

XCIX
Gradasso turned, nor more Orlando sought,
But hastened where he Agramant espied:
The incautious Brandimart, suspecting nought
Orlando would have let him turn aside,
Had not Gradasso in his eyes or thought,
And to the paynim's throat his knife applied.
Gradasso came, and at his helmet layed,
Wielding with either hand his trenchant blade.

C
Father of heaven! 'mid spirits chosen by thee,
To him thy martyr true, a place accord;
Who, having traversed his tempestuous sea,
Now furls his sails in port. Ah! ruthless sword,
So cruel, Durindana, can'st thou be,
To good Orlando, to thine ancient lord,
That thou can'st slaughter, in the warrior's view,
Of all his friends the dearest and most true?

CI
An iron ring that girt his helmet round,
Two inches thick, was broke by that fell blow
And cleft; and with the solid iron bound,
Was parted the good cap of steel below,
Bold Brandimart, reversed upon the ground,
With haggard face beside his horse lies low;
And issuing widely from the warrior's head
A stream of life-blood dyes the shingle red.

CII
Come to himself, the County turns his eye
And sees his Brandimart upon the plain,
And in such act Gradasso standing by
As clearly shows by whom the knight was slain.
If he most raged or grieved I know not, I,
But such short time is left him to complain,
His hasty wrath breaks forth, his grief gives way;
But now 'tis time that I suspend my lay.

CANTO 42

ARGUMENT
The victory with Count Orlando lies;
But good Rinaldo and Bradamant at heart,
(One for Angelica, the other sighs
For young Rogero) suffer cruel smart.
Him that in chase of the Indian damsel hies
Disdain preserves; from thence does he depart
Towards Italy, and is with courteous cheer
And welcome guested by a cavalier.

I
What bit, what iron curb is to be found,
Or (could it be) what adamantine rein,

That can make wrath keep order and due bound,
And within lawful limits him contain?
When one, to whom the constant heart is bound
And linked by Love with solid bolt and chain,
We see, through violence or through foul deceit,
With mortal damage or dishonour meet.

II
And is the mind sometimes, if so possest,
To ill and savage action led astray,
It may deserve excuse; in that the breast
No more is under Reason's sovereign sway.
Achilles, when, beneath his borrowed crest,
He saw Patroclus crimsoning the way,
Was with his murderer's slaughter ill content,
Till he his mangled corse had dragged and shent.

III
Unconquered Duke Alphonso, anger so
Inflamed thy host the day that weighty stone
Wounded thy forehead with such grievous blow,
That all believed it to its rest was gone;
— Inflamed them with such fury, for the foe
In rampart, fosse, or wall, defence was none,
Who, one and all, within their works lay dead,
Nor wight was left the woeful news to spread.

IV
Seeing thy fall caused thine such mighty pain,
They were to fury moved; hadst thou, my lord,
Maintained thy footing, haply might thy train
Have with less licence plied the murderous sword.
Enough for thee thy Bastia to regain!
In fewer hours replaced beneath thy ward,
Then Cordova's and fierce Granada's band
Took days erewhile, to wrest it from thy hand.

V

Haply Heaven's vengeance ordered what befel,
And in that case thy wound so hindered thee
To the end, the cruel outrage, foul and fell,
Done by that band before, should punished be.
For after the unhappy Vestidel,
Wearied and hurt, had sought their clemency,
Among them (mostly an unchristened train)
He, mid a hundred swords, unarmed, was slain.

VI

To end; I say that other rage is none
Which can be weighed with that in equal wise,
Which kindles, when an injury is done
To kinsman, friend or lord before our eyes.
Then justly in Orlando's heart, for one
So dear to him, might sudden fury rise;
When him he saw, extended on the sand,
Slain by the stroke of fierce Gradasso's brand.

VII

As nomade swain, who darting on its way
In slippery line the horrid snake has seen,
That his young son, amid the sands at play,
Has killed with venomed tooth, enflamed with spleen,
Grasps his batoon, the poisonous worm to slay;
His sword, than every other sword more keen,
So, in his fury grasped Anglantes' knight,
And wreaked on Agramant his first despite,

VIII

Scaped, bleeding, with helm loosened form his head,
With half a shield and swordless, through his mail,
Sore wounded in more places than is said;
As from the dull or envious falcon's nail,
Escapes the unhappy sparrowhawk, half dead,

With ruffled plumage and with loss of tail.
On him Orlando came and smote him just
Where with the helmed head confined the bust.

IX

Loosed was the helm, the neck without its band:
So, like a rush, was severed by the sword.
Down-fell, and shook its last upon the sand
The heavy trunk of Libya's mighty lord.
His spirit, which flitted to the Stygian strand,
Charon with crooked boat-hook dragged aboard.
On him Orlando wastes no further pain,
But, sword in hand, seeks him of Sericane.

X

As the headless trunk of Africk's cavalier
Extended on the shore Gradasso's viewed,
(What never had befallen him whilere)
He shook at heart, a troubled visage shewed,
And, at the coming of Anglantes' peer,
Presageful of his fate, appears subdued:
Nor seeks he means of fence against his foe,
When fierce Orlando deals the fatal blow.

XI

Orlando levels at his better side,
Beneath the lowest rib, his faulchion bright;
And crimsoned to the hilt, a hand's breadth wide
Of the other flank, the sword appears in sight;
And well his mighty puissance testified,
And spoke him as the strongest living knight
That stroke, by which a warrior was undone,
Better than whom in Paynimry was none.

XII

Little his victory good Orlando cheers:
Himself he quickly from his saddle throws;

And, with a face disturbed, and wet with tears,
To his Brandimart in haste the warrior goes;
The field about him red with blood appears,
His helmet cleft as by a hatchet's blows;
And, had it been than spungy rind more frail,
Would have defended him no worse than mail.

XIII
Orlando lifts the helmet, and descries
Brandimart's head by that destructive brand
Cleft even to his nose, between the eyes;
Yet so the wounded knight his spirits manned,
That pardon of the king of Paradise
He, before death, was able to demand,
And to exhort to patience Brava's peer,
Whose manly cheeks were wet with many a tear;

XIV
And — "Roland, in thy helping orisons, I
Beseech thee to remember me," he cried,
"Nor recommend to thee less warmly my —"
— Flordelice would, but could not, say — and died;
And sounds and songs of angels in the sky,
As the soul parts, are heard on every side;
Which from its prison freed, mid hymns of love,
Ascends into the blissful realms above.

XV
Orlando, albeit he should joy in heart
At death so holy, and is certified
That called to bliss above is Brandimart;
For he heaven opened to the knight described;
Through human wilfulness — which aye takes part
With our weak senses — hardly can abide
The loss of one, above a brother dear,
Nor can refrain from many a scalding tear.

XVI

Warlike Sobrino, of much blood bereaved,
Which from his flank and wounded visage rained,
Long since had fallen, reversed and sore aggrieved,
And had by now his vessels well nigh drained.
Olivier too lies stretched; nor has retrieved,
Nor can retrieve, his crippled foot, save sprained,
And almost crushed; so long between the plain,
And his stout courser jammed, the limb has lain;

XVII

And but Orlando helped (so woe begone
Was weeping Olivier, and brought so low)
He could not have released his limb alone;
And, when released, endures such pain, such woe,
The helpless warrior cannot stand upon,
Or shift withal his wounded foot, and so
Benumbed and crippled is the leg above,
That he without assistance cannot move.

XVIII

The victory brought Orlando small delight;
On whom too heavily and hardly weighed
Of slaughtered Brandimart the piteous sight;
Nor sure of Oliviero's life he made.
Sobrino yet survived; but little light
The wounded monarch had, amid much shade:
For almost spend his ebbing life remained
So fast from him the crimson blood had drained.

XIX

The County has him taken, bleeding sore;
Thither, where he is saved with sovereign care;
And he as if a kinsman of the Moor,
Benignly comforts him and speaks him fair:
For in Orlando, when the strife was o'er,

Was nothing evil; ever prompt to spare.
He from the dead their arms and coursers reft,
The rest he to their knives' disposal left.

XX
Here as my story stood not on good ground,
Frederick Fulgoso doubtful does appear;
Who, searching Barbary's every shore and sound
Erewhile on board a squadron, landed here;
And the isle so rugged and so rocky found,
In all its parts so mountainous and drear,
There is not (through the land) a level space
(He says) whereon a single boot to place.

XXI
Nor deems he likely, that six cavaliers,
The wide world's flower, on Alpine rock should vye,
In that equestrian fight, with levelled spears.
To whose objection thus I make reply:
Erewhile a place, well fit for such careers,
Stretched at the bottom of the hills did lie;
But afterwards, o'erthrown by earthquake's shock,
A cliff o'erspread the plain with broken rock.

XXII
So, of Fulgoso's race thou shining ray,
Clear, lasting light, if, questioning my word,
Thou on this point hast ever said me nay,
And haply too, before the unconquered lord,
Through whom thy land, reposing, casts away
All haste, and wholly leans to kind accord,
Prythee delay not to declare, that I
In this my story haply tell no lie.

XXIII
Meanwhile his eyes the good Orlando reared,
And saw, on turning them to seaward, where

Under full sail a nimble bark appeared,
As if she to that island would repair.
I will not now rehearse who thither steered;
For more than one awaiteth me elsewhere.
Wend me to France and see if they be glad
At having chased the Saracens, or sad;

XXIV
See what she does withal, the lady true,
That sees her knight content to wend so wide;
Of the afflicted Bradamant I shew;
After she saw the oath was nullified,
Made in the hearing of those armies two,
Upon the Christian and the paynim side;
Since he again had failed her, there was nought
Wherein she could confide, the damsel thought.

XXV
And now her too accustomed plaint and wail
Repeating, of Rogero's cruelty
Fair Bradamant renewed the wonted tale;
She cursed her hard and evil destiny;
Then loosening to tempestuous grief the sail,
Heaven that consented to such perjury,
— And did not yet by some plain token speak —
She, in her passion, called unjust and weak.

XXVI
The sage Melissa she accused, and cursed
The oracle of the cavern, through whose lie
She in that sea of love herself immersed,
Upon whose waters she embarked to die.
She to Marphisa afterwards rehearsed
Her woes, and told her brother's perfidy;
She chides, pours forth her sorrows, and demands,
With tears and outcries, succour at her hands.

XXVII

Marphisa shrugs her shoulders; what alone
She can, she offers — comfort to the fair;
Nor thinks Rogero her has so foregone
But what to her he shortly will repair.
And, should he not, such outrage to be done,
The damsel plights her promise not to bear;
Twixt her and him shall deadly war be waged,
Or he shall keep the word, which he engaged.

XXVIII

She makes her somewhat thus her grief restrain;
Which having vent in some sort spend its gall,
Now we have seen the damsel in her pain
Rogero impious, proud, and perjured call,
See we, if in a happier state remain
The brother of that gentle maid withal;
Whose flesh, bones, nerves, and sinews are a prey
To burning love; Rinaldo I would say.

XXIX

I say Rinaldo that (as known to you)
Angelica the beauteous loved so well:
Nor him into the amorous fillets drew
So much her beauty as the magic spell.
In peace reposed those other barons true;
For wholly broken was the infidel:
Alone amid the victors, he, of all
The paladins, remained Love's captive thrall.

XXX

To seek her he a hundred couriers sent,
And sought as well, himself, the missing maid:
He in the end to Malagigi went,
Who in his need had often given him aid:
To him he told his love, with eyelids bent

On earth, and visage crimsoned o'er; and prayed
That sage magicians to instruct him, where
He in the world might find the long-sought fair.

XXXI
A case, so strange and wondrous, marvel sore
In friendly Malagigi's bosom bred:
The wizard knew, a hundred times and more,
He might have had the damsel in his bed;
And he himself, to move the knight or yore,
In her behalf, enough had done and said:
Had him by prayer and menace sought to bend,
Yet ne'er was able to obtain his end;

XXXII
And so much more, that out of prison ward
He then would Malagigi so have brought.
Now will he seek her, of his own accord,
On less occasion, when it profits nought.
Next that magician Montalbano's lord
To mark how sorely do had erred, besought:
Since little lacked, but through the boon denied,
Erewhile he had in gloomy dungeon died.

XXXIII
But how much more Rinaldo's strange demand
Sounded importunately in his ear,
So by sure index Malagigi scanned,
That so much was Angelica more dear.
Rinaldo prayer unable to withstand,
In ocean sunk the wizard cavalier
All memory of old injury assaid,
And bowned himself to give the warrior aid.

XXXIV
For his reply he craved some small delay,
And with fair hope consoled Mount Alban's knight,

He should be able of the road to say
By which Angelica had sped her flight,
In France or wheresoe'er; then wends his way
Thither where he is wont his imps to cite;
A grot impervious and with mountains walled:
His book he opened and the spirits called.

XXXV

Then one he chooses, in love-cases read,
Whom Malagigi to declare requires,
How good Rinaldo's heart, before so died,
Was now so quickly moved by soft desires;
And of those fountains twain (the demon said)
Whereof one lights, one quenches amorous fires;
And how nought cures the mischief caused by one
But that whose streams in counter current run;

XXXVI

And says, Rinaldo, having drunk whilere
From the love-chasing fountain's mossy urn,
To Angelica, that long had wooed the peer,
Had shown himself so obstinate and stern;
And he, whom after his ill star did steer
To drink of that which makes the bosom burn,
Her whom but just before he loathed above
All reason, by that draught was forced to love.

XXXVII

Him his ill star and cruel fate conveyed
To swallow fire and flame i' the frozen lake:
For nigh at the same time the Indian maid
In the other bitter stream her thirst did slake;
Which in her bosom so all love allayed,
Henceforth she loathed him more than noisome snake;
He loved her, and such love was his, as late
Rinaldo bore her enmity and hate.

XXXVIII
Of this strange story fully certified
Was Malagigi by the demon's lore;
Who news as well of Angelique supplied;
How yielding up herself to a young Moor,
With him embarking on the unstable tide,
She had abandoned Europe's every shore;
And hoisting her bold canvas to the wind,
In Catalonian galley loosed for Ind.

XXXIX
Rinaldo seeking out the sage anew
For his reply — he would dissuade the knight
From loving more that Indian lady, who
Now waited on a vile barbarian wight;
And was so distant he could ill pursue;
If he would chase the damsel on her flight,
Who must have measured than half her way
Homeward, with young Medoro to Catay.

XL
In that bold lover no displeasure deep
The journey of Angelica would move;
Nor yet would mar or break the warrior's sleep
To think that he again must eastward rove:
But that a stripling Saracen should reap
The first fruits of that faithless lady's love
In him such passion bred, such heart-ache sore,
He never in his life so grieved before.

XLI
No power hath he to make one sole reply;
His heart, his lip, is quivering with disdain;
His tongue no word is able to untie;
His mouth is bitter, and 'twould seem with bane.
He flung from the magician suddenly,

And, as by fury stirred and jealous pain,
He after mighty plaint and mighty woe
Resolved anew to eastern realms to go.

XLII
Licence he asks of Pepin's royal son,
Upon the ground, since with his courser dear
To Sericane is King Gradasso gone,
Against the use of gallant cavalier,
Him honour moves the selfsame course to run,
In the end he may prevent the paynim peer
From ever vaunting, that with sword or lance
He took him from a Paladin of France.

XLIII
Charles gives him leave to go; though, far and nigh,
With him all France laments he thence should wend;
But he in fine that prayer can ill deny,
So honest seems the worthy warrior's end.
Him Dudon, Guido, would accompany;
But he refuses either valiant friend:
From Paris he departs, and wends alone,
Plunged in his grief and heaving many a groan.

XLIV
Ever in memory dwells the restless thought,
He might a thousand times have had the fair;
And — mad and obstinate — had, when besought,
A thousand times refused such beauty rare;
And such sweet joy was whilom set at nought,
Such bright, such blessed moments wasted were;
And now he life would gladly give away
To have that damsel but for one short day.

XLV
The thought will never from his mind depart,
How for a sorry footpage she could slight,

— Flinging their merit and their love apart —
The service of each former loving wight.
Vext by such thought, which racked and rent his heart,
Rinaldo wends towards the rising light:
He the straight road to Rhine and Basle pursued,
Till he arrived in Arden's mighty wood.

XLVI
When within that adventurous wood has hied
For many a mile Montalban's cavalier,
Of lonely farm or lordly castle wide,
Where the rude place was roughest and most drear,
The sky disturbed he suddenly descried,
He saw the sun's dimmed visage disappear,
And spied forth issuing from a cavern hoar
A monster, which a woman's likeness wore.

XLVII
A thousand lidless eyes are in her head:
She cannot close them, nor, I think, doth sleep:
She listens with as many ears, and spread
Like hair, about her forehead serpents creep.
Forth issued into day that figure dread
From devilish darkness and the caverned deep.
For tail, a fierce and bigger serpent wound
About her breast, and girt the monster round.

XLVIII
What in a thousand, thousand quests had ne'er
Befal'n Rinaldo, here befel the knight;
Who, when he sees the horrid form appear,
Coming to seek him and prepared for fight,
Feels in his inmost veins such freezing fear,
As haply never fell on other wight;
Yet wonted daring counterfeits and feigns,
And with a trembling hand the faulchion strains.

XLIX

The monster so the fierce assault did make
Therein her master was well descried,
It might be said; she shook a poisonous snake,
And now on this, now on the other side,
Leapt at the knight; at her Rinaldo strake
Ever meanwhile with random blows and wide;
With forestroke, backstroke, he assails the foe;
He often smites, but never plants a blow.

L

The monster threw a serpent at his breast,
That froze his heart beneath its iron case:
Now through the vizor flung the poisonous pest,
Which crept about his collar and his face.
Dismaid, Rinaldo fled the field, and prest
With all his spurs his courser through the chase:
But not behind the hellish monster halts,
Who in a thought upon the crupper vaults.

LI

Wend where the warrior will, an-end or wide,
Ever with him is that accursed Pest:
Nor knows he how from her to be untied,
Albeit his courser plunges without rest.
Like a leaf quakes his heart within his side,
Not that the snakes in other mode molest,
But they such horror and such loathing bred,
He shrieks, he groans, and gladly would be dead.

LII

By gloomiest track and blindest path he still
Threaded the tangled forest here and there;
By thorniest valley and by roughest hill,
And wheresoever darkest was the air;
Thus hoping to have rid him of that ill,

Hideous, abominable, poisonous Care;
Beneath whose gripe he foully might have fared,
But that one quickly to his aid repaired.

LIII
But aid, and in good time, a horseman bore,
Equipt with arms of beauteous steel and clear:
For crest, a broken yoke the stranger wore;
Red flames upon his yellow shield appear:
So was the courser's housing broidered o'er,
As the proud surcoat of the cavalier.
His lance he grasped, his sword was in its place,
And at his saddle hung a burning mace.

LIV
That warrior's mace a fire eternal fills,
Whose lasting fuel ever blazes bright;
And goodly buckler, tempered corslet thrills,
And solid helm; then needs the approaching knight
Must make him way, wherever 'tis his will
To turn his inextinguishable light.
Nor of less help in need Rinaldo stands,
To save him from the cruel monster's hands.

LV
The stranger horseman, like a warrior bold,
Where he that hubbub hears, doth thither swoop,
Until he sees the beast, whose snakes enfold
Rinaldo, linked in many a loathsome loop,
Who sweats at once with heat and quakes with cold,
Nor can he thrust the monster from his croup.
Arrived the stranger smote her in the flank,
Who on the near side of the courser sank:

LVI
But scarcely was on earth extended, ere
She rose and shook her snakes in volumed spire.

The knight no more assails her with the spear;
But is resolved to plague the foe with fire:
He gripes the mace and thunders in her rear
With frequent blows, like tempest in its ire;
Nor leaves a moment to that monster fell
To strike one stroke in answer, ill or well;

LVII
And, while he chases her or holds at bay,
Smites her and venges many a foul affront,
Counsels the paladin, without delay,
To take the road which scales the neighbouring mount:
He took that proffered counsel and that way,
And without stop, or turning back his front,
Pricked furiously till he was out of sight;
Though hard to clamber was the rugged height.

LVIII
The stranger, when he to her dark retreat
Had driven from upper light that beast of hell
(Where she herself doth ever gnaw and eat,
While from her thousand eyes tears ceaseless well)
Followed the knight, to guide his wandering feet;
And overtook him on the highest swell;
Then placed himself beside the cavalier
Him from those dark and gloomy parts to steer.

LIX
When him returned beheld Montalban's knight,
That countless thanks were due to him, he said,
And that at all times, as a debt of right,
His life should be for his advantage paid.
Of him he next demands, how he is hight,
That he may know and tell who brought him aid;
And among worthy warriors, and before
King Charles, exalt his prowess evermore.

LX
The stranger answered: "Let it irk not thee
That I not now my name to thee display;
Ere longer by a yard the shadows be,
This will I signify; a short delay."
Wending together, they a river see
Whose murmurs woo the traveller from his way,
And shepherd-swain, by whiles, to their green brink;
There an oblivion of their love to drink.

LXI
My lord, that fountain's chilling stream and clear
Extinguished love; Angelica of yore
Drinking thereof, for good Montalban's peer
Conceived that hate she nourished evermore;
And if she once displeased the cavalier,
And he to her such passing hatred bore,
For this no other cause occasion gave,
My lord, save drinking of this chilly wave.

LXII
Arriving at that limpid river's side,
The cavalier that with Rinaldo goes,
Reined-in his courser, how with toil, and cried,
"Here 'twere not ill, meseemeth, to repose."
— "It cannot but be well" (the peer replied),
"Because, beside that mid-day fiercely glows,
I have so suffered from that hideous Pest,
As sweet and needful shall I welcome rest."

LXIII
Upon the green sward lit the martial two,
While their loose horses through the forest fed;
And from their brows the burnished helmets threw
On that flowered herbage, yellow, green, and red.
Rinaldo to the liquid crystal flew,

By heat and thirst unto the river sped;
And with one draught of that cold liquid drove
Out of his burning bosom thirst and love.

LXIV
Whenas Rinaldo, sated with the draught,
Raising his head the stranger knight espied,
And saw that he, repentant, every thought
Of that so frantic love had put aside,
He reared himself, and said with semblance haught
That which he would not say before, and cried:
"Rinaldo, know that I am hight Disdain,
Bound hither but to break thy worthless chain."

LXV
So saying, suddenly he passed from sight;
With him his horse: this in Rinaldo bred
Much wonderment; and the astonished knight,
"Where is he?" gazing round about him, said.
He cannot guess if 'twere a magic sprite,
A fiend by Malagigi thither sped,
From those his ministers, to break the chain,
Fettered whereby he lived so long in pain;

LXVI
Of if an angel from the heavenly sphere
In his ineffable goodness by the Lord,
Dispatched, as to Tobias's aid whilere,
A medicine for his blindness to afford.
But good or evil angel — whatsoe'er
He was that him to liberty restored —
Him thanked and praised Rinaldo, for a heart
Healed only by his help of amorous smart.

LXVII
Old hate revived upon Rinaldo's side;
Nor he alone unworthy to be wooed,

The damsel deemed by pilgrimage so wide
Her half a league he would not have pursued.
Nathless anew Baiardo to bestride
To Sericane would go that warrior good:
As well because his honour him compelled,
As for the talk which he with Charles had held.

LXVIII
He pricked to Basle upon the following day,
Whither the tidings had arrived before:
That Count Orlando was, in martial fray,
To meet Gradasso and the royal Moor:
Nor through Orlando was divulged that say:
But one, who crost from the Sicilian shore,
And thither had, in haste, the journey made,
As certain news, the tidings had conveyed.

LXIX
Rinaldo had gladly been at Roland's side,
And from that battle far himself doth see:
Every ten miles he changes horse and guide,
And whips and spurs, and makes his courser flee.
He crost the Rhine at Constance, forward hied,
He traversed Alp, arrived in Italy,
He left Verona, Mantua, in his rear,
And reached and past the Po, with swift career.

LXX
Much towards eve already sloped the sun,
And the first star was glimmering in the sky,
When, doubting on the bank if he shall run
Another course, or in some hostel lie
Until the shades of night and vapours dun
Before Aurora's beauteous visage fly,
A cavalier approaching him he viewed,
Who courtesy in face and semblance shewed.

LXXI
He, after greeting him, if he were tied
In wedlock, made in gentle wise demand.
Rinaldo, wondering what the quest implied,
Made answer: "I am bound in nuptial band."
— "I joy thereat," the cavalier replied;
Then, that he might this saying understand,
Added, "I pray that you, sir knight, within
My mansion will this eve be pleased to inn.

LXXII
"For I will make you see what must please
A wight" (pursued the stranger) "that is wed."
Rinaldo, as well that he would take his ease,
— But this, with so long posting sore bested —
As that to see and hear strange novelties
By natural desire he still was led,
His offer takes, and enters a new road,
Following that cavalier to his abode.

LXXIII
A bowshot from the way diverged the two,
And a great palace fronting them descried:
Whence squires with blazing lights (a numerous crew)
Issued, and chased the darkness far and wide.
Entering, his eyes around Rinaldo threw,
And saw a place, whose like is seldom spied,
Of beauteous fabric, and well ordered plan;
Nor such huge cost befitted private man.

LXXIV
Of serpentine and of hard porphyry are
The stones which form the gateway's arch above.
Of bronze the portal leaves, which figures bear,
Whose lively features seem to breathe and move.
Beneath the vaulted entry, colours rare

Cheating the eye, in mixt mosaic strove,
The quadrangle within was galleried,
And of a hundred yards, on every side.

LXXV
A gateway is there to each galleried row,
And, twixt it and that gate, an arch is bent;
Of equal breadth, but different in their show,
For the architect had spared not ornament.
Each arch an entrance was; up which might go
A laden horse; so easy the ascent.
To arch above leads every stair withal,
And every arch is entrance to a hall.

LXXVI
Above, project the arches in such sort,
They for the spacious portals form a shade;
And each two pillars has for its support:
Of bronze are some, and some of marble made.
The ornamented chambers of the court
Too many are to be at length displayed;
With easements, which (beside what is in sight)
The skilful master underground had dight.

LXXVII
Tall columns, with their capitals of gold,
Which gemmed entablatures support in air;
Exotic marbles engraved with figures fair;
Picture and cast, and works so manifold,
Albeit by night they mostly hidden were,
Showed that two kings' united treasure ne'er
Would have sufficed such gorgeous pile to rear.

LXXVIII
Above the beauteous ornaments and rich
That mingled in that gay quadrangle meet,
There is a fresh and plenteous fountain, which

Scatters in many threads its watery sheet,
'Tis here that youths at equal distance pitch,
I' the middle, tables for the festive treat.
Whence they four gates of that rich mansion see,
And seen from those four gates as well may be.

LXXIX

By cunning master, diligent and wise,
With much and subtle toil, the fount was made:
In open gallery or pavilion's guise;
Which from eight separate fronts, projects a shade.
A gilded roof, which with enamelled dyes
Was stained below, the building overlayed.
Eight marble statues (snowy was the grain),
With the left arm that gilded roof sustain.

LXXX

Fair Amalthaea's horn in the right hand
Had quaintly sculptured the ingenious master,
Whence water, trickling forth with murmur bland,
Descends into a vase of alabaster;
And he, in likeness of a lady grand,
With sovereign art had fashioned each pilaster.
Various they were in visage and in vest,
But all of equal charms and grace possest.

LXXXI

Upon two beauteous images below
Each of these female statues fix their feet.
The lower seem with open mouth to show
That song and harmony to them are sweet;
And, by their attitude, 'twould seem, as though
Their every work and every study meet
In praising them, they on their shoulders bear,
As they would those whose likenesses they wear.

LXXXII
The images below them in their hand
Long scrolls and of an ample size contain,
Which of the worthiest figures of that band
The several names with mickle praise explain
As well their own at little distance stand,
Inscribed upon that scroll, in letters plain,
Rinaldo, by the help of blazing lights,
Marked, one by one, the ladies and their knights.

LXXXIII
The first inscription there which meets the eye
Recites at length Lucretia Borgia's fame,
Whom Rome should place, for charms and chastity,
Above that wife who whilom bore her name.
Strozza and Tebaldeo — Anthony
And Hercules — support the honoured dame:
(So says the scroll): for tuneful strain, the pair
A very Linus and an Orpheus are.

LXXXIV
A statue no less jocund, no less bright,
Succeeds, and on the writing is impressed;
Lo! Hercules' daughter, Isabella hight,
In whom Ferrara deems her city blest,
Much more because she first shall see the light
Within its circuit, than for all the rest
Which kind and favouring Fortune in the flow
Of rolling years, shall on that town bestow.

LXXXV
The pair that such desirous ardour shew
That aye her praises should be widely blown:
John James alike are named: of those fair two,
One is Calandra, one is Bardelon.
In the third place, and fourth, where trickling through

Small rills, the water quits that octagon,
Two ladies are there, equal in their birth,
Equal in country, honour, charms and worth.

LXXXVI
One was Elizabeth, one Eleanor,
And if we credit what that marble said,
Manto's so glorious city which such store
Sets my melodious Maro, whom she bred,
More vaunts not him, nor reverences more,
Than these fair dames her poet's honoured head.
The first of these her hallowed feet had set
On Peter Bembo and James Sadolet.

LXXXVII
Arelio and Castiglion, a polished pair,
That other lady, in mid air, sustain.
Their names were carved upon the marble fair,
Then both unknown, and now so fames a twain.
Next was a lady, that from Heaven shall heir
As mighty virtue as on earth doth reign,
Or ever yet hath reigned, in any age,
Well proved by Fortune in her love or rage.

LXXXVIII
Inscribed in characters of gold is here
Lucretia Bentivoglia, and among
Her praises, 'tis declared Ferrara's peer
Joys that such daughter doth to him belong.
Her shall Camillus voice, and far and near
Reno and Felsina shall hear his song,
Wrapt in as mighty wonder at the strain
As that wherewith Amphrysus heard his swain;

LXXXIX
And one, through whom that city's name (where sweet
Isaurus salts his wave in larger vase)

Fame shall from Africa to Ind repeat,
From southern tracts to Hyperborean ways,
More than because Rome's gold in that famed seat
Was weighed, whereof perpetual record says
Guy Posthumus — about whose honoured brow
Phoebus and Pallas bind a double bough.

XC
Dian is next in order of that train.
"Regard not (said the marble) is she wear
A haughty port; for in her heart, humane
The matron is, as in her visage, fair.
Learned Celio Calcagnine in lofty strain
Her glories and fair name abroad shall bear,
And Juba's and Moneses' kingdom hear,
And Spain and farthest Ind, his trumpet clear;

XCI
And a Cavallo shall make such a font
Of poetry in famed Ancona run,
As that winged courser on Parnassus' mount;
Or was it on the hill of Helicon?
'Tis Beatrice, who next uprears her front,
Whereof so speaks the writing on the stone:
"Her consort Beatrice, while she has breath,
Blesses, and leaves unhappy at her death;

XCII
"Yea, Italy; that with her triumphs bright,
Without that lady fair shall captive be."
A lofty song appears of her to indite
A lord of the Correggio's noble tree;
And, Benedeo's pride, Timotheus hight.
Between his banks, descending to the sea,
By their joint music shall the stream be stopt,
Whose trees erewhile the liquid amber dropt.

XCIII
Between this and that lofty column's place
Into fair Borgia fashioned (as was said)
Of aspect so distinguished, of such grace,
A lady was, of alabaster made,
That, hiding in a simple veil her face,
In sable, without gems or gold arraid,
She, 'mid the brightest, flung her light as far,
As amid lesser fires the Cyprian star.

XCIV
None knows, observing her with steadfast view,
If she of charms or grace have fuller store,
Whether her visage most majestic shew,
Or beam with genius or with beauty more.
"He that would speak — would speak her praises true —
(Declares in fine the sculptured marble's lore)
The fairest of emprizes would intend,
But never bring his noble task to end."

XCV
Albeit such grace and passing sweetness shewed
Her fair and well wrought image, she disdain
Appeared to nurse, that one of wit so rude
Should dare to sing her praise in humble strain,
As he that only without comrade stood,
I know not why, her statue to sustain,
The marble all those other names revealed.
That pair's alone the artist had concealed.

XCVI
The statues in the middle form a round,
The floor whereof dry stalks of coral pave;
Most pleasant, cool, and grateful, is that ground;
So rendered by the pure and crystal wave.
Which vent without in other channel found;

And issued forth in many a stream, to lave
A mead of azure, white, and yellow hue;
Gladdening the plants that on their margins grew.

XCVII
Conversing with his courteous host, the peer
Sate at the board, and oft and often prayed,
That without more delay the cavalier
Would keep the promise he whilere had made;
And marking, ever and anon, his cheer,
Observes his heart with some deep woe downweighed.
For not a moment 'mid their converse slips,
But what a burning sigh is on his lips.

XCVIII
Oft with desire was good Rinaldo stung
To ask that sorrow's cause, and the request
Was almost on the gentle warrior's tongue,
And there by courteous modesty represt.
Now at their banquet's close a youth, among
The menial crew, on whom that charge did rest,
Placed a gold cup before the paladin,
Filled full of gems without, of wine within.

XCIX
The host then somedeal smiling, from the board
Looked up at Aymon's son; but who this while
Well marked him, as he eyed Montalban's lord,
Had deemed him more disposed to weep than smile.
"So oft reminded, to maintain my word,
'Tis time meseems (said he, that owned the pile)
To shew the touchstone for a woman's love,
Which needs to wedded man must welcome prove.

C
"Ne'er, in my judgment, should the married dame
Be from espial by her lord released;

Thus shall he know if honour or if blame
His portion is; if he is man or beast.
The weight of horns, though coupled with such shame,
Is of all burdens upon the earth the least.
While well-nigh all behold his antlers spread,
He feels them not who has them on his head.

CI
"If certain of thy wife's fidelity,
Thou hast more ground to prize and hold her dear
Than one, whose wife is evil known to be,
Or husband that is still in doubt and fear.
Full many husbands live in jealousy,
And groundlessly, of women chaste and clear.
On many women many men rely
Meanwhile, who bear their branching antlers high.

CII
"If thou would'st be assured thy wife is true
(As sure methinks thou thinkest and must think)
For it is hard that notion to undo,
Unless thy trust before sure tokens sink,
— No hearsay matter this — thyself shalt view
The truth, if thou in this fair vessel drink,
Placed solely on the supper-board, that thou
May'st see the marvel promised thee but now.

CIII
"Drink, and a mighty marvel shall be seen;
For if thou wearest Cornwall's lofty crest,
No drop of wine shall pass thy lips between,
And all the draught be spilt upon thy breast.
If faithful is thy wife, thou shalt drink clean.
And now — to try thy fortune — to the test!"
He said, and with fixt eyes the sign explored;
If on his breast the wine Rinaldo poured.

CIV
Rinaldo was nigh moved the cup to raise,
And seek what he would haply wish unsought:
Forward he reached his hand and took the vase,
About to prove his fortune in the draught.
Then of the passing peril of the case,
Before it touched his lips, the warrior thought.
But let me, sir, repose myself, and I
Will then relate the Paladin's reply.

CANTO 43

ARGUMENT
Rinaldo from his courteous landlord hears
What folly had destroyed his every good;
Next learns another story, as he steers
Toward Ravenna with the falling flood:
Then last arrives where, conqueror o'er his foes
Orlando was, but in no joyful mood.
He, that the Child a Christian made whilere,
Christens Sobrino, and heals Olivier.

I
O Execrable avarice! O vile thirst
Of sordid gold! it doth not me astound
So easily thou seizest soul, immersed
In baseness, or with other taint unsound;
But that thy chain should bind, amid the worst,
And that thy talon should strike down and wound
One that for loftiness of mind would be
Worthy all praise, if he avoided thee.

II
Some earth and sea and heaven above us square,
Know Nature's causes, works, and properties;

What her beginnings, what her endings are;
And soar till Heaven is open to their eyes:
Yet have no steadier aim, no better care,
Stung by thy venom, than, in sordid wise,
To gather treasure: such their single scope,
Their every comfort, and their every hope.

III
Armies by him are broken in his pride,
And gates of warlike towns in triumph past:
The foremost he to breast the furious tide
Of fearful battle; to retire the last;
Yet cannot save himself from being stied
Till death, in thy dark dungeon prisoned fast.
Of others that would shine thou dimm'st the praise;
Whom other studies, other arts would raise.

IV
What shall of high and beauteous dames be said?
Who (from their lovers' worth and charms secure)
Against long service, I behold, more staid,
More motionless, than marble shafts, endure:
Then Avarice comes, who so her spells hath laid,
I see them stoop directly to her lure.
— Who could believe? — unloving, in a day
They fall some elder's, fall some monster's prey.

V
Not without reason here I raise this cry:
— Read me who can, I read myself — nor so
I from the beaten pathway tread awry,
Nor thus the matter of my song forego.
Not more to what is shown do I apply
My saying, than to what I have to show.
But now return we to the paladine,
Who was about to taste the enchanted wine.

VI
Fain would he think awhile, of whom I speak,
(As said) ere to his lips the vase he bore;
He thought; then thus: "When finding what we seek
Displeases, this 'tis folly to explore,
My wife's a woman; every woman's weak.
Then let me hold the faith I held before.
Faith still has brought, and yet contentment brings.
From proof itself what better profit springs?

VII
"From this small good, much evil I foresee:
For tempting God moves sometimes his disdain.
I know not if it wise or foolish be,
But to know more than needs, I am not fain.
Now put away the enchanted cup from me;
I neither will, nor would, the goblet drain;
Which is with Heaven's command as much at strife,
As Adam's deed who robbed the tree of life.

VIII
"For as our sire who tasted of that tree,
And God's own word, by eating, disobeyed,
Fell into sorrow from felicity,
And was by misery evermore o'erlaid;
The husband so, that all would know and see;
Whatever by his wife is done and said;
Passes from happiness to grief and pain,
Nor ever can uplift his head again."

IX
Meanwhile the good Rinaldo saying so,
And pushing from himself the cup abhorred,
Beheld of tears a plenteous fountain flow
From the full eyes of that fair mansion's lord;
Who cried, now having somewhat calmed his woe,

"Accursed be he, persuaded by whose word,
Alas! I of the fortune made assay,
Whereby my cherished wife was reft away!

X
"Wherefore ten years ago wast thou not known,
So that I counselled might have been of thee?
Before the sorrows and the grief begun,
That have nigh quenched my eyes; but raised shall be
The curtain from the scene, that thou upon
My pain mayst look, and mayst lament with me;
And I to thee of mine unheard-of woe
The argument and very head will show.

XI
"Above, was left a neighbouring city, pent
Within a limpid stream that forms a lake;
Which widens, and wherein Po finds a vent.
Their way the waters from Benacus take.
Built was the city, when to ruin went
Walls founded by the Agenorean snake.
Here me of gentle line my mother bore,
But of small means, in humble home and poor.

XII
"If Fortune's care I was not, who denied
To me upon my birth a wealthy boon,
Nature that went with graceful form supplied;
So that in beauty rival had I none.
Enamoured of me in youth's early tide
Erewhile was dame and damsel more than one:
For I with beauty coupled winning ways;
Though it becomes not man himself to praise.

XIII
"A sage within our city dwelled, a wight,
Beyond belief, in every science great;

Who, when he closed his eyes on Phoebus' light,
Numbered one hundred years, one score and eight:
A savage life he led and out of sight,
Until impelled by love, the senior late
By dint of gifts obtained a matron fair,
Who secretly to him a daughter bare;

XIV
"And to prevent the child from being won,
As was erewhile the mother, that for gain
Bartered her chastity, whose worth alone
Excels what gold earth's ample veins contain,
With her he from the ways of man is gone,
And where he spies the loneliest place, his train
Of demons forces, in enchantment skilled,
This dome so spacious, fair, and rich, to build.

XV
"By ancient and chaste dames he there made rear
This daughter, that in sovereign beauty grew;
Nor suffered her to see or even hear
A man beside himself; and, for her view,
— Lest lights should lack, whereby her course to steer —
The senior every modest lady, who
E'er on unlawful love the barrier shut,
Made limn in picture, or in sculpture cut.

XVI
"Nor he alone those virtuous dames, who, sage
And chaste, had so adorned antiquity,
Whose fame, preserved by the historic page,
Is never doomed its dying day to see;
But those as well that will in future age
Everywhere beautify fair Italy,
Made fashion in their well-known form and mien;
As eight that round this fount by thee are seen.

XVII

"What time the damsel ripe for husband shows,
So that the fruit may now be gathered, I
(Did chance or my misfortune so dispose?)
Am worthiest found; and those broad lands that lie
Without the walls which that fair town enclose,
— The fishy flat no less than upland dry —
Extending twenty miles about that water,
He gives me for a dowry, with his daughter.

XVIII

"She was so mannered, was so fair of hue,
None could desire she other gifts should bring;
So well to broider was she taught, and sew,
Minerva knew not better; did she sing,
Or play, or walk, to those that hear and view,
She seems a heavenly, and no mortal thing;
And in the liberal arts was skilled as well
As her own sire, or scarce behind him fell.

XIX

"With genius high and beauty no less bright,
Which might have served the very stones to move,
Such love, such sweetness did the maid unite,
Thinking thereof meseems my heart is clove.
She had no greater pleasure or delight
Than being with me, did I rest or rove.
Twas long ere we had any strife; in fine
We quarrelled; and the fault, alas! was mine.

XX

"Five years my consort's father had been dead,
Since to that yoke I stooped, and pledged my vow;
When in short time (the manner shall be said)
Began the sorrows that I feel even now.
While me with all his pinions overspread

Love of the dame, whose praises thus I blow,
A noble townswoman with love of me
Was smit; more sorely smitten none could be.

XXI
"She, in all magic versed, was of such skill
As never was enchantress; by her say
Moved solid earth, and made the sun stand still,
Illumined gloomy night and darkened day:
Yet never could she work upon my will,
With salve I could not give, except with scathe
Of her to whom erewhile I pledged my faith.

XXII
"Not because she right gentle was and bright,
Nor because I believed her love so true,
Nor for large gift, nor promise often plight,
Nor yet because she never ceased to sue,
Could she from me obtain one spark of light
From that first flame my gentle consort blew:
So mates and masters every will in me
The knowledge of my wife's fidelity.

XXIII
"I in the hope, belief, and certitude
My wife to me was faithful evermore,
Should with contempt the beauty have eschewed
Of that famed daughter which fair Leda bore;
And all the wit and wealth wherewith was wooed
The illustrious shepherd upon Ida hoar.
But no repulse withal with her avails,
Who me, for ever at my side, assails.

XXIV
"One day that me beyond my palace sees
That weird enchantress, who Melissa hight,
And where she can discourse with me at ease,

She finds a way whereby my peace to blight;
And, goading me with evil jealousies,
The faith I nursed at heart, she puts to flight.
She 'gan commending my intent to be
Faithful to her who faithful was to me.

XXV

" `But that she faithful is, ye cannot say,
Save of her faith ye have assurance true;
If she fails not withal, where fail she may,
She faithful, modest may be deemed by you:
But is she never from your side away,
Is not permitted other man to view,
How does this boldness come, that you would be
The warrant of her untried modesty?

XXVI

" `Go forth awhile; go forth come from home alone;
And be the bruit in town and village spread
That she remains behind, and you are gone;
Let lovers and let couriers have their head:
If, unpersuaded still by prayer and boon,
She does no outrage to the marriage bed;
Though doing so she deem herself unseen,
Then faithful you the dame may justly ween.'

XXVII

"I with such words and such-like words was plied,
Till so on me the shrewd enchantress wrought,
I wished to see my consort's virtue tried
By certain proof, and to the touchstone brought.
— `Now grant we (I to that witch-lady cried)
She prove what cannot by myself be thought,
How by some certain token can I read
If she will merit punishment or meed?'

XXVIII

" `A drinking-cup will I for that assay
Give you (she said) of virtue strange and rare:
Such was for Arthur made by Morgue the fay,
To make him of Genevra's fault aware.
The chaste wife's lord thereof may drink; but they
Drink not, whose wedded partners wanton are:
For, when they would the cordial beverage sup,
Into their bosom overflows the cup.

XXIX

" `Below departing, you the test shall try,
And, to my thinking, now shall you drink clean;
For clean as yet I think your consort, I:
The event however shall by you be seen.
Yet will I warrant not your bosom dry,
Should you repeat the proof; for if, between
The cup and lip, the liquor be not shed,
You are the happiest wight that ever wed.'

XXX

"The offer I accept, the vase to me
Is given, and trial made with full success;
For hitherto (as hoped) confirmed I see
My gentle consort's worth and faithfulness.
'Leave her awhile (Melissa said), and be
A month or twain a truant, more or less:
Then homeward wend; again the goblet fill;
And prove if you the beverage drink or spill.'

XXXI

"I thought it hard to leave my consort's side;
Not as so much about her truth in pain,
As that I could nor for two days abide,
Nay, not an hour without her could remain.
`— You in another way (Melissa cried)

Guided by me, the truth shall ascertain;
Voice, vesture shall you change; and to her sight
Present yourself, disguised like other wight.'

XXXII
"Sir, a fair city nigh at hand, defends
Twixt fierce and threatening horns the foaming Po;
Whose jurisdiction to the shore extends,
Where the sea's briny waters come and go:
This yields in ancientry, but well contends
With neighbouring towns in rich and gorgeous show:
A Trojan remnant its foundations placed,
Which scaped from Attila's destructive waste.

XXXIII
"A rich, a youthful, and a handsome knight
Bridles this city with his sovereign sway;
Who, following a lost falcon in its flight,
Entering by chance my dwelling on a day,
Beheld my wife, who pleased him so at sight,
He bore her impress in his heart away;
Nor ceased to practise on her, with intent
To incline the matron to his evil bent.

XXXIV
"So often she repels the cavalier
That finally his courtship is foregone;
But her fair image graved by Love will ne'er
Be razed from memory; me Melissa won
(So well she soothed and flattered) of that peer
The face and figure to the sight to don;
And changed me — nor well how can I declare —
In voice and visage and in eyes and hair.

XXXV
"I, having to my lady made a show
As eastward bound and gone, — like him that wooed,

Her rich and youthful lover, altered so,
His semblance, attended by Melissa, go,
Into a page upon her side transmewed;
Who the most costly jewels with her bore
E'er brought form Ind, or Erithraean shore.

XXXVI
"I enter safely, that my palace knew,
And with me wends Melissa; and there I
So wholly at her ease Madonna view,
No woman or attendant squire is by.
To her with suppliant prayer forthwith I sue,
And next those goads to evil deed apply;
Show emerald, ruby, diamond, that might serve;
To make the firmest heart from honour swerve;

XXXVII
"And I declare to her the gift is small
To that, which she may hope to make her own;
Then of the vantage speak, that from his hall
Her husband at the present time is gone;
And I how long it was to her recall,
Since, as she knew, to her my love was shown;
And that my loving with such faith, in the end
Might worthily to some reward pretend.

XXXVIII
"At first she was somedeal disturbed; became
Like scarlet; nor would listen to my say;
But seeing those bright jewels flash like flame,
Her stubborn heart was softened, and gave way;
And in brief speech and feeble said the dame
What to remember takes my life away:
She with my wishes, said, she would comply,
If sure to be unseen of watchful eye.

XXXIX
"Me my wife's words like poisoned weapon thrill,
And pierce my suffering spirit through and through:
Through bones and veins there went a deadly chill;
My tongue clave to my throat: The witch withdrew
With that the magic mantle, and at will
Transformed me to mine ancient shape anew.
— Bethink thee of what hue my wife became,
Taken by me in such notorious shame!

XL
"Of deadly hue we both of us remain;
We both stand silent; both with downcast eye.
So feeble is my tongue, that I with pain,
So faint my voice, that I with pain can cry;
'Thou wouldst betray me then, O wife, for gain,
If there was one that would my honour buy!'
She nought replies; nor save by tears she speaks,
Which furrow, as they fall, her woeful cheeks.

XLI
"Shame stings her sore, but yet in sorer wise
Wrath at the outrage I to her had done;
And so without restraint it multiplies,
And into rage and cruel hate is run,
To fly from me forthwith does she devise;
And, what time from his car dismounts the sun,
Runs to the shore, aboard her pinnace wends,
And all that night the stream in haste descends;

XLII
"And she at morn presents herself before
Him that had loved her once, the cavalier,
Whose semblance and whose borrowed face I wore
When, to my shame, I tempted her whilere.
To him that loved, and loves her evermore,

Her coming, it may be believed, is dear.
From thence she bade me never entertain
The hope she'd love me or be mine again.

XLIII
"Alas! with him she swells in mickle glee
Even from that day, and makes of me a jest;
And of that evil which I brought on me
I languish yet, and find no place of rest.
Justly this growing ill my death will be,
Of little remnant now of life possest.
I well believe I in a year had died,
But that a single comfort aid supplied.

XLIV
"That comfort was; of all which harboured were
Here for ten years (for still to every guest
Beneath my roof I bade the vessel bear)
Was none but with the wine had bathed his breast.
To have so many comrades in my care,
Some little soothes the griefs that so molest.
Thou only of so many hast been wise,
Who wouldst forbear the perilous emprize.

XLV
"My wish, o'erpassing every fitting bound,
To know what husband of his wife should know,
Is cause, by me no quiet will be found,
Whether my death be speedy of be slow.
Thereat at first Melissa joys; but drowned
Forthwith is her light mirth; for of my woe
Esteeming her the cause, that dame so sore
I hated, I would not behold her more.

XLVI
"Impatient to be treated with disdain
By me, — of her more loved than life, she said -

Where she forthwith as mistress to remain
Had hoped, when thence the other was conveyed,
— Not to behold such present, cause of pain,
Her own departure little she delayed;
And went so far away, no further word
By me was ever of that woman heard."

XLVII
His tale the mournful cavalier so taught;
And when he now had closed his history,
With pity touched, somewhile immersed in thought
Rinaldo mused, and after made reply:
"Right ill advice to thee Melissa brought,
Who moved three thus to anger wasps; and I
Perceive in thee small wisdom, that wouldst sound
A thing which thou wouldst gladly not have found.

XLVIII
"If she, thy wife, by avarice was inclined
To break her faith and be to thee untrue,
Muse not: nor first nor last of womankind,
She, worsted, from such cruel war withdrew;
And by a meaner bribe yet firmer mind
Is even tempted fouler deed to do.
Of men, of how many we hear, that sold
Their patrons and their friends for sordid gold?

XLIX
"With such fierce arms thou ill didst her assail,
If to behold a brave defence thou sought.
Knowst thou not, against gold of no avail
Is stone, or steel to hardest temper wrought?
Meseems that thou in tempting her didst fail
More than herself, that was so quickly caught.
I know not, had she tempted thee as much,
If thou, thyself, hadst better stood the touch."

L

Here ends Rinaldo, and — the parley done —
Rises and to his rest desires to go:
Awhile will he repose; and then be gone,
An hour or two before the daylight show.
But little time has Aymon's warlike son;
Nor idly will that little time bestow.
To him the mansion's master made reply,
He in his house might at his pleasure lie.

LI

For bed and bower, within, were ready dight;
But — would he take his counsel for his guide —
In comfort might he sleep throughout the night.
And yet advance some miles; "For thou," he cried,
"Shalt have a pinnace, that with rapid flight
And without risque shall with the current glide.
Therein shalt thou all night pursue thy way,
And on thy journey gain withal a day."

LII

Good seemed that proffer in Rinaldo's eyes,
And to the courteous host large thanks he paid;
Then for the pinnace which that lord supplies,
That waits him with her crew, the warrior made.
Here, at full ease reclined, Rinaldo lies,
While with the stream his frigate is conveyed;
Which, by six oars impelled, flies fast and fair,
And cleaves the water, as a bird the air.

LIII

As soon as he reclines his weary head,
Asleep is Mount Albano's cavalier;
Having erewhile that they shall wake him, said,
As soon as they Ferrara's city near.
Melara lies left of that river's bed,

Sermide to the right; they in their rear
Next leave Stellata and Figarolo,
Where his two horns are lowered by angry Po.

LIV
Of those two horns that which t'ward Venice goes
Rinaldo's pilot left, and took the right;
Then the Bodeno past. Already shows
Faintly the eastern blue, and fades from sight;
For now Aurora from her basket throws
All her rich flowers, and paints it red and white;
When viewing the two castles of Tealdo,
Again his head uplifts the good Rinaldo.

LV
"O happy town! whereof" (the warrior cried)
"Spake Malagigi, having, far and near,
The fixt and wandering fires of heaven espied,
And forced some subject spirit to appear,
To me foretelling that in future tide,
— What time with him I took his way whilere —
Even to such pitch thy glorious fame should rise,
Thou from all Italy wouldst bear the prize."

LVI
So saying, in his barge he all this while
Hurries, as if the bark with pinions flew,
Scowering the king of rivers, to that isle
Nearest the town; and, though it not to view
(Deserted and neglected then) doth smile,
This yet rejoices to behold anew;
Nor makes small mirth thereat; because aware
Hereafter how adorned 'twill be and fair.

LVII
Before when he with him that way had gone,
From Malagigi, his cousin, did he hear

That when seven hundred times his course had run,
Circling the heaven in Aries, the fourth sphere,
Of islands this should be the fairest one
In sea, or pool, or river, far and near,
So that who this beheld, would brook no more
To hear that praised which fair Nausicaa bore.

LVIII
He heard, it in fair mansions would outdo
That island which Tiberius held so dear;
And trees that in Hesperian gardens grew
Would yield to what this beauteous place should bear;
— So rare its race of beasts — no fairer shew
Herded or housed erewhile by Circe were;
Venus with Loves and Graces there should sport,
Nor more in Gnide and Cyprus keep her court;

LIX
And so would flourish through his study and care,
Who will with knowledge and with power should blend;
And who so safely should that bright repair
With circling wall and sheltering dyke defend,
The united world's assault it well might dare,
Nor call on foreign power its aid to lend;
And that Duke Hercules' sire and Hercules' son
Was he by whom this marvel should be done.

LX
So wends the warrior summing in his mind
What erst to him had told his cousin wise;
What time the sage of future things divined,
Whereof with him he often wont devize;
And aye contemplating that city blind,
"How can it ever be," Rinaldo cries,
"That in all liberal and all worthy arts
Shall flourish so these waste and watery parts?

LXI
"And that to city of such amplitude
And beauty such a petty burgh should grow,
And where but marsh and miry pool is viewed,
Henceforth should full and fruitful harvests glow?
Even now I rise, to hail the gentle blood,
The love, the courtesy thy lords shall show,
O thou fair city, in succeeding years;
Thy burghers' honours and thy cavaliers'.

LXII
"The grace ineffable of powers above,
Thy princes' wisdom and their love of right,
Shall with perpetual peace, perpetual love
Preserve thee in abundance and delight;
And a defence from all the fury prove
Of such as hate thee; and unmask their spite.
Be thy content thy neighbours' wide annoy,
Rather than thou shouldst envy other's joy!"

LXIII
While thus Rinaldo speaks, so swiftly borne
By the quick current flies that nimble yawl;
Not to the lure more swiftly makes return
The falcon, hurrying at his lord's recall.
Thenceforth the right-hand branch of the right horn
Rinaldo takes; and hid are roof and wall:
St. George recedes; recede from that swift boat
The turrets OF GAIBANA and OF THE MOAT.

LXIV
Montalban's martial lord (as it befell,
That thought moved thought, which others moved again)
In memory chances on the knight to dwell,
That him at supper late did entertain;
That, through this city's cause, the truth to tell,

Hath reason evermore to be in pain;
And of the magic vessel him bethinks
Which shows his consort's guilt to him that drinks;

LXV
And him bethinks therewith of what the knight
Related; how of all that he had tried,
Who of his goblet drank, there was no wight
But split the wine he to his lips would guide.
Now he repents him; now, "'Tis my delight,"
(Mutters) "that I the proof would not abide:
Succeeding I should prove but what I thought;
And not succeeding, to what pass am brought!

LXVI
"This my belief I deem a certainty;
And faith could have but small increase in me:
So, if I this should by the touchstone try,
My present good would little bettered be:
But small the evil would not prove, if I
Saw of my Clarice what I would not see.
This were a thousand against one to stake;
To hazard much where I could nothing take."

LXVII
The knight of Clermont buried in this mood,
Who lifted not his visage from the floor,
A mariner with much attention viewed,
That overright was seated at his oar;
And, for he deemed he fully understood
The thought that prest the cavalier so sore,
Made him (well-spoken was the man and bold)
Wake from his muse, some talk with him to hold.

LXVIII
The substance of the talk between the two
Was, that the husband little wit possest,

Who, wishing to assay if she was true,
Had tried his wife by too severe a test:
For woman, proof to gold and silver, who,
Armed but with modesty, defends her breast,
This from a thousand faulchions will defend
More surely, and through burning fires will wend.

LXIX

The mariner subjoined: "Thou saidest well;
With gifts so rich he should not her have prest;
For, these assaults, these charges, to repel,
Not good alike is every human breast.
I know not if of wife thou has heard tell
(For haply not with us the tale may rest)
That in the very sin her husband spied,
For which she by his sentence should have died.

LXX

"My lord should have remembered, gold and meed
Have upon every hardest matter wrought:
But he forgot this truth in time of need;
And so upon his head this ruin brought,
Ah! would that he in proof, like me, a deed
Done in this neighbouring city had been taught,
His country and mine own; which lake and fen,
Brimming with Mincius' prisoned waters, pen.

LXXI

"I of Adonio speak, that in a hound
A treasure on the judge's wife conferred."
"Thereof," replied the paladin, "the sound
Hath not o'erpast the Alps; for never word
Of this neighbouring France, nor in my round
Through far and foreign countries have I heard:
So tell, if telling irks not," said the peer,
"What willingly I bown myself to hear.

LXXII

The boatman then: "Erewhile was of this town
One Anselm, that of worthy lineage came;
A wight that spent his youth in flowing gown,
Studying his Ulpian: he of honest fame,
Beauty, and state assorting with his own,
A consort sought, and one of noble name:
Nor vainly; in a neighbouring city, crowned
With superhuman beauty, one he found.

LXXIII

"She such fair manners and so graceful shows,
She seems all love and beauty; and much more
Perchance than maketh for her lord's repose;
Then well befits the reverend charge he bore.
He, wedded, strait in jealousy outgoes
All jealous men that ever were before:
Yet she affords not other cause for care
But that she is too witty and too fair.

LXXIV

"In the same city dwelt a cavalier,
Numbered that old and honoured race among,
Sprung from the haughty lineage, which whilere
Out of the jaw-bone of a serpent sprung:
Whence Manto, doomed my native walls to rear,
Descended, and with her a kindred throng.
The cavalier (Adonio was he named)
Was with the beauties of the dame inflamed;

LXXV

"And for the furtherance of his amorous quest,
To grace himself, began his wealth to spend,
Without restraint, in banquet and in vest,
And what might most a cavalier commend:
If he Tiberius' treasure had possest,

He of his riches would have made an end.
I well believe two winters were not done,
Ere his paternal fortune was outrun.

LXXVI
"The house erewhile, frequented by a horde
— Morning and evening — of so many friends,
Is solitary; since no more his board
Beneath the partridge, quail, and pheasant bends.
Of that once noble troop upon the lord,
Save beggars, hardly any one attends.
Ruined, at length he thinks he will begone
To other country, where he is unknown.

LXXVII
"He leaves his native land with this intent,
Nor letteth any his departure know;
And coasts, in tears and making sad lament,
The marshes that about his city go:
He his heart's queen, amid his discontent,
Meanwhile forgets not, for this second woe.
Lo! him another accident that falls,
From sovereign woe to sovereign bliss recalls!

LXXVIII
"He saw a peasant who with heavy stake
Smote mid some sapling trunks on every side:
Adonio stopt, and wherefore so he strake,
Asked of the rustic, that in answer cried,
Within that clump a passing ancient snake,
Amid the tangled stems he had espied:
A longer serpent and more thick to view
He never saw, nor thought to see anew;

LXXIX
"And that from thence he would not wend his way
Until the reptile he had found and slain,

When so Adonio heard the peasant say,
He scarce his speech with patience could sustain,
Aye reverence to the serpent wont to pay,
The honoured ensign of his ancient strain;
In memory that their primal race had grown
Erewhile from serpent's teeth by Cadmus sown;

LXXX
"And by the churl the offended knight so said,
And did withal, he made him quit the emprize;
Leaving the hunted serpent neither dead,
Nor injured, nor pursued in further wise.
Thither, where he believes would least have spread
The story of his woe, Adonio hies;
And in discomfort and in sorrow wears,
Far from his native land, seven weary years.

LXXXI
"Neither for distance nor for straitened cheer,
Which will not let Thought run its restless round,
Ceased Love, so wont to rein the cavalier,
Aye to inflame his heart, aye vex his wound:
At length those beauties, to his eyes so dear,
Parforce must he revisit, homeward bound.
Unshorn, afflicted, he, in poor array,
Thither returns, from whence he went his way.

LXXXII
"My city, at the time whereof I tell,
To Rome was fain to send an embassy;
That sometime near his holiness should dwell;
And for how long a time could none foresee.
Upon our judge the lot of envoy fell:
O day, that ever wept by him will be!
To be excused, Anselmo promised, prayed,
And bribed; but at the last parforce obeyed.

LXXXIII
"As no less cruel and less hard to abide
He deemed a woe which caused such piteous smart,
Than had he seen a hostile hand his side
Lay bare, and from his bosom pluck his heart:
Dead-white with jealous fear his cheek is dyed,
Through doubt of his fair consort while apart;
And in the mode he deems may best avail,
He supplicates her not in faith to fail,

LXXXIV
"Nor beauty, to his wife the husband cries,
Nor noble blood, nor fortune, are enow
To make a woman to true honour rise,
Save chaste in name and deed; subjoining how
The virtue that mankind most highly prize
Is that which triumphs after strife; and now
Through his long absense, a fair field and wide
Is opened where that virtue may be tried.

LXXXV
"With such persuasions, and with many more
Anselm exhorts the lady to be true.
His going doth his woful wife deplore.
O heaven, what tears, what loud complaints ensue!
Immersed in her despair, that lady swore,
Sooner the sun bedimmed the world should view
Than she would break her faith; she would expire
Sooner than she would cherish such desire.

LXXXVI
"Though to the lady's promise and protest
He lent belief, and somewhat calmed his fears,
Until he further hear he will not rest;
And till he can find matter for his tears,
A soothsayer he among his friends possest,

Prized for his knowledge, as the first of seers;
Who of all witchery and of magic art
Had read the whole, or read the greater part.

LXXXVII
"To him before departing does he pray,
To take the charge upon himself to see
If true would be Argia while away
(So name his consort), or the contrary.
Won by his prayers, he takes the time o' the day;
Figures the heavens as they appear to be.
Anselmo left him at his work, and came
His answer on the following day to claim.

LXXXVIII
"The astrologer is silent, loath to expose
A matter that will work the doctor woe;
And would excuse himself with many a gloze:
But when he sees, he would the evil know,
Argia will break faith with him, he shows,
As soon as he shall from his threshold go.
Nor prayer shall soften her, nor beauty fire:
Corrupted will she be by gain and hire.

LXXXIX
"When to Anselmo's early doubt and fear
Are joined the threatnings of the signs above,
How stands his heart may well to thee appear,
If thou hast known the accidents of love;
And worse than every woe, wherewith whilere
The afflicted spirits of that husband strove,
Is that it by the prophet is foretold,
Argais' honour will be bought and sold.

XC
"Now to support his wife, as best he may,
From falling into such an evil deed.

For man, alas, will sometimes disarray
The altar, when he finds himself in need,
What gold and gems the judge had put away,
(A plenteous store) he leaves; and field and mead,
Rents, fruits, and all possessions whatsoe'er
Leaves to his consort; all his worldly gear:

XCI
" `With power,' he said, `not only without measure,
These, as thou needest, to enjoy and spend,
But do with them according to thy pleasure,
Consume and fling away, and give and vend:
Other account I ask not of my treasure,
If such as now I find thee in the end;
But such as now remain; — at thy command
(Even shouldst thou squander both) are house and land.'

XCII
"Unless she heard he thither made repair,
He prayed that she would dwell not in the town;
But would a farm of his inhabit, where
She might with all convenience live alone.
And this besought he of his consort fair,
As thinking, that the rustics, which on down
Pasture their flocks, or fruitful fallows till,
Could ne'er contaminate her honest will.

XCIII
"Her fearful husband still embracing close,
Her arms about his neck Argia threw:
A burst of tears her visage overflows:
For from her eyes two streams their way pursue.
She grieves, he guilty should his wife suppose;
As if she hath already been untrue:
For his suspicion to its source she traced;
That in her faith no faith Anselmo placed.

XCIV

"Citing their long farewell, I should exceed.
`— To thee at length,' he so the dame addrest,
`I recommend my honour'; — and indeed
Took leave, and on his road in earnest prest;
And truly felt, on wheeling round his steed,
As if his heart was issuing from his breast.
She follows him as long as she can follow
With eyes whose tears her furrowed visage hollow.

XCV

"Poor, pale, unshorn, and wretched (as whilere
To you in former strain by me was said),
Homeward meanwhile the wandering cavalier,
Hoping he there should be unknown, had made.
Beside the lake that pilgrim journeyed, near
The city, where he gave the serpent aid,
In that thick brake besieged by village swain,
Who with his staff the reptile would have slain.

XCVI

"Arriving here, upon the dawn of light,
For yet some stars were glimmering in the skies,
Approaching him, in foreign vesture dight,
Along the shore, a damsel he espies.
Though neither squire nor waiting wench in sight
Appears, yet noble is the lady's guise.
With pleasing visage she Adonio boards,
And then breaks silence in the following words.

XCVII

"Albeit thou know'st me not, O cavalier
I am thy kin, and greatly bound to thee:
I am thy kin; for of the lineage clear
Derived of haughty Cadmus' seed are we.
I am the fairy Manto, that whilere

Laid the first stone of this rude villagery;
And (as thou haply mayst have heard it famed)
Mantua from me the rising town was named.

XCVIII
" `O' the fairies am I one: with that to show
Our fatal state, and what it doth import;
We to all other kinds of ill below
Are subject by our natal influence, short
Of death; but with immortal being such woe
Is coupled, death is not of direr sort.
For every seventh day we all must take
By certain law, the form of spotted snake.

XCIX
" `So sad it is that loathsome coil to fill,
And prone, at length, upon the ground to crawl;
Equal to this here is no worldly ill;
So that immortal life is cursed by all.
And thou the debt I owe thee (for my will
Is to inform thee of its cause withal)
Shalt know as well; how on that fatal day
Of change we are to countless ills a prey.

C
" `So hated as the serpent beast is none;
And we that wear its evil form, alarm,
Outrage, and war endure from every one:
For all that see us, hunt and do us harm:
Unless we can to ground for shelter run,
We feel how heavy falls man's furious arm.
Happier it were to die, than languish — broke,
Battered, and crippled by the cruel stroke.

CI
" `My mighty obligation due to thee
Is that, when once thou didst this greenwood thread,

Thou from a rustic's fury rescuedst me,
By whose ill handling was I sore bested.
But for thine aid, I should not have got free,
Without a broken spine or battered head:
With body crooked and crushed I should have lain,
Albeit I could not by his arm be slain.

CII
" `Because thou hast to know upon the day
We sprang from earth with scales of dragon dight,
— Subject to us at other times — to obey
The heavens refuse; and we are void of might:
At other seasons, at our simple say
The circling sun stands still, and dims its light:
Fixt earth is moved, and in a circle wheels:
Ice at our word takes fire, and fire congeals.

CIII
" `Now here, prepared to render thee the meed
Of benefit then done to me, I stand;
For now, dismantled of my dragon weed,
Vainly no grace of me wilt thou demand.
Even now, thrice richer art thou by my deed,
Than when thou heirdst erewhile thy father's land:
Now will I that henceforth thou shalt be poor;
But wealth, the more 'tis spent, augment the more:

CIV
" `And because with that ancient knot thou still,
I know, art tangled, which by Love was tied,
The mode and order, how thou mayst fulfil
Thy wishes, shall by me be signified.
Now that her lord is absent, 'tis my will
My scheme without delay by thee be tried;
Go forth the lady at her farm to find,
Without the town; nor will I say behind.'

CV
"She her discourse continuing, 'gan advise
What form he to that lady's eyes should take:
I say, what vesture wear, and in what wise
Should speak, how tempt her; what entreaties make:
And said, how she her figure would disguise;
For, save the day wherein she was a snake,
Upon all others went the fairy drest
In whatsoever figure pleased her best.

CVI
"She in a pilgrim's habit clothed the knight,
Such as from door to door our alms entreat:
Into a dog she changed herself to sight;
The smallest ever seen, of aspect sweet,
Long hair, than ermine's fur more snowy white;
And skilled withal in many a wondrous feat.
Towards Agria's villa, so transmewed,
The fairy and the knight their way pursued;

CVII
"And at the labourer's cabins in his round
The stripling halts, before he stops elsewhere;
And certain rustic reeds begins to sound;
His dog is up, and dances to the air.
The dame, that hears the voice and cry rebound,
Is by the rumour moved to see the pair.
Into her court she has the pilgrim brought,
As Anselm's evil destiny had wrought:

CVIII
"And here Adonio gives the dog command;
And here by that obedient dog is shown
Dance of our country and of foreign land,
With paces, graces, fashions of his own;
And finally he does, amid that band,

With winning ways what else is to be done,
With such attention of the admiring crew,
None winked their eyes, their breath they scarcely drew.

CIX
"Great marvel in the dame, then longing, bred
That gentle dog: she one that her had nursed
With no mean offer to his master sped.
— `If all the riches for which women thirst'
(To her embassadress in answer said
The wary pilgrim) `in my bags were pursued,
There is not in that treasure what would boot
To purchase of my dog one single foot':

CX
"And he, the truth of his discourse to show,
Into a corner took the beldam old,
And bade the dog in courtesy bestow
Upon that messanger a mark of gold.
The dog obeyed, and shook himself; and lo!
The treasure! which he bade her have and hold:
Thereto he added, `Thinkest thou by ought
A dog so fair and useful can be bought?

CXI
" `For whatsoever I of him demand,
I empty-handed never go away;
Now pearl, now ring will he shake from him, and
Now gift me with some rich and fair array.
Yet tell madonna he is at her command;
But not for gold; for him no gold can pay;
But if I for one night her arms may fill,
Him may she take and do with him her will.'

CXII
"So said, a gem, new-dropt, on her he prest,
And bade her to the lady bear the boon.

That in the costly produce she possest
Ten, twenty ducats' value deemed the crone.
She bore the message to the dame addressed,
And after wrought on her till she was won
To buy the beauteous dog, who might be bought
By payment of a prize which costeth nought.

CXIII
"Argia somewhat coy at first appears;
Partly that she her faith will not forego;
Partly that she believes not all she hears
That beldam of the dog and pilgrim show.
The nurse insists, and dins into her ears,
That seldom such a chance occurs below;
And makes her fix another day to see
That dog, when fewer eyes on her shall be.

CXIV
"The next appearance which Adonio made
Was ruin to the doctor; for the hound
Doubloons, by dozens and by dozens, braid
Of pearl, and costly jewels scattered round.
So that Argia's pride of heart was laid;
And so much less the dame maintained her ground,
When she in him, who made the proffer, viewed
The Mantuan cavalier that whilom wooed.

CXV
"The harlot nurse's evil oratory,
The prayer and presence of the suitor lord,
The occasion to acquire that mighty fee,
Which wretched Anselm's absence would afford,
The hope that none would her accuser be,
So vanquish her chaste thoughts, she makes the accord —
Accepts the wondrous dog; and, as his pay,
To her leman yields herself a willing prey.

CXVI
The fruits of love long culled that cavalier
With his lady fair; unto whom the fay
Took such affection, whom she held so dear,
That she obliged herself with her to stay.
Through all the signs the sun had travelled, ere
The judge had leave to wend his homeward way.
He finally returned; but sore afraid
Through what the astrologer erewhile had said.

CXVII
"Arrived, his first employment is to run
To that astrologer's abode, and crave,
If shame and evil to his wife be done;
Of if she yet her faith and honor save.
The heavens he figured; and to every one
Of the seven planets its due station gave;
Then to the judge replied that it had been
Even as he feared, and as it was foreseen.

CXVIII
"By richest presents tempted to forego
Her faith, a prey was she to other wight.
This to the doctor's heart was such a blow;
Nor lance, nor spear, I deem, so sorely smite.
To be more certified he wends (although
He is too well assured the seer is right)
To that old nurse; and, drawing her apart,
To learn the truth employs his every art.

CXIX
"He in wide circles doth about her wind,
Hoping now here, now there, to spy some trace:
But nought in the beginning can he find,
With whatsoever care he sifts the case.
For she, as not unpractised in that kind,

Denies, and fronts him with untroubled face;
And, as well taught, above a month stands out,
Holding the judge 'twixt certainty and doubt.

CXX
"How blest would doubt appear, had he that wound
Foreseen, which would be given by certainty!
When out of that false nurse at last he found
He could not fish the truth by prayer or fee,
Touching no chord but yielded a false sound,
He shrewdly waits his time till there should be
Discord between the beldam and his wife:
For whereso women are, is stir and strife.

CXXI
"And even that Anselmo waited, so
Befell; since, angered by the first despite,
Unsought of him, to him that nurse did go,
To tell the whole; and nothing hid from sight.
How sank his heart beneath that cruel blow,
'Twere long to say; how prostrate lay his sprite.
So was the wretched judge with grief opprest,
He of his wits well-nigh was dispossest;

CXXII
"And finally resolved to die, so burned
His rage, but first would kill the faithless dame;
And he with one destructive faulchion yearned
To free himself from woe and her from shame.
Stung by such blind and furious thoughts, returned
Anselmo to the city, in a flame;
And to the farm despatched a follower true,
Charged with the bidding he was bound to do.

CXXIII
"He bids the servant to the villa go,
And to Argia in his name pretend,

He by a fever is reduced so low,
She hardly can arrive before his end.
Hence without waiting escort — would she show
Her love — she with his man must backward wend,
(Wend with him will she surely, nor delay)
And bids him cut her throat upon the way.

CXXIV
"The serving man to call his lady went
Prepared his lord's command on her to do.
Having her little dog at starting hent,
She mounted and began her journey, through
The dog advised of Anselm's ill intent,
But bid no less her purpose to pursue;
For he had taken thought for her; and aid
Should in the time of peril be purveyed.

CXXV
"The servant from his pathway turns aside,
And through bye-roads and solitary goes;
Purposely lighting on a stream, whose tide
From Apennine into our river flows;
Where, both of farm and busy city wide,
A holt, and dark and dismal greenwood grows.
Silent appeared the gloomy place, and one
Fitting the cruel deed which should be done.

CXXVI
"He drew his sword on her, and signified
The mandate by her angry husband given;
That so she might entreat, before she died,
Forgiveness of her every sin from Heaven.
I know not how; she vanished from his side,
When through her flank the blade he would have driven.
Vainly long time he seeks her, then remains
Foiled and outscorned, for guerdon of his pains.

CXXVII

"He all astound and with bewildered face,
And full of shame, to seek his lord returns;
Who from the servant that unwonted case,
Unweeting how the thing had happened, learns;
Nor knows the fairy Manto fills a place
About Argia, prompt to serve her turns.
Because the nurse, that all the rest revealed
(I know not wherefore, I), had this concealed.

CXXVIII

"He knows not what to do: the outrage sore
Avenged he has not, nor his pain allaid:
What was a mote is now a beam; so sore
It prest him; on his heart so heavy weighed.
So plain is what was little known before,
He fears that it will shortly be displaid.
At first, he haply might have hid his woe;
Which Rumour now throughout the world will blow.

CXXIX

"Full well he wots, that since his evil vein
He to his wife, unhappy wretch! hath shown,
Not to be subject to his yoke again,
She to some strong protector will have flown;
Who to his ignominy will maintain,
And utter scorn, the lady as his own:
And haply may she to some losel flee,
Who will her paramour and pander be.

CXXX

"For remedy, he sends in haste a band
Of messengers, with letters far and nigh.
Some of Argia here, some there demand;
Nor town unsearched is left in Lombardy.
Next he in person goes; nor any land

Leaves unexamined by himself or spy.
Yet cannot he discover means or way
For learning where concealed his consort lay.

CXXXI
"The servant last he called on whom was laid
The ill hest, but who had served not his despite;
And thither by his guidance was conveyed,
Where (as 'twas said) she vanished from his sight;
Who haply lurked by day in greenwood-shade,
And to some friendly roof retired at night.
He thither guided, where but forest-trees
He thinks to find, a sumptuous palace sees.

CXXXII
"This while for bright Argia in that part
The fay had made with speedy toil prepare
An alabaster palace by her art,
Gilded within, without, and everywhere.
So wonderful, no tongue could tell, no heart
Conceive, how rich within, without how fair:
That, which thou deemed so fair, my master's home,
Is but a cottage to that costly dome.

CXXXIII
"Curtain and cloth of arras deck the wall,
Sumptuously woven and in different wise,
In vaulted cellar and in littered stall;
Not only spread in latticed galleries,
Not only spread in lordly bower and hall.
Vase, gold and silver, gems of many dyes,
Carved into cup and charger, blue, red, green,
And countless cloths of silk and gold are seen.

CXXXIV
"He chanced upon the costly dome (as I
To you was in my story making known)

When he expected not a hut to spy,
And but a weary waste of woodland lone.
As he beheld the dome with wondering eye,
Anselmo thought his intellects were gone:
That he was drunk, or dreamed that wondrous sight
He weened, of that his wits had taken flight.

CXXXV
"An Aethiop woman posted at the door,
With blubber lip and nostril, he descries.
Nor will he see again, nor e'er before
Had seen a visage of such loathsome guise:
Ill-favoured — such was Aesop feigned of yore:
If there, she would have saddened Paradise.
Greasy and foul and beggarly her vest;
Nor half her hideousness have I exprest.

CXXXVI
"Anselm, who saw no other wight beside
To tell who was that mansion's lord, drew nigh
To the Aethiopian, and to her applied;
And she: `The owner of this house am I.'
The judge was well assured the negress lied,
And made that answer but in mockery:
But with repeated oaths the negress swears;
'Tis hers, and none with her the mansions shares;

CXXXVII
"And would he see the palace, him invites
To view it at his ease; and recommends
If there be ought within which him delights,
To take it for himself or for his friends.
Anselmo hears, and from his horse alights,
Gives it his man; and o'er the threshold wends;
And by the hag conducted, mounts from hall
Below to bower above, admiring all.

CXXXVIII
"Form, site, and sumptuous work doth he behold,
And royal ornament and fair device;
And oft repeats, not all this wide world's gold
To buy the egregious mansion wound suffice.
To him in answer said that negress old:
'And yet this dome, like others, hath its prize;
If not in gold and silver, price less high
Than gold and silver will the palace buy':

CXXXIX
"And she to him prefers the same request,
Which erst Adonio to Argia made.
A fool he deemed the woman and possest,
Who for a boon so foul and filthy prayed.
Yet ceased she not, though more than thrice represt;
And strove so well Anselmo to persuade,
Proffering, for his reward, the palace still,
She wrought on him to do her evil will.

CXL
"The wife Argia, that is hid fast by,
When in such sin her husband she descries,
Of doctor, that was deemed so passing wise,
Springs forth and saith: `Ah! worthy deed! which I
Found in such foul and filthy work, espy!'
Bethink thee, if his kindling blushes rise;
If he stands mute! why opens not thy hollow
And central womb, O earth, the wretch to swallow?

CXLI
"To clear herself and shame him, doth she stun
Anselmo, never ceasing to upbraid.
`What pain should by thyself be undergone
For this so filthy deed, (Argia said)
If thou would'st take my life for having done

What Nature prompted and a lover prayed;
One that was fair and gentle, and who brought
A gift, compared wherewith, this dome is nought?

CXLII
" `If worthy of one death thou deemest me,
Worthy art thou a hundred deaths to die:
And, though my pleasure might I do on thee,
So passing puissant in this place am I,
No other or worse vengeance done shall be
Upon my side, on thy delinquency.
The give against the take, O husband, place;
And, as 'twas granted thee, so grant me grace:

CXLIII
" `And be there peace between us, and accord
That all be to forgetfulness consigned;
Nor thee I of thy fault by deed or word,
Nor me of mine, henceforward thou remind!'
This seemed a goodly bargain to her lord;
Nor to such pardon was he disinclined.
Thus peace and concord they at home restore,
And love each other dearly evermore."

CXLIV
So said the mariner, and some brief fit
Of laughter in Montalban's master stirred;
And made his visage burn, as if 'twas lit
With fire, when of Anselmo's shame he heard.
Rinaldo greatly praised Argia's wit,
Who by such quaint device had trapped that bird;
Who fell into the net wherein the dame
Herself erewhile had fallen, but with less shame.

CXLV
When the sun climbed a steeper road, the knight
Ordered the board with food to be supplied,

Which the good Mantuan landlord overnight
Took care with largest plenty to provide;
While the fair town, upon the left, from sight
Retired, and on the right that marish wide.
Argenta is come and gone, with circling walls
And stream into whose bed Santerno falls.

CXLVI
Then was not fair Bastia built, deem I,
Which little cause of boast affords to Spain
(That there her banner has been raised on high),
And causes deeper sorrow to Romagne.
Thence in strait line their bark, that seems to fly,
To the right shore the boatmen drive amain:
Next through a stagnant channel make, that near
Ravenna brings by noon the cavalier.

CXLVII
Though oft of money he had small supply,
Then was the knight so well bested, he made
The weary rowers, in his courtesy,
A parting present, ere farewell was said.
Here changing horse and guide, to Rimini
Rinaldo rode that very eye, nor stayed
In Montefiore till the night was done;
And well nigh reached Urbino with the sun.

CXLVIII
Then Frederick was not there of gentle lore,
Nor was Elizabeth nor Guido good;
Francis Maria nor sage Leonore;
Who would in courteous, not in haughty mood,
Have forced so famed a paladin for more
Than one short eye, with them to make abode;
As they long did, and do unto this day,
By dames and cavaliers who pass that way.

CXLIX
Since here none takes his rein, Rinaldo bends
His course an-end to Cagli; o'er the height,
Rifted by Gaurus and Metaurus, wends
Past Apennine, no longer on his right,
Umbri and Tuscans; and at Rome descends.
From Rome to Ostia goes Montalban's knight:
Thence to the city sails; wherein a grave
His pious son to old Anchises gave.

CL
There changes back; and thence in haste he goes
Bound towards Lampedosa's island-shore,
That place of combat chosen by the foes,
And where they had encountered Frank and Moor.
Rinaldo grants his boatmen no repose;
That do what can be done by sail and oar.
But with ill wind and strong the warrior strives;
And, though by little, there too late arrives.

CLI
Thither he came what time Anglante's peer
The useful and the glorious deed had done;
Had slain those paynim kings in the career,
But had a hard and bloody conquest won:
Dead was Sir Brandimart; and Olivier,
Dangerously hurt and sore, sate woe-begone,
Somedeal apart, upon the sandy ground,
Martyred and crippled by his cruel wound.

CLII
From tears could not the mournful Count refrain,
When brave Rinaldo he embraced, and said,
How in the battle Brandimart was slain.
Such love, such faith endeared the warrior dead.
Nor less Rinaldo's tears his visage stain

When he so cleft beholds their comrade's head.
Thence to embrace bold Oliviero, where
He sits with wounded foot, he makes repair.

CLIII
All comfort that he could he gave; though none
Could good Rinaldo to himself afford;
Because he came but when the feast was done;
Yea after the removal of the board.
The servants wend to the demolished town,
There hide the bones of either paynim lord
Beneath Biserta's ruined domes, and nigh
And far, the fearful tidings certify.

CLIV
At the fair conquest won by Roland's blade,
Sansonet and Astolpho make great cheer;
Yet other mirth those warriors would have made
Had Brandimart not perished; when they hear
That he is dead, their joy is so allayed
They can no more the troubled visage clear.
Which of them now the tidings of such woe
To the unhappy Flordelice shall show?

CLV
The night preceding that ill-omened day
Flordelice dreamed the vest of sable grain
That she had made, her husband to array,
And woven with her hand and worked with pain,
Before her eyes all sprinkled-over lay
With ruddy drops, in guise of pattering rain.
That she had worked it so the lady thought;
And then was grieved at seeing what was wrought.

CLVI
And seemed to say, "Yet from my lord have I
Command to make it all of sable hue;

Now wherefore it is stained with other dye
Against his will, in mode so strange to view?"
She from that dream draws evil augury;
And thither on that eve the tidings flew:
But these concealed Astolpho from the dame
Till he to her with Sansonetto came.

CLVII
When they are entered, and she sees no show
Of joyful triumphs, she, without a word,
Without a hint to indicate that woe,
Knows that no longer living is her lord.
With that her gentle heart was riven so,
And so her harassed eyes the light abhorred,
And so was every other sense astound,
That, like one dead, she sank upon the ground.

CLVIII
She in her hair, when life returns again,
Fastens her hand; and on her lovely cheeks,
Repeating the beloved name in vain,
With all her force her scorn and fury wreaks;
Uproots and tears, her locks, and in her pain
Like woman, smit by evil demon, shrieks,
Or, as Bacchante at the horn's rude sound,
Erewhile was seen to run her restless round.

CLIX
Now to the one, to the other now her prayer
She made for knife, wherewith her heart to smite;
Now she aboard the pinnace would repair
That brought the corse of either paynim knight,
And would on either, lifeless as they were,
Do cruel scathe, and vent her fierce despite.
Now would she seek her lord, till at his side
She rested from her weary search, and died.

CLX
"Ah! wherefore, Brandimart, did I let thee
Without me wend on such a dire emprize?
She ne'er before did thy departure see,
But Flordelice aye followed thee," she cries:
"Well aided mightest thou have been by me;
For I on thee should still have kept my eyes;
And when Gradasso came behind thee, I
Thee might have succoured with a single cry;

CLXI
"And haply I so nimbly might have made
Between you, that the stroke I might have caught,
And with my head, as with a buckler, stayed:
For little ill my dying would have wrought.
Anyhow I shall die; and — that debt paid —
My melancholy death will profit nought:
When, had I died, defending thee in strife,
I could not better have bestowed my life.

CLXII
"Even is averse had been hard Destiny,
And all heaven's host, when thee I sought to aid,
At least my tears had bathed thy visage, I
Should the last kiss thereon, at least, have laid;
And, ere amid the blessed hierarchy
Thy spirit mixt, `Depart' — I should have said —
`In peace, and wait me in thy rest; for there,
Where'er thou art, I swiftly shall repair.'

CLXIII
"Is this, O Brandimart, is this the reign,
Whose honoured sceptre thou wast now to take?
With thee to Dommogire, thy fair domain,
Thus went I; me thus welcome dost thou make?
Alas! what hope to-day thou renderest vain!

Ah! what designs, fell Fortune, dost thou break!
Ah! wherefore fear I, since a lot so blest,
Is lost, to lose as well the worthless rest?"

CLXIV
Repeating this and other plaint, so spite
And fury waxed, that she in her despair
Made new assault upon her tresses bright,
As if the fault was wholly in her hair:
Wildly her hands together doth she smite,
And gnaw; with nails her lip and bosom tear.
But I return to Roland and his peers;
While she bemoans herself and melts in tears.

CLXV
Roland with Olivier, who much requires
Such leech's care, his anguish to allay;
And who, himself, some worthy place desires
As much, wherein Sir Brandimart to lay,
Steers for the lofty mountain, that with fires
Brightens the night, with smoke obscures the day.
The wind blows fair, and on the starboard hand,
Not widely distant from them, lies that land.

CLXVI
With a fresh wind, that in their favour blows,
They loose their hawser at the close of day:
In heaven above the silent goddess shows
Her shining horn, to guide them on their way;
And on the following morn before them rose
The pleasant shores that round Girgenti lay.
Here Roland orders for the ensuing night
All that is needful for the funeral rite.

CLXVII
He, when he saw his order duly done,
And now the westering sun's fair light was spent.

With many nobles, who from neighbouring town,
At his invital, to Girgenti went,
— The shore with torches blazing up and down,
And sounding wide with cries and loud lament, —
Thither returned where late, of life bereft,
His friends, beloved in life and death, was left.

CLXVIII
There stands Bardino, weeping o'er the bier,
Who under Age's heavy burden bows;
Who, in the tears on shipboard shed whilere.
Might well have wept away his eyes and brows:
Upbraiding skies and stars, the cavalier,
Like lion, in whose veins a fever glows,
Roars as he wreathes his wayward hands within
His hoary hair, and rends his wrinkled skin.

CLXIX
Upon the paladin's return the cry
Redoubled, and the mourning louder grew
Orlando to the corse approached more nigh,
And speechless stood awhile, his friends to view,
Pale, as at eve is the acanthus' dye
Or lily's, which were plucked at morn: he drew
A heavy sigh, and on the warrior dead
Fixing his stedfast eyes, the County said:

CLXX
"O comrade bold and true, there here liest slain,
And who dost live in heaven above, I know,
Rewarded with a life, thy glorious gain,
Which neither heat nor cold can take, my woe
Forgive, if thou beholdest me complain:
Because I sorrow to remain below,
And not to share in such delights with thee;
Not that thou art not left behind with me.

CLXXI
"Alone, without thee, there is nought I may
Ever possess, without thee, that can please.
If still with thee in tempest and affray,
Ah wherefore not with thee in calm and ease?
Right sore must be my trespass, since this clay
Will not to follow thee my soul release.
If in thy troubles still I bore a burden,
Why am I not a partner of thy guerdon?

CLXXII
"Thine is the guerdon; mine the loss; thy gain
Is single; but not single is my woe:
Partners with me in sorrow are Almayne,
And grieving France and Italy; and oh!
How will my lord and uncle, Charlemagne,
How will his paladins lament the blow!
How will the Christian church and empire moan,
Whose best defence in thee is overthrown!

CLXXIII
"Oh! how thy foes will by the death of thee
Be freed henceforward from alarm and fear!
Alas! how strengthened paynimry will be!
What hardiment will now be theirs! what cheer!
What of thy consort will become? I see
Even here her mourning, and her outcries hear.
Me she accuses, haply hates, I know;
In that, through me, her every hope lies low.

CLXXIV
"Yet by one comfort, Flordelice, is followed
His loss, for us that reft of him remain:
His death, with such surpassing glory hallowed,
To die all living warriors should be fain.
Those Decii; Curtius, in Rome's forum swallowed;

Cordus, so vaunted by the Grecian train;
Not with more honour to themselves, with more
Profit to others, went to death of yore."

CLXXV
These sad laments and more Orlando made;
And all this while white friars, and black, and gray,
With other clerks, by two and two arrayed,
Behind in long procession took their way;
And they to God for the departed prayed,
That he would to his rest his soul convey.
Before and all about were torches reared,
And changed to day the sable night appeared.

CLXXVI
They raise the warrior's bier, and ranged to bear
By turns that honoured weight were earl and knight.
The pall was purple silk, with broidery rare
Of gold, and pearls in costly circles dight.
Thereon, of lordly work and no less fair,
Cushions were laid, with jewels shining bright.
On which was stretched the lifeless knight in view,
Arrayed in vest of like device and hue.

CLXXVII
A hundred men had past before the rest,
All taken from the poorest of the town;
And in one fashion equally were drest
Those beadsmen all, in black and trailing gown.
A hundred pages followed them, who prest
A hundred puissant steeds, for warfare bown;
And by those pages backed, the portly steeds
Went, sweeping wide the ground with sable weeds.

CLXXVIII
Banners in front and banners borne in rear,
Whose fields with diverse ensignry is stained,

Unfurled accompany the funeral bier;
Which from a thousand vanquished bands were gained,
For Caesar and for Peter's church whilere,
By that rare force, which now extinct remained.
Bucklers by other followers carried are,
Won from good warriors, whose device they bear.

CLXXIX
By hundreds and by hundreds followed more,
Ordained for different tasks, the steps of those;
Who burning torches like those others bore.
Mantled, say rather closely muffled, goes
Roland in sables next, and evermore
His eyes suffused and red with weeping shows.
Nor wears a gladder face Montalban's peer.
At home his wound detains Sir Olivier.

CLXXX
The ceremonies would be long to say
In verse, wherewith Sir Brandimart was mourned;
The mantles, black or purple, given away;
The many torches which that eve were burned.
Wending to the cathedral, where the array
Past on its road, were no dry eyes discerned:
All sexes, ages, ranks, in pitying mood
Gazed upon him so youthful, fair, and good.

CLXXXI
He in the church was placed; and, when with vain
Lament the women had bemoaned the dead,
And Kyrie Eleison, by the priestly train,
And other holy orisons were said,
In a fair ark, upraised on columns twain,
Was reared, with sumptuous cloth of gold o'erspread.
So willed Orlando; till he could be laid
In sepulchre of costlier matter made:

CLXXXII
Nor out of Sicily the Count departs,
Till porphyries he procures and alabasters,
And fair designs; and in their several arts
Has with large hire engaged the primest masters.
Next Flordelice, arriving in those parts,
Raises the quarried slabs and rich pilasters;
Who, good Orlando being gone before,
Is hither wafted from the Africk shore.

CLXXXIII
She, seeing that her tears unceasing flow,
And that of long lament she never tires;
Nor she, for mass or service said, her woe
Can ease, or satisfy her sad desires,
Vows in her heart she thence will never go
Till from the wearied corse her soul expires;
And builds in that fair sepulchre a cell;
There shuts herself; therein for life will dwell.

CLXXXIV
Thither in person, having courier sent
And letter, Roland goes, her thence to take;
Her, would she wend to France, with goodly rent
Would gift, and Galerana's inmate make;
As far as Lizza convoy her, if bent
On journeying to her father; for her sake
If wholly she to serve her God was willed,
A monastery would the warrior build.

CLXXXV
Still in that sepulchre she dwelt, and worn
By weary penance, praying night and day,
It was not long, ere by the Parcae shorn
Was her life's thread: already on their way

Were the three Christian warriors, homeward borne,
Sorrowing and afflicted sore in mind
For their fourth comrade who remained behind.

CLXXXVI
They would not go without a leech, whose skill
Might ease the wound of warlike Olivier;
Which, as in the beginning it could ill
Be salved, is hard to heal. Meanwhile they hear
The champion so complain, his outcries fill
Orlando and all that company with fear.
While they discoursed thereon, the skipper, moved
By a new notion, said what all approved.

CLXXXVII
A hermit not far distance hence, he said
A lonely rock inhabits in this sea;
Whose isle none, seeking succour, vainly tread,
Whether for counsel or for aid it be:
Who hath done superhuman deeds; the dead
Restores to life; and makes the blind to see;
Hushes the winds; and with a sign o' the cross
Lulls the loud billows when they highest toss;

CLXXXVIII
And adds they need not doubt, if they will go
To seek that holy man to God so dear,
But he on Olivier will health bestow;
Having his virtue proved by signs more clear.
This counsel pleases good Orlando so,
That for the holy place he bids him steer;
Who never swerving from his course, espies
The lonely rock, upon Aurora's rise.

CLXXXIX
Worked by good mariners, the bark was laid
Safely beside the rugged rock and fell:

The marquis there, with crew and servants' aid,
They lowered into their boat; and through the swell
And foaming waters in that shallop made
For the rude isle; thence sought the holy cell;
The holy cell of that same hermit hoar,
By whom Rogero was baptized before.

CXC
The servant of the Lord of Paradise
Receives Orlando and the rest on land;
Blesses the company in cheerful wise;
And after of their errand makes demand;
Though he already had received advice
From angels of the coming of that band.
That they were thither bound in search of aid
For Oliviero's hurt, Orlando said;

CXCI
Who, warring for the Christian faith, in fight
To perilous pass was brought by evil wound.
All dismal fear relieved that eremite,
And promised he would make him wholly sound.
In that no unguents hath the holy wight,
Nor is in other human medicine found,
His church he seeks, his knee to Jesus bows,
And issues from the fane with cheerful brows;

CXCII
And in the name of those eternal Three,
The Father, and the Son, and Holy Ghost,
On Oliviero bade his blessing be.
Oh! grace vouchsafed to faith! his sainted host
From every pain the paladin did free;
And to his foot restored its vigour lost.
He moved more nimble than before, and sure;
And present was Sobrino at the cure.

CXCIII
Sobrino, so diseased that he described
How worse with each succeeding day he grew,
As soon as he that holy monk espied
The manifest and mighty marvel do,
Disposed himself to cast Mahound aside,
And own in Christ a living God and true.
He, full of faith, with contrite heart demands
Our holy rite of baptism at his hands.

CXCIV
So him baptized the hermit; and as well
That monarch made as vigorous as whilere.
At this conversion no less gladness fell
On Roland and each Christian cavalier,
Than when, restored from deadly wound, and well
The friendly troop beheld Sir Olivier.
Rogero more rejoiced than all that crew;
And still in faith and grace the warrior grew.

CXCV
Rogero from the day he swam ashore
Upon that islet, there had ever been.
That band is counselled by the hermit hoar,
Who stands, benign, those warlike knights between,
Eschewing in their passage mire and moor,
To wade withal through that dead water, clean,
Which men call life; wherein so fools delight;
And evermore on heaven to fix their sight.

CXCVI
Roland on shipboard sends one from his throng,
Who fetches hence good wine, hams, cheese, and bread;
And makes the sage, who had forgotten long
All taste of partridge since on fruits he fed,
Even do for love, what others did, among

Those social guests for whom the board was spread.
They, when their strength by food was reinforced,
Of many things amid themselves discoursed;

CXCVII
And as in talk it often doth befall
That one thing from another takes its rise,
Roland and Olivier Rogero call
To mind for that Rogero, in such wise
Renowned in arms; whose valour is of all
Lauded and echoed with accordant cries.
Not even had Rinaldo known the knight
For him whose prowess he had proved in fight.

CXCVIII
Him well Sobrino recognized whilere,
As soon as with that aged man espied;
But he at first kept silence; for in fear
Of some mistake the monarch's tongue was tied.
But when those others knew the cavalier
For that Rogero, famous far and wide,
Whose courtesy, whose might and daring through
The universal world loud Rumor blew,

CXCIX
All, for they know he is a Christian, stand
About him with serene and joyful face:
All press upon the knight; one grasps his hand;
Another locks him fast in his embrace:
Yet more than all the others of that band
Him would Montalban's lord caress and grace:
Why more than all the others will appear
In other strain, if you that strain will hear.

CANTO 44

ARGUMENT
Rinaldo his sister to the Child hath plight,
And to Marseilles is with the warrior gone:
And having crimsoned wide the field in fight,
Therein arrives King Otho's valiant son.
To Paris thence: where to that squadron bright
Is mighty grace and wonderous honour done.
The Child departs, resolved on Leo's slaughter,
To whom Duke Aymon had betrothed his daughter.

I
In poor abode, mid paltry walls and bare,
Amid discomforts and calamities,
Often in friendship heart united are,
Better than under roof of lordly guise,
Or in some royal court, beset with snare,
Mid envious wealth, and ease, and luxuries;
Where charity is spent on every side,
Nor friendship, unless counterfeit, is spied.

II
Hence it ensues that peace and pact between
Princes and peers are of such short-lived wear.
To-day king, pope, and emperor leagued are seen,
And on the marrow deadly foemen are.
Because such is not as their outward mien
The heart, the spirit, that those sovereigns bear.
Since, wholly careless as to right or wrong,
But to their profit look the faithless throng.

III
Though little prone to friendship is that sort,
Because with those she loveth not to dwell,
Who, be their talk in earnest or in sport,

Speak not, except some cozening tale to tell;
Yet if together in some poor resort
They prisoned are by Fortune false and fell,
What friendship is they speedily discern;
Though years had past, and this was yet to learn.

IV

In his retreat that ancient eremite
Could bind his inmates with a faster noose,
And in true love more firmly them unite,
Than other could in domes where courtiers use;
And so enduring was the knot and tight,
That nothing short of death the tie could loose.
Benignant all the hermit found that crew;
Whiter at heart than swans in outward hue.

V

All kind he found them, and of courteous lore;
Untainted with iniquity, in wise
Of them I painted, and who nevermore
Go forth, unless concealed in some disguise.
Of injuries among them done before
All memory, by those comrades buried lies:
Nor could they better love, if from one womb
And from one seed that warlike band had come.

VI

Rinaldo more than all that lordly train
Rogero graced and lovingly caressed;
As well because be on the listed plain
Had proved the peer so strong in martial gest,
As that he was more courteous and humane
Than any knight that e'er laid lance in rest:
But much more; that to him on many a ground
By mighty obligation was he bound.

VII
The fearful risk by Richardetto run
He knew, and how Rogero him bested;
What time the Spanish monarch's hest was done,
And with his daughter he was seized in bed;
And how he had delivered either son
Of good Duke Buovo (as erewhile was said)
From Bertolagi of Maganza's hand,
His evil followers, and the paynim band.

VIII
To honour and to hold Rogero dear,
Him, Sir Rinaldo thought, this debt constrained;
And that he could not so have done whilere,
The warlike lord was sorely grieved and pained;
When one for Africk's monarch couched the spear,
And one the cause of royal Charles maintained:
Now he Rogero for a Christian knew,
What could not then be done he now would do.

IX
Welcome, with endless proffers, on his side,
And honour he to good Rogero paid.
The prudent sire that in such kindness spied
An opening made for more, the pass assayed:
"And nothing else remains," that hermit cried,
"Nor will, I trust, my counsel be gainsaid)
But that, conjoined by friendship, you shall be
Yet faster coupled by affinity.

X
"That from the two bright progenies, which none
Will equal in illustrious blood below,
A race may spring, that brighter than the sun
Will shine, wherever that bright sun may glow;
And which, when years and ages will have run

Their course, will yet endure and fairer show,
While in their orbits burn the heavenly fires:
So me, for your instruction, God inspires."

XI
And his discourse pursuing still, the seer
So spake, he moves Rinaldo by his rede
To give his sister to the cavalier;
Albeit with either small entreaties need.
Together with Orlando, Olivier
The counsel lauds, and would that union speed:
King Charles and Aymon will, he hopes, approve,
And France will welcome wide their wedded love.

XII
So spake together peer and paladine:
Nor knew that Aymon, with King Charles' consent,
Unto the Grecian emperor Constantine
To give his gentle daughter had intent;
Who for young Leo, of his lofty line
The heir and hope, to crave the maid had sent.
Such warmth the praises of her worth inspired,
With love of her unseen was Leo fired.

XIII
To him hath Aymon answered: he, alone,
Cannot conclude thereon in other sort,
Until he first hath spoken with his son,
Rinaldo, absent then from Charles's court;
Who with winged haste, he deems, will thither run,
And joy in kinsman of such high report;
But from the high regard he bears his heir,
Can nought resolve till thither he repair.

XIV
Now good Rinaldo, of his father wide,
And of the imperial practice knowing nought,

Promised his beauteous sister as a bride,
Upon his own, as well as Roland's thought
And the others, harboured in that cell beside;
But most of all on him the hermit wrought;
And by such marriage, 'twas the peer's belief,
He could not choose but pleasure Clermont's chief.

XV
That day and night, and of the following day
Great part, with that sage monk the warriors spent;
Scarce mindful that the crew their coming stay,
Albeit the wind blew fair for their intent,
But these, impatient at their long delay,
More than one message to the warriors sent;
And to return those barons urged so sore,
Parforce they parted from the hermit hoar.

XVI
The Child who, so long banished, had not stayed
From the lone rock, whereon the waters roared,
His farewell to that holy master made,
Who taught him the true faith: anew with sword
Orlando girt his side, and with the blade,
Frontino and martial Hector's arms restored;
As knowing horse and arms were his whilere,
As well as out of kindness to the peer;

XVII
And, though the enchanted sword with better right
Would have been worn by good Anglantes' chief,
Who from the fearful garden by his might
Had won the blade with mickle toil and grief,
Than by Rogero, who that faulchion bright
Received with good Frontino, from the thief,
He willingly thereof, as with the rest,
As soon as asked, the warrior repossest.

XVIII
The hermit blessings on the band implores:
They to their bark in fine return; their sails
Give to the winds, and to the waves their oars;
And such clear skies they have and gentle gales,
Nor vow nor prayer the patron makes; and moors
His pinnace in the haven of Marseilles.
There, safely harboured, let the chiefs remain,
Till I conduct Astolpho to that train.

XIX
When of that bloody, dear-brought victory
The scarcely joyful tale Astolpho knew,
He, seeing evermore fair France would be
Secure from mischief from the Moorish crew,
Homeward to send the king of Aethiopy
Devised, together with his army, through
The sandy desert, by the self-same track,
Through which he led them to Biserta's sack.

XX
Erewhile restored, in Afric waters ride
Sir Dudon's ships which did the paynims rout;
Whose prows (new miracle!) and poop, and side,
As soon as all their sable crews are out,
Are changed anew to leaves; which far and wide,
Raised by a sudden breeze, are blown about;
And scattered in mid-air, like such light gear,
Go eddying with the wind, and disappear.

XXI
Home, horse and foot, the Nubian host arraid
By squadrons, all, from wasted Africk go;
But to their king, first, thanks Astolpho paid,
And said, he an eternal debt should owe;
In that he had in person given him aid

With all his might and main against the foe.
The skins Astolpho gave them, which confined
The turbid and tempestuous southern wind.

XXII

I say, enclosed in skins that wind he gave,
Which in such fury blows at noon, on high
I moves the shifting plain in many a wave,
And fills the eddying sand the troubled sky,
To carry with them, and from scathe to save
Their squadrons, lest the dusty whirlwind fly;
And bids them, when arrived at home, unnoose
The bladder's vent, and let their prisoners loose.

XXIII

When they have lofty Atlas passes won,
The horses that the Nubian riders bear,
Turpin relates, are changed at once to stone;
So that the steeds return to what they were.
But it is time the Duke to France was gone;
Who having thus provided, in his care,
For the main places in the Moorish land,
Made the hippogryph anew his wings expand;

XXIV

He reached Sardinia at one flight and shear,
Corsica from Sardinia; and then o'er
The foaming sea his venturous course did steer,
Inclining somewhat left the griffin's soar.
In the sea-marshes last his light career
He stopt, on rich Provence's pleasant shore:
Where to the hyppogryph by him is done
What was erewhile enjoined by sainted John.

XXV

To him the charge did sainted John commit,
When to Provence by that winged courser borne,

Him nevermore with saddle or with bit
To gall, but let him to his lair return.
Already had the planet, whither flit
Things lost on earth, of sound deprived his horn:
For this not only hoarse but mute remained,
As soon as the holy place Astolpho gained.

XXVI
Thence to Marseilles he came; and came the day
Orlando, and Rinaldo, and Olivier
Arrived therein, upon their homeward way,
With good Sobrino, and the better peer,
Rogero: not so triumphs that array,
Touched by the death of him, their comrade dear,
As they for such a glorious victory won
— But for that sad disaster — would have done.

XXVII
Of the kings slain upon the paynim part,
The news from Sicily to Charles were blown,
Sobrino's fate, and death of Brandimart;
Nor less of good Rogero had been shown.
Charles stood with jocund fate and gladsome heart,
Rejoicing he had from his shoulders thrown
The intolerable load whereof the weight
Will for long time prevent his standing straight.

XXVIII
To honour those fair pillars that sustain
The state — the holy empire's corner-stone —
The nobles of his kingdom Charlemagne
Dispatched, to meet the knights, as far as Saone;
And from his city with his worthiest train,
King, duke, and her, the partner of his throne,
Issued amid a fair and gorgeous band
Of noble damsels, upon either hand.

XXIX

The emperor Charles with bright and cheerful brow,
Lords, paladins and people, kinsmen, friends,
Fair love to Roland and the others show.
Mongrana and Clermont's cry the welkin rends.
No sooner, mid that kind and festal show,
The interchange of fond embracements ends,
Than Roland and his friends Rogero bring,
And mid those lords present him to the king;

XXX

And him Rogero of Risa's son declare,
And vouch in valour as his father's peer,
"Witnesses of his worth our squadrons are,
They best can tell his prowess with the spear."
Meanwhile, the noble and the lovely pair,
Marphisa and gentle Bradamant appear.
This runs to fold Rogero to her heart;
More coy, that other stands somedeal apart.

XXXI

The emperor bids Rogero mount again,
Who from his horse had lit, in reverence due;
And, side by side, with him his courser rein;
Nor aught omits that monarch which may do
The warrior honour, mid his martial train:
How the true faith he had embraced he knew;
Of all instructed by that band before;
When first those paladins set foot ashore.

XXXII

With pomp triumphal and with festive cheer
The troop returns within the city-walls:
With leaves and garlands green the streets appear,
And tapestried all about with gorgeous palls.
Of herbs and flowers a mingled rain, where'er

They wend, upon the conquering squadron falls,
Which with full hands from stand and window throw
Damsel and dame upon the knights below.

XXXIII
At every turn, in various places are,
Of sudden structure arch and trophy high,
Whereon Biserta's sack is painted fair,
Ruin and fire, and feat of chivalry:
Scaffolds, upraised for different sports elsewhere
And merrimake and stage-play meet the eye;
And, writ with truth, above, below, between,
To THE EMPIRE'S SAVIOURS, everywhere is seen.

XXXIV
With sound of shrilling pipe and trumpet proud,
And other festive music, laughter light,
Applause and favour of the following crowd,
Which scarce found room, begirt with dames and knight,
The mighty emperor, mid those greetings loud.
Before the royal palace did alight:
Where many days he feasted high in hall
His lords, mid tourney, mummery, mask and ball.

XXXV
His son to Aymon on a day made known
His sister he would make Rogero's bride;
And, before Olivier and Milo's son,
Her to the Child by promise had affied;
Who think with him that kindred is there none
Wherewith to league themselves, on any side,
For valour or nobility of blood,
Better than his; nay, none so passing good.

XXXVI
Duke Aymon heard his heir with some disdain;
That, without concert with him, and alone

He dared to plight his daughter, whom he fain
Would marry to the Grecian emperor's son;
And not to him that has no kingly reign,
Nay has not ought that he can call his own;
And should not know, how little nobleness
Is valued without wealth; how virtue less.

XXXVII
But Beatrice, his wife, with more despite
Arraigns her son, and calls him arrogant;
And moves each open way and hidden sleight
To break Rogero's match with Bradamant;
Resolved to tax her every means and might
To make her empress of the wide Levant.
Firm in his purpose is Montalban's lord,
Nor will in ought forego his plighted word.

XXXVIII
Beatrice who believes the highminded fair
Is at her hest, exhorts her to reply,
Rather than she will be constrained to pair
With a poor knight, she is resolved to die;
Nor, if this wrong she from Rinaldo bear
Will she regard her with a mother's eye:
Let her refuse and keep her stedfast course;
For her free will Rinaldo cannot force.

XXXIX
Silent stands mournful Bradamant, nor dares
Meanwhile her lady-mother's speech gainsay;
To whom such reverence, and respect, she bears,
She thinks no choice is left but to obey.
Yet a foul fault it in her eyes appears,
If what she will not do, she falsely say:
She will not, for she cannot; since above
All guidance, great or small, is mighty Love.

XL

Deny she dared not, nor yet seem content;
So, sighed and spake not; but — when uncontrolled
She could — she gave her secret sorrow vent,
While from her eyes the tears like billows rolled;
A portion of the pains that her torment,
Inflicting on her breast and locks of gold:
For this she beat, and those uptore and brake;
And thus she made lament, and thus she spake.

XLI

"Ah! shall I will what she wills not, by right
More sovereign mistress of my will than I?
Hers shall I hold so cheaply, so to slight
A mother's will, my own to satisfy?
Alas! what blemish is so foul to sight
In damsel? What so ill, as to affy
Myself to husband, reckless of her will,
Which 'tis my duty ever to fulfil?

XLII

"Wo worth the while! and shall I then to thee
By filial love be forced to be untrue,
O my Rogero, and surrender me
To a new hope, a new love, and a new
Desire; or rather from those ties break free,
From all good children to good parents due;
Observance, reverence cast aside; and measure
My duty by my happiness, my pleasure?

XLIII

"I know, alas! what I should do; I know
That which a duteous daughter doth behove;
I know; but what avails it, if not so
My reason moves me as my senses move;
If she retires before a stronger foe;

Nor can I of myself dispose, for Love;
Nor think how to dispose; so strict his sway;
Nor, saving as he dictates, do and say?

XLIV
"Aymon and Beatrice's child, the slave
Of Love am I; ah! miserable me!
I from my parents am in hope to have
Pardon and pity, if in fault I be:
But, if I anger Love, whose prayer shall save
Me from his fury, till one only plea,
Of mine the Godhead shall vouchsafe to hear;
Nor doom me dead as soon as I appear?

XLV
"Alas! with long and obstinate pursuit,
To our faith to draw Rogero have I wrought;
And finally have drawn; but with what boot,
If my fair deed for other's good be wrought?
So yearly by the bee, whose labour's fruit
Is lost for her, is hive with honey fraught.
But I will die ere I the Child forsake,
And other husband than Rogero take.

XLVI
"If I shall not obey my father's hest,
Nor mothers, I my brother's shall obey,
Of greater wisdom far than them possest;
Nor Time hath made that warrior's wit his prey;
And what he wills by Roland is profest;
And, one and the other, on my side are they;
A pair more feared and honoured far and wide
Than all the members of my house beside.

XLVII
"If them the flower of Clermont's noble tree,
The glory and the splendor all account;

If all believe our other chivalry
They, more than head o'ertops the foot, surmount;
Why would I Aymon should dispose of me,
Rather than good Rinaldo and the Count?
I should not; so much less, as not affied
To Leo, and Rogero's promised bride."

XLVIII
If cruel thoughts the afflicted maid torment,
Rogero's mind enjoys not more repose;
For albeit those sad tidings have not vent
Yet in the city, he the secret knows.
He o'er his humble fortunes makes lament
Which his enjoying such a good oppose;
As unendowed with riches or with reign,
Dispensed so widely to a worthless train.

XLIX
Of other goods which Nature's hand supplies,
Or which acquired by man's own study are,
He such a portion in himself espies,
Such and so large was never other's share:
In that, no beauty with his beauty vies;
In that, resistance to his might is rare.
The palm by none from him can challenged be,
In regal splendour, magnanimity.

L
But they at whose disposal honours lie,
Who give at will, and take away renown;
The vulgar herd; and from the vulgar I,
Except the prudent man, distinguished none;
Nor emperor, pope, nor king, is raised more high
Than these by sceptre, mitre, or by crown,
Nor save by prudence; save by judgement, given
But to the favoured few by partial Heaven;

LI
This vulgar (to say out what I would say)
Which only honours wealth, therewith more smit
Than any worldly thing beside, nor they
Aught heed or aught esteem, ungraced with it,
Be beauty or be daring what it may,
Dexterity or prowess, worth, or wit,
Or goodness — yet more vulgar stands confest
In that whereof I speak than in the rest.

LII
Rogero said: "If Aymon is disposed
An empress in his Bradamant to see,
Let not his treaty be so quickly closed
With Leo; let a year be granted me:
In that, meanwhile, I hope, by me deposed
Shall Leo with his royal father be,
And I, encircled with their forfeit crown,
Shall be for Aymon no unworthy son.

LIII
"But if he give without delay, as said,
His daughter to the son of Constantine,
If to that promise no regard be paid,
Which good Rinaldo and the paladine,
His cousin, erst before the hermit made,
The Marquis Olivier and King Sobrine,
What shall I do? such grievous wrong shall I
Endure, or, rather than endure it, die?

LIV
"What shall I do? her father then pursue,
On whom for vengeance this grave outrage cries?
I heed not that the deed is hard to do,
Or if the attempt in me is weak or wise: —
But presuppose that, with his kindred crew

Slain by my hand that unjust elder dies;
This will in nothing further my content;
Nay it will wholly frustrate my intent.

LV
" `Twas ever my intent, and still 'tis so
To have the love, not hatred, of that fair;
But should I Aymon slay, or bring some woe
By plot or practice, on his house or heir,
Will she not justly hold me as her foe,
And me, that foeman, as her lord forswear?
What shall I do, endure such injury?
Ah! no, by Heaven! far rather I will die.

LVI
"Nay die I will not; but with better right
Shall Leo die, who so disturbs my joy;
He and his unjust sire; less dear his flight
With Helen paid her paramour of Troy;
Nor yet in older time that foul despite,
Done to Proserpina, cost such annoy
To bold Pirithous, as for her I've lost
My grief of heart shall son and father cost.

LVII
"Can it be true, my life, that to forsake
Thy champion for this Greek should grieve not thee?
And could thy father force thee him to take,
Though joined thy brethren with thy sire should be?
But 'tis my fear that thou would'st rather make
Accord withal with Aymon than with me;
And that it seemeth better in thy sight
To wed with Caesar than with simple wight.

LVIII
"Can it be true that royal name should blind,
Imperial title, pomp and majesty,

And taint my Bradamant's egregious mind,
Her mighty valour and her virtue high,
So that, as cheaper, she should cast behind
Her plighted faith, and from her promise fly?
Nor sooner she a foe to Love be made,
Than she no longer say, what once she said?"

LIX
These things Rogero said, and more beside,
Discoursing with himself, and in such strain
Oftentimes the afflicted warrior cried,
That stander-by o'erheard the knight complain,
And more than once his grief was signified
To her that was the occasion of his pain;
Who no less for his cruel woe, when known,
Lamented than for sorrows of her own.

LX
But most, of all the sorrows that were said
To vex Rogero, most it works her woe
To hear that he afflicts himself, in dread
Lest for the Grecian prince she him forego.
Hence this belief, this error, from his head
To drive, comfort on the knight bestow,
The trustiest of her bower-women, one day,
She to Rogero bade these words convey.

LXI
"Rogero, I what I was till death will be;
And be more faithful, if I can be more:
Deals Love in kindness or in scorn with me;
Hath doubtful Fortune good or ill in store;
I am a very rock of faith, by sea
And winds unmoved, which round about it roar
Nor I have changed for calm or storm, nor I
Will ever change to all eternity.

LXII

"Sooner shall file or chisel made of lead
To the rough diamond various forms impart,
Than any stroke, by fickle Fortune sped,
Or Love's keen anger, break my constant heart:
Sooner return, to Alp, their fountain-head,
The troubled streams that from its summit part,
Than e'er, for change or chances, good or nought,
Shall wander from its way my stedfast thought.

LXIII

"All power o'er me have I bestowed on you,
Rogero; and more than others may divine:
I know that to a prince whose throne is new
Was never fealty sworn more true than mine;
Nor ever surer state, this wide world through,
By king or keysar was possest than thine.
Thou need'st not dig a ditch nor build a tower,
In fear lest any rob thee of that power.

LXIV

"For if thou hire no aids, assault is none,
But what thereon shall aye be made in vain;
Nor shall it be by any riches won:
So vile a price no gentle heart can gain:
Nor by nobility, nor kingly crown,
That dazzle so the silly vulgar train;
Nor beauty, puissant with the weak and light,
Shall ever make me thee for other slight.

LXV

"Thou hast no cause, amid thy griefs, to fear
My heart should ever bear new impress more:
So deeply is thine image graven here,
It cannot be removed: that my heart's core
Is not of wax is proved; for Love whilere

Smote it a hundred times, not once, before
He by his blows a single scale displaced,
What time therein his hand thine image traced.

LXVI
"Ivory, gem, and every hard-grained stone
That best resists the griding tool, may break:
But, save the form it once hath taken, none
Will ever from the graver's iron take.
My heart like marble is, or thing least prone
Beneath the chisel's trenchant edge to flake:
Love this may wholly splinter, ere he may
Another's beauty in its core enlay."

LXVII
Other and many words with comfort rife,
And full of love and faith, she said beside;
Which might a thousand times have given him life,
Albeit a thousand times the knight had died:
But, when most clear of the tempestuous strife,
In friendly port these hopes appeared to ride,
These hopes a foul and furious wind anew
Far from the sheltering land to seaward blew.

LXVIII
In that the gentle Bradamant, who fain
Would do far more than she hath signified,
With wonted daring armed her heart again;
And boldly casting all respect aside,
One day stood up before King Charlemagne;
And, "Sire, if ever yet," the damsel cried,
"I have found favour in your eyes for deed
Done heretofore, deny me not its meed;

LXIX
"And I entreat, before I claim my fee,
That you to me your royal promise plight,

To grant my prayer; and fain would have you see
That what I shall demand is just and right."
"Thy valour, damsel dear, deserves from me
The boon wherewith thy worth I should requite"
(Charles answered), "and I to content thee swear,
Though of my kingdom thou should'st claim a share."

LXX
"The boon for which I to your highness sue,
Is not to let my parents me accord
(Pursued the martial damsel) save he shew
More prowess than myself, to any lord.
Let him contend with me in tourney, who
Would have me, or assay me with the sword.
Me as his wife let him that wins me, wear;
Let him that loses me, with other pair."

LXXI
With cheerful face the emperor made reply,
The entreaty was well worthy of the maid;
And that with tranquil mind she might rely,
He would accord the boon for which she prayed.
This audience was not given so secretly,
But that the news to others were conveyed;
Which on that very day withal were told
In the ears of Beatrice and Aymon old;

LXXII
Who against Bradamant with fury flame,
And both alike, with sudden anger fraught,
(For plainly they perceive, that in her claim
She for Rogero more than Leo wrought)
And active to prevent the damsel's aim
From being to a safe conclusion brought,
Privily take her from King Charles's court,
And thence to Rocca Forte's tower transport.

LXXIII

A castle this, which royal Charlemagne
Had given to Aymon some few days before,
Built between Carcasson and Perpignan,
On a commanding point upon the shore.
Resolved to send her eastward, there the twain
As in a prison kept her evermore.
Willing or nilling, so must she forsake
Rogero, and for lord must Leo take.

LXXIV

The martial maid of no less modest vein
Than bold and full of fire before the foe,
Albeit no guard on her the castellain
Hath set, and she is free to come or go,
Observant of her sire, obeys the rein:
Yet prison, death, and every pain and woe
To suffer is resolved that constant maid
Before by her Rogero be betrayed.

LXXV

Rinaldo, who thus ravished from his hand,
By ancient Aymon's craft his sister spied,
And saw he could no more in wedlock's band
Dispose of her, by him in vain affied,
Of his old sire complains, and him doth brand,
Laying his filial love and fear aside:
But little him Rinaldo's words molest;
Who by the maid will do as likes him best.

LXXVI

Rogero, bearing this and sore afraid
That he shall lose his bride; and Leo take,
If left alive, by force or love the maid,
Resolved within himself (but nothing spake)
Constantine's heir should perish by his blade;

And of Augustus him a god would make.
He, save his hope deceived him and was vain,
Would sire and son deprive of life and reign.

LXXVII
His limbs in arms, which Trojan Hector's were,
And afterwards the Tartar king's, he steeled;
Bade rein Frontino, and his wonted wear
Exchanged, crest, surcoat and emblazoned shield.
On that emprize it pleased him not to bear
His argent eagle on its azure field.
White as a lily, was a unicorn
By him upon a field of crimson worn.

LXXVIII
He chose from his attendant squires the best,
And willed none else should him accompany;
And gave him charge, that ne'er by him exprest
Rogero's name in any place should be;
Crost Meuse and Rhine, and pricked upon his quest
Through the Austrian countries into Hungary;
Along the right bank of the Danube made,
And rode an-end until he reached Belgrade.

LXXIX
Where Save into dark Danube makes descent,
And to the sea, increased by him, doth flow,
He saw the imperial ensigns spread, and tent
And white pavilion, thronged with troops below.
For Constantine to have that town was bent
Anew, late won by the Bulgarian foe.
In person, with his son, is Constantine,
With all the empire's force his host to line.

LXXX
Within Belgrade, and through the neighbouring peak,
Even to its bottom which the waters lave,

The Bulgar fronts him; and both armies seek
A watering-place in the intermediate Save.
A bridge across that rapid stream the Greek
Would fling; the Bulgar would defend the wave;
When thither came Rogero; and engaged
Beheld the hosts in fight, which hotly raged.

LXXXI
The Greeks in that affray were four to one,
And with pontoons to bridge the stream supplied;
And a bold semblance through their host put on
Of crossing to the river's further side.
Leo meanwhile was from the river gone
With covert guile; he took a circuit wide,
Then thither made return; his bridges placed
From bank to bank, and past the stream in haste.

LXXXII
With many horse and foot in battle dight,
Who nothing under twenty thousand rank,
Along the river rode the Grecian knight;
And fiercely charged his enemies in flank.
The emperor, when his son appeared in sight.
Leading his squadrons on the farther bank,
Uniting bridge and bark together, crost
Upon his part the stream with all his host.

LXXXIII
King Vatran, chief of the Bulgarian band,
Wise, bold, withal a warrior, here and there
Laboured in vain such onset to withstand,
And the disorder of his host repair;
When Leo prest him sore, and with strong hand
The king to earth beneath his courser bare;
Whom at the prince's hest, for all to fierce
Is he to yield, a thousand faulchions pierce.

LXXXIV
The Bulgar host hath hitherto made head;
But when they see their sovereign is laid low,
And everywhere that tempest wax and spread,
They turn their backs where erst they faced the foe.
The Child, who mid the Greeks, from whom they fled,
Was borne along, beheld that overthrow,
And bowned himself their battle to restore,
As hating Constantine and Leo more.

LXXXV
He spurs Frontino, that in his career
Is like the wind, and passes every steed;
He overtakes the troop, that in their fear
Fly to the mountain and desert the mead.
Many he stops and turns; then rests his spear;
And, as he puts his courser to his speed,
So fearful is his look, even Mars and Jove
Are frighted in their azure realms above.

LXXXVI
Advanced before the others, he descried
A cavalier, in crimson vest, whereon
With all its stalk in silk and gold was spied
A pod, like millet, in embroidery done:
Constantine's nephew, by the sister's side,
He was, but was no less beloved than son:
He split like glass his shield and scaly rind;
And the long lance appeared a palm behind.

LXXXVII
He left the dead, and drew his shining blade
Upon a squadron, whom he saw most nigh;
And now at once, and now at other made;
Cleft bodies, and made hearts from shoulders fly.
At throat, at breast and flank the warrior laid;

Smote hand, and arm, and shoulder, bust, and thigh;
And through that champaign ran the reeking blood,
As to the valley foams the mountain-flood.

LXXXVIII
None that behold those strokes maintain their place;
So are they all bewildered by their fear.
Thus suddenly the battle changed its face:
For, catching courage from the cavalier,
The Bulgar squadrons rally, turn, and chase
The Grecian troops that fled from them whilere.
Lost was all order in a thought, and they
With all their banners fled in disarray.

LXXXIX
Leo Augustus on a swelling height,
Seeing his followers fly, hath taken post;
Where woeful and bewildered (for to sight
Nothing in all the country round is lost)
He from his lofty station eyes the knight,
Who with his single arm destroys that host;
And cannot choose, though so his prowess harms,
But praise that peer and own his worth in arms.

XC
He knew full well by ensignry displaid,
By surcoat and by gilded panoply,
That albeit to the foe he furnished aid,
That champion was not of his chivalry;
Wondering his superhuman deeds surveyed;
And now an angel seemed in him to see,
To scourge the Greeks from quires above descended,
Whose sins so oft and oft had heaven offended;

XCI
And, as a man of great and noble heart,
(Where many others would have hatred sworn)

Enamoured of such valour, on his part,
Would not desire to see him suffer scorn:
For one that died, six Grecians' death less smart
Would cause that prince; and better had he borne
To lose as well a portion of his reign,
Than to behold so good a warrior slain.

XCII
As baby, albeit its fond mother beat
And drive it forth in anger, in its fear
Neither to sire nor sister makes retreat;
But to her arms returns with fondling cheer:
So Leo, though Rogero in his heat
Slaughters his routed van and threats his rear,
Cannot that champion hate; because above
His anger is the admiring prince's love.

XCIII
But if young Leo loved him and admired,
Meseems that he an ill exchange hath made;
For him Rogero loathed; nor aught desired
More than to lay him lifeless with his blade:
Him with his eyes he sought; for him inquired;
But Leo's fortune his desire gainsayed;
Which with the prudence of the practised Greek,
Made him in vain his hated rival seek.

XCIV
Leo, for fear his bands be wholly spent,
Bids sound the assembly his Greek squadrons through:
He to his father a quick courier sent,
To pray that he would pass the stream anew;
Who, if the way was open, well content
Might with his bargain he; and with a few
Whom he collects, the Grecian cavalier
Recrost the bridge by which he past whilere.

XCV

Into the power o' the Bulgars many fall,
Stalin from the hill-top to the river-side;
And they into their hands had fallen all,
But for the river's intervening tide.
From the bridge many drop, and drown withal;
And many that ne'er turned their heads aside,
Thence to a distant ford for safety made;
And many were dragged prisoners to Belgrade.

XCVI

When done was that day's fight, wherein (since borne
To ground the Bulgar king his life did yield)
His squadrons would have suffered scathe and scorn,
Had not for them the warrior won the field,
The warrior, that the snowy unicorn
Wore for his blazon on a crimson shield,
To him all flock, in him with joy and glee
The winner of that glorious battle see.

XCVII

Some bow and some salute him; of the rest
Some kist the warrior's feet, and some his hand.
Round him as closely as they could they prest,
And happy those are deemed, that nearest stand;
More those that touch him; for to touch a blest
And supernatural thing believes the band.
On him with shouts that rent the heavens they cried,
To be their king, their captain, and their guide.

XCVIII

As king or captain them will he command
As liked them best, he said, but will not lay
On sceptre or on leading-staff his hand;
Nor yet Belgrade will enter on that day:
For first, ere farther flies young Leo's band,

And they across the river make their way,
Him will he follow, nor forego, until
That Grecian leader he o'ertake and kill.

XCIX
A thousand miles and more for this alone
He thither measured, and for nought beside.
He saith; and from the multitude is gone,
And by a road that's shown to him doth ride.
For towards the bridge is royal Leo flown;
Haply lest him from this the foe divide:
Behind him pricks Rogero with such fire,
The warrior calls not, nor awaits, his squire.

C
Such vantage Leo has in flight (to flee
He rather may be said than to retreat)
The passage open hath he found and free;
And then destroys the bridge and burns his fleet.
Rogero arrived not, till beneath the sea
The sun was hid; nor lodging found; his beat
He still pursued; and now shone forth the moon:
But town or village found the warrior none.

CI
Because he wots not where to lodge, he goes
All night, nor from his load Frontino frees.
When the new sun his early radiance shows,
A city to the left Rogero sees;
And there all day determines to repose,
As where he may his wearied courser ease,
Whom he so far that livelong night had pressed;
Nor had he drawn his bit, nor given him rest.

CII
Ungiardo had that city in his guard,
Constantine's liegeman, and to him right dear;

Who, since upon the Bulgars he had warred,
Much horse and foot had sent that emperor; here
Now entered (for the entrance was not barred)
Rogero, and found such hospitable cheer,
He to fare further had no need, in trace
Of better or of more abundant place.

CIII
In the same hostelry with him a guest
Was lodged that evening a Romanian knight;
Present what time the Child with lance in rest
Succoured the Bulgars in that cruel fight;
Who hardly had escaped his hand, sore prest
And scared as never yet was living wight;
So that he trembled still, disturbed in mind,
And deemed the knight of the unicorn behind.

CIV
He by the buckler knew as soon as spied
The cavalier, whose arms that blazon bear,
For him that routed the Byzantine side;
By hand of whom so many slaughtered were.
He hurried to the palace, and applied
For audience, weighty tidings to declare;
And, to Ungiardo led forthwith, rehearsed
What shall by men in other strain be versed.

CANTO 45

ARGUMENT
Young Leo doth from death Rogero free;
For him Rogero Bradamant hath won,
Making that maid appear less strong to be,
Disguised in fight like Leo; and, that done,
Straight in despite would slay himself; so he

By sorrow, so by anguish is foredone.
To hinder Leo of his destined wife
Marphisa works, and kindles mighty strife.

I
By how much higher we see poor mortal go
On Fortune's wheel, which runs a restless round,
We so much sooner see his head below
His heels; and he is prostrate on the ground.
The Lydian, Syracusan, Samian show
This truth, and more whose names I shall not sound;
All into deepest dolour in one day
Hurled headlong from the height of sovereign sway.

II
By how much more deprest on the other side,
By how much more the wretch is downwards hurled,
He so much sooner mounts, where he shall ride,
If the revolving wheel again be twirled.
Some on the murderous block have well-nigh died,
That on the following day have ruled the world.
Ventidius, Servius, Marius this have shown
In ancient days; King Lewis in our own;

III
King Lewis, stepfather of my duke's son;
Who, when his host at Santalbino fled,
Left in his clutch by whom that field was won,
Was nigh remaining shorter by the head.
Nor long before the great Corvinus run
A yet more fearful peril, worse bested:
Both throned, when overblown was their mischance,
One king of Hungary, one king of France.

IV

'Tis plain to sight, through instances that fill
The page of ancient and of modern story,
That ill succeeds to good, and good to ill;
That glory ends in shame, and shame in glory;
And that man should not trust, deluded still,
In riches, realm, or field of battle, gory
With hostile blood, nor yet despair, for spurns
Of Fortune; since her wheel for ever turns.

V

Through that fair victory, when overthrown
Were Leo and his royal sire, the knight
Who won that battle to such trust is grown,
In his good fortune and his peerless might,
He, without following, without aid, alone
(So is he prompted by his daring sprite)
Thinks, mid a thousand squadrons in array,
— Footmen and horsemen — sire and son to slay.

VI

But she, that wills no trust shall e'er be placed
In her by man, to him doth shortly show,
How wight by her is raised, and how abased;
How soon she is a friend, how soon a foe;
She makes him know Rogero, that in haste
Is gone to work that warrior shame and woe;
The cavalier, which in that battle dread
With much ado had from his faulchion fled.

VII

He to Ungiardo hastens to declare
The Child who put the imperial host to flight,
Whose carnage many years will not repair,
Here past the day and was to pass the night;
And saith, that Fortune, taken by the hair,

Without more trouble, and without more fight,
Will, if he prisons him, the Bulgars bring
Beneath the yoke and lordship of his king.

VIII
Ungiardo from the crowd, which had pursued
Thither their flight from the ensanguined plain,
For, troop by troop, a countless multitude
(Arrived, because not all the bridge could gain)
Knew what a cruel slaughter had ensued:
For there the moiety of the Greeks was slain;
And knew that by a cavalier alone
One host was saved, and one was overthrown;

IX
And that undriven he should have made his way
Into the net, and of his own accord,
Wondered, and showed his pleasure, at the say
In visage, gesture, and in joyful word.
He waited till Rogero sleeping lay;
Then softly sent his guard to take that lord;
And made the valiant Child, who had no dread
Of such a danger, prisoner in his bed.

X
By his own shield accused, that witness true,
The Child is captive in Novogorood,
To Ungiardo, worst among the cruel, who
Marvellous mirth to have that prisoner shewed.
And what, since he was naked, could he do,
Bound, while his eyes were yet by slumber glued?
A courier, who the news should quickly bear,
Ungiardo bids to Constantine repair.

XI
Constantine on that night with all his host,
Raising his camp, from Save's green shore had gone:

With this in Beleticche he takes post,
Androphilus', his sister's husband's town,
Father of him, whose arms in their first joust
(As if of wax had been his habergeon)
Had pierced and carved the puissant cavalier,
Now by Ungiardo pent in dungeon drear.

XII
Here from attack the emperor makes assure
The city walls and gates on every side;
Lest, from the Bulgar squadrons ill secure,
Having so good a warrior for their guide,
His broken Grecians worse than fear endure;
Deeming the rest would by his hand have died.
Now he is taken, these breed no alarms;
Nor would he fear the banded world in arms.

XIII
The emperor, swimming in a summer sea,
Knows not for very pleasure what to do:
"Truly the Bulgars may be said to be
Vanquished," he cries, with bold and cheerful brow.
As he would feel assured of victory,
That had of either arm deprived his foe;
So the emperor was assured, and so rejoiced,
When good Rogero's fate the warrior voiced.

XIV
No less occasion has the emperor's son
For joying; for besides that he anew
Trusts to acquire Belgrade, and tower and town
Throughout the Bulgars' country to subdue,
He would by favours make the knight his own,
And hopes to rank him in his warlike crew:
Nor need he envy, guarded by his blade,
King Charles', Orlando's, or Rinaldo's aid.

XV

Theodora was by other thoughts possest,
Whose son was killed by young Rogero's spear;
Which through his shoulders, entering at his breast,
Issued a palm's breadth in the stripling's rear;
Constantine's sister she, by grief opprest,
Fell down before him; and with many a tear
That dropt into her bosom, while she sued,
His heart with pity softened and subdued.

XVI

"I still before these feet will bow my knee,
Save on this felon, good my lord," (she cried)
"Who killed my son, to venge me thou agree,
Now that we have him in our hold; beside
That he thy nephew was, thou seest how thee
He loved; thou seest what feats upon thy side
That warrior wrought; thou seest if thou wilt blot
Thine own good name, if thou avenge him not.

XVII

"Thou seest how righteous Heaven by pity stirred
From the wide champaign, red with Grecian gore,
Bears that fell man; and like a reckless bird
Into the fowler's net hath made him soar;
That for short season, for revenge deferred,
My son may mourn upon the Stygian shore.
Give me, my lord, I pray, this cruel foe,
That by his torment I may soothe my woe."

XVIII

So well she mourns; and in such moving wise
And efficacious doth she make lament;
(Nor from before the emperor will arise,
Though he three times and four the dame has hent,
And to uplift by word and action tries)

That he is forced her wishes to content;
And thus, according to her prayer, commands
The Child to be delivered to her hands;

XIX
And, not therein his orders to delay,
They take the warrior of the unicorn
To cruel Theodora; but one day
Of respite has the knight: to have him torn
In quarters, yet alive; to rend and slay
Her prisoners publicly with shame and scorn,
Seems a poor pain; and he must undergo
Other unwonted and unmeasured woe.

XX
At the commandment of that woman dread,
Chains on his neck and hands and feet they don;
And put him in a dungeon-cell, where thread
Of light was never by Apollo thrown:
He has a scanty mess of mouldy bread;
And sometimes is he left two days with none;
And one that doth the place of jailer fill
Is prompter than herself to work him ill.

XXI
Oh! if Duke Aymon's daughter brave and fair,
Of if Marphisa of exalted mind
Had heard Rogero's sad estate declare,
And how he in this guise in prison pined,
To his rescue either would have made repair,
And would have flung the fear of death behind:
Nor had bold Bradamant, intent to aid,
Respect to Beatrice or Aymon paid.

XXII
Meanwhile King Charlemagne upon his side,
Heeding his promise made in solemn sort,

That none should have the damsel for his bride,
That of her prowess in the field fell short;
Not only had his sovereign pleasure cried
With sound of trumpet in his royal court,
But in each city subject to his crown.
Hence quickly through the world the bruit was blown.

XXIII
Such the condition which he bids proclaim:
He that would with Duke Aymon's daughter wed
Must with the sword contend against that dame
From the suns rise until he seeks his bed;
And if he for that time maintains the game,
And is not overcome, without more said,
The lady is adjudged to have lost the stake;
Nor him for husband can refuse to take.

XXIV
The choice of arms must be by her foregone,
No matter who may claim it in the course:
And by the damsel this may well be done,
Good at all arms alike, on foot or horse.
Aymon, who cannot strive against the crown,
— Cannot and will not — yields at length parforce.
He much the matter sifts, and in the end
Resolves to court with Bradamant to wend.

XXV
Though for the daughter choler and disdain
The mother nursed, yet that she honour due
Might have, she garments, dyed in different grain,
Had wrought for her, of various form and hue.
Bradamant for the court of Charlemagne
Departs, and finding not her love, to her view
His noble court appears like that no more,
Which had appeared to her so fair before.

XXVI

As he that hath beheld a garden, bright
With flowers and leaves in April or in May,
And next beholds it, when the sun his light
Hath sloped toward the north, and shortened day,
Finds it a desert horrid to the sight;
So, now that her Rogero is away,
To Bradamant, who thither made resort,
No longer what it was appeared that court.

XXVII

What is become of him she doth not dare
Demand, lest more suspicion thence be bred;
But listens still, and searches here and there;
That this by some, unquestioned, may be said;
Knows he is gone, but has no notion where
The warrior, when he went, his steps had sped;
Because, departing thence, he spake no word
Save to the squire who journeyed with his lord.

XXVIII

Oh! how she sighs! how fears the gentle maid,
Hearing Rogero, as it were, was flown!
Oh! how above all other terrors, weighed
The fear, that to forget her he was gone!
That, seeing Aymon still his wish gainsayed,
And that to wed the damsel hope was none,
He fled, perchance, so hoping to be loosed
From toils wherein he by her love was noosed;

XXIX

And that with further end the youthful lord
Her from his heart more speedily to chase,
Will rove from realm to realm, till one afford
Some dame, that may his former love efface;
Even, as the proverb says, that in a board

One nail drives out another from its place.
A second thought succeeds, and paints the youth
Arraigned of fickleness, as full of truth;

XXX
And her reproves for having lent an ear
To a suspicion so unjust and blind;
And so, this thought absolves the cavalier;
And that accuses; and both audience find;
And now this way, now that, she seemed to veer;
Nor this, nor that — irresolute of mind —
Preferred: yet still to what gave most delight
Most promptly leaned, and loathed its opposite;

XXXI
And thinking, ever and anon, anew
On that so oft repeated by the knight,
As for grave sin, remorse and sorrow grew
That she had nursed suspicion and affright;
And she, as her Rogero were in view,
Would blame herself, and would her bosom smite;
And say: "I see 'twas ill such thoughts to nurse,
But he, the cause, is even cause of worse.

XXXII
"Love is the cause; that in my heart inlaid
Thy form, so graceful and so fair to see;
And so thy darling and thy wit pourtrayed,
And worth, of all so bruited, that to me
It seems impossible that wife or maid,
Blest with thy sight, should not be fired by thee;
And that she should not all her art apply
To unbind, and fasten thee with other tie.

XXXIII
"Ah! wellaway! if in my thought Love so
Thy thought, as thy fair visage, had designed,

This — am I well assured — in open show,
As I unseen believe it, should I find;
And be so quit of Jealousy, that foe
Would not still harass my suspicious mind;
And, where she is by me repulsed with pain,
Not quelled and routed would she be, but slain.

XXXIV
"I am like miser, so intent on gear,
And who hath this so buried in his heart,
That he, for hoarded treasure still in fear,
Cannot live gladly from his wealth apart.
Since I Rogero neither see nor hear,
More puissant far than Hope, O Fear! thou art;
To thee, though false and idle I give way;
And cannot choose but yield myself thy prey.

XXXV
"But I, Rogero, shall no sooner spy
The light of thy glad countenance appear,
Against mine every credence, from mine eye
Concealed (and woe is me), I know not where, —
Oh! how true Hope false Fear shall from on high
Depose withal, and to the bottom bear!
Ah! turn to me, Rogero! turn again,
And comfort Hope, whom Fear hath almost slain.

XXXVI
"As when the sun withdraws his glittering head,
The shadows lengthen, causing vain affright;
And as the shadows, when he leaves his bed,
Vanish, and reassure the timid wight:
Without Rogero so I suffer dread;
Dread lasts not, if Rogero is in sight.
Return to me, return, Rogero, lest
My hope by fear should wholly be opprest.

XXXVII

"As every spark is in the night alive,
And suddenly extinguished when 'tis morn;
When me my sun doth of his rays deprive,
Against me felon Fear uplifts his horn:
But they the shades of night no sooner drive,
Than Fears are past and gone, and Hopes return.
Return, alas! return, O radiance dear!
And drive from me that foul, consuming Fear.

XXXVIII

"If the sun turn from us and shorten day,
Earth all its beauties from the sight doth hide;
The wild winds howl, and snows and ice convey;
Bird sings not; nor is leaf or flower espied.
So, whensoever thou thy gladsome ray,
O my fair sun, from me dost turn aside,
A thousand, and all evil, dreads, make drear
Winter within me many times a year.

XXXIX

"Return, my sun, return! and springtide sweet,
Which evermore I long to see, bring back;
Dislodge the snows and ice with genial hear;
And clear my mind, so clouded o'er and black."
As Philomel, or Progne, with the meat
Returning, which her famished younglings lack,
Mourns o'er an empty nest, or as the dove
Laments himself at having lost is love;

XL

The unhappy Bradamant laments her so,
Fearing the Child is reft from her and gone;
While often tears her visage overflow:
But she, as best she can, conceals her moan.
Oh! how — oh! how much worse would be her woe,

If what she knew not to the maid were known!
That, prisoned and with pain and pine consumed,
Her consort to a cruel death was doomed.

XLI
The cruelty which by that beldam ill
Was practised on the prisoned cavalier,
And who prepared the wretched Child to kill,
By torture new and pains unused whilere,
While so Rogero pined, the gracious will
Of Heaven conveyed to gentle Leo's ear;
And put into his heart the means to aid,
And not to let such worth be overlaid.

XLII
The courteous Leo that Rogero loved,
Not that the Grecian knew howe'er that he
Rogero was, but by that valour moved
Which sole and superhuman seemed to be,
Thought much, and mused, and planned, how it behoved
— And found at last a way — to set him free;
So that his cruel aunt should have no right
To grieve or say he did her a despite.

XLIII
In secret, Leo with the man that bore
The prison-keys a parley had, and said,
He wished to see that cavalier, before
Upon the wretch was done a doom so dread.
When it was night, one, faithful found of yore,
Bold, strong, and good in brawl, he thither led;
And — by the silent warder taught that none
Must know 'twas Leo — was the door undone.

XLIV
Leo, escorted by none else beside,
Was led by the compliant castellain,

With his companion, to the tower, where stied
Was he, reserved for nature's latest pain.
There round the neck of their unwary guide,
Who turns his back the wicket to unchain,
A slip-knot Leo and his follower cast;
And, throttled by the noose, he breathes his last.

XLV

— The trap upraised, by rope from thence suspended
For such a need — the Grecian cavalier,
With lighted flambeau in his hand, descended,
Where, straitly bound, and without sun to cheer,
Rogero lay, upon a grate extended,
Less than a palm's breadth of the water clear:
To kill him in a month, or briefer space,
Nothing was needed but that deadly place.

XLVI

Lovingly Leo clipt the Child, and, "Me,
O cavalier! thy matchless valour," cried,
"Hath in indissoluble bands to thee,
In willing and eternal service, tried;
And wills thy good to mine preferred should be,
And I for thine my safety set aside,
And weigh thy friendship more than sire, and all
Whom I throughout the world my kindred call.

XLVII

"I Leo am, that thou what fits mayst know,
Come to thy succour, the Greek emperor's son:
If ever Constantine, my father, trow
That I have aided thee, I danger run
To be exiled, or aye with troubled brow
Regarded for the deed that I have done;
For thee he hates because of those thy blade
Put to the rout and slaughtered near Belgrade."

XLVIII
He his discourse with more beside pursues,
That might from death to life the Child recall;
And all this while Rogero's hands doth loose.
"Infinite thanks I owe you," cries the thrall,
"And I the life you gave me, for your use
Will ever render back, upon your call;
And still, at all your need, I for your sake,
And at all times, that life will promptly stake."

XLIX
Rogero is rescued; and the gaoler slain
Is left in that dark dungeon in his place;
Nor is Rogero known, nor are the twain:
Leo the warrior, free from bondage base,
Brings home, and there in safety to remain
Persuades, in secret, four or six days' space:
Meanwhile for him will he retrieve the gear
And courser, by Ungiardo reft whilere.

L
Open the gaol is found at dawn of light,
The gaoler strangled, and Rogero gone.
Some think that these or those had helped his flight:
All talk; and yet the truth is guessed by none.
Well may they think by any other wight
Rather than Leo had the deed been done;
For many deemed he had cause to have repaid
The Child with scathe, and none to give him aid.

LI
So wildered by such kindness, so immersed
In wonder, is the rescued cavalier,
So from those thoughts is he estranged, that erst
So many weary miles had made him steer,
His second thoughts confronting with his first,

Nor these like those, nor those like these appear.
He first with hatred, rage, and venom burned;
With pity and with love then wholly yearned.

LII
Much muses he by night and much by day;
— Nor cares for ought, nor ought desires beside —
By equal or more courtesy to pay
The mighty debt that him to Leo tied.
Be his life long or short, or what it may,
Albeit to Leo's service all applied,
Dies he a thousand deaths, he can do nought,
But more will be deserved, Rogero thought.

LIII
Thither meanwhile had tidings been conveyed
Of Charles' decree: that who in nuptial tye
Would yoke with Bradamant, with trenchant blade
Or lance must with the maid his prowess try.
These news the Grecian prince so ill appaid,
His cheek was seen to blanch with sickly dye;
Because, as one that measured well his might,
He knew he was no match for her in fight.

LIV
Communing with himself, he can supply
(He sees) the valour wanting with his wit;
And the strange knight with his own ensignry,
Whose name is yet unknown to him, will fit:
Him he against Frank champion, far and nigh,
Believes he may for force and daring pit;
And if the knight to that emprize agree,
Vanquished and taken Bradamant will be.

LV
But two things must he do; must, first, dispose
That cavalier to undertake the emprize;

Then send afield the champion, whom he chose,
In mode, that none suspect the youth's disguise:
To him the matter Leo doth disclose;
And after prays in efficacious wise,
That he the combat with the maid will claim,
Under false colours and in other's name.

LVI
Much weighs the Grecian's eloquence; but more
Than eloquence with good Rogero weighed
The mighty obligation which he bore;
That debt which cannot ever be repaid.
So, albeit it appeared a hardship sore
And thing well-nigh impossible, he said,
With blither face than heart, that Leo's will
In all that he commands he would fulfil.

LVII
Albeit no sooner he the intent exprest,
Than with sore grief Rogero's heart was shent;
Which, night and day, and ever, doth molest,
Ever afflict him, evermore torment:
And though he sees his death is manifest,
Never will he confess he doth repent:
Rather than not with Leo's prayer comply,
A thousand deaths, not one, the Child will die.

LVIII
Right sure he is to die; if he forego
The lady, he foregoes his life no less.
His heart will break through his distress and woe,
Or, breaking not with woe and with distress,
He will, himself, the bands of life undo,
And of its clay the spirit dispossess.
For all things can he better bear than one;
Than see that gentle damsel not his own.

LIX
To die is he disposed; but how to die
Cannot as yet the sorrowing lord decide:
Sometimes he thinks his prowess to belie,
And offer to her sword his naked side:
For never death can come more happily
Than if her hand the fatal faulchion guide:
Then sees, except he wins the martial maid
For that Greek prince, the debt remains unpaid.

LX
For he with Bradamant, as with a foe,
Promised to do, not feign, a fight in mail,
And not to make of arms a seeming show;
So that his sword should Leo ill avail.
Then by his word will he abide; and though
His breast now these now other thoughts assail,
All from his bosom chased the generous youth,
Save that which moved him to maintain his truth.

LXI
With the emperor's licence, armour to prepare,
And steeds meanwhile had wrought his youthful son;
Who with such goodly following as might square
With his degree, upon his way was gone:
With him Rogero rides, through Leo's care,
Equipt with horse and arms, that were his own.
Day after day the squadron pricks; nor tarries
Until arrived in France; arrived at Paris.

LXII
Leo will enter not the town; but nigh
Pitches his broad pavilions on the plain;
And his arrival by an embassy
Makes known that day to royal Charlemagne.
Well pleased is he; and visits testify

And many gifts the monarch's courteous vein.
His journey's cause the Grecian prince displayed,
And to dispatch his suit the sovereign prayed:

LXIII
To send afield the damsel, who denied
Ever to take in wedlock any lord
Weaker than her: for she should be his bride,
Or he would perish by the lady's sword.
Charles undertook for this; and, on her side,
The following day upon the listed sward
Before the walls, in haste, enclosed that night,
Appeared the martial maid, equipt for fight.

LXIV
Rogero past the night before the day
Wherein by him the battle should be done,
Like that which felon spends, condemning to pay
Life's forfeit with the next succeeding sun:
He made his choice to combat in the fray
All armed; because he would discovery shun:
Nor barded steed he backed, nor lance he shook;
Nor other weapon than his faulchion took.

LXV
No lance he took: yet was it not through fear
Of that which Argalia whilom swayed;
Astolpho's next; then hers, that in career
Her foemen ever upon earth had laid:
Because none weened such force was in the spear,
Nor that it was by necromancy made;
Excepting royal Galaphron alone;
Who had it forged, and gave it to his son.

LXVI
Nay, bold Astolpho, and the lady who
Afterwards bore it, deemed that not to spell,

But simply to their proper force, was due
The praise that they in knightly joust excel;
And with whatever spear they fought, those two
Believed that they should have performed as well.
What only makes that knight the joust forego
Is that he would not his Frontino show.

LXVII
For easily that steed of generous kind
She might have known, if him she had espied;
Whom in Montalban, long to her consigned,
The gentle damsel had been wont to ride.
Rogero, that but schemes, but hath in mind
How he from Brandamant himself shall hide,
Neither Frontino nor yet other thing.
Whereby he may be known, afield will bring.

LXVIII
With a new sword will he the maid await;
For well he knew against the enchanted blade
As soft as paste would prove all mail and plate;
For never any steel its fury stayed;
And heavily with hammer, to rebate
Its edge, as well he on this faulchion layed.
So armed, Rogero in the lists appeared,
When the first dawn of day the horizon cheered.

LXIX
To look like Leo, o'er his breast is spread
The surcoat that the prince is wont to wear;
And the gold eagle with its double head
He blazoned on the crimson shield doth bear;
And (what the Child's disguisement well may stead)
Of equal size and stature are the pair.
In the other's form presents himself the one;
That other lets himself be seen of none.

LXX

Dordona's martial maid is of a vein
Right different from the gentle youth's, who sore
Hammers and blunts the faulchion's tempered grain,
Lest it his opposite should cleave or bore.
She whets her steel, and into it would fain
Enter, that stripling to the quick to gore:
Yea, would such fury to her strokes impart,
That each should go directly to his heart.

LXXI

As on the start the generous barb in spied,
When he the signal full of fire attends;
And paws now here now there; and opens wide
His nostrils, and his pointed ears extends;
So the bold damsel, to the lists defied,
Who knows not with Rogero she contends,
Seemed to have fire within her veins, nor found
Resting-place, waiting for the trumpet's sound.

LXXII

As sometimes after thunder sudden wind
Turns the sea upside down; and far and nigh
Dim clouds of dust the cheerful daylight blind,
Raised in a thought from earth, and whirled heaven-high;
Scud beasts and herd together with the hind;
And into hail and rain dissolves the sky;
So she upon the signal bared her brand,
And fell on her Rogero, sword in hand.

LXXIII

But well-built wall, strong tower, or aged oak,
No more are moved by blasts that round them rave,
No more by furious sea is moved the rock,
Smote day and night by the tempestuous wave,
Than in those arms, secure from hostile stroke,

Which erst to Trojan Hector Vulcan gave,
Moved was he by that ire and hatred rank
Which stormed about his head, and breast, and flank.

LXXIV
Now aims that martial maid a trenchant blow,
And now gives point; and wholly is intent
'Twixt plate and plate to reach her hated foe;
So that her stifled fury she may vent:
Now on this side, now that, now high, now low
She strikes, and circles him, on mischief bent;
And evermore she rages and repines;
As balked of every purpose she designs.

LXXV
As he that layeth siege to well-walled town,
And flanked about with solid bulwarks, still
Renews the assault; now fain would batter down
Gateway or tower; now gaping fosse would fill;
Yet vainly toils (for entrance is there none)
And wastes his host, aye frustrate of his will;
So sorely toils and strives without avail
The damsel, nor can open plate or mail.

LXXVI
Sparks now his shield, now helm, now cuirass scatter,
While straight and back strokes, aimed now low, now high,
Which good Rogero's head and bosom batter,
And arms, by thousands and by thousands fly
Faster than on the sounding farm-roof patter
Hailstones descending from a troubled sky.
Rogero, at his ward, with dexterous care,
Defends himself, and ne'er offends the fair.

LXXVII
Now stopt, now circled, now retired the knight,
And oft his hand his foot accompanied;

And lifted shield, and shifted sword in fight,
Where shifting he the hostile hand espied.
Either he smote her not, or — die he smite —
Smote, where he deemed least evil would betide.
The lady, ere the westering sun descend,
Desires to bring that duel to an end.

LXXVIII
Of the edict she remembered her, and knew
Her peril, save the foe was quickly sped:
For if she took not in one day nor slew
Her claimant, she was taken; and his head
Phoebus was now about to hide from view,
Nigh Hercules' pillars, in his watery bed,
When first she 'gan misdoubt her power to cope
With the strong foe, and to abandon hope.

LXXIX
By how much more hope fails the damsel, so
Much more her anger waxes; she her blows
Redoubling, yet the harness of her foe
Will break, which through that day unbroken shows;
As he, that at his daily drudgery slow,
Sees night on his unfinished labour close,
Hurries and toils and moils without avail,
Till wearied strength and light together fail.

LXXX
Didst thou, O miserable damsel, trow
Whom thou wouldst kill, if in that cavalier
Matched against thee thou didst Rogero know,
On whom depend thy very life-threads, ere
Thou killed him thou wouldst kill thyself; for thou,
I know, dost hold him than thyself more dear;
And when he for Rogero shall be known,
I know these very strokes thou wilt bemoan.

LXXXI
King Charles and peers him sheathed in plate and shell
Deem not Rogero, but the emperor's son;
And viewing in that combat fierce and fell
Such force and quickness by the stripling shown;
And, without e'er offending her, how well
That knight defends himself, now change their tone;
Esteem both well assorted; and declare
The champions worthy of each other are.

LXXXII
When Phoebus wholly under water goes,
Charlemagne bids the warring pair divide;
And Bradamant (nor boots it to oppose)
Allots to youthful Leo as a bride.
Not there Rogero tarried to repose;
Nor loosed his armour, nor his helm untied:
On a small hackney, hurrying sore, he went
Where Leo him awaited in his tent.

LXXXIII
Twice in fraternal guise and oftener threw
Leo his arms about the cavalier;
And next his helmet from his head withdrew,
And kiss'd him on both cheeks with loving cheer.
"I would," he cried, "that thou wouldst ever do
By me what pleaseth thee; for thou wilt ne'er
Weary my love: at any call I lend
To thee myself and state; these friendly spend;

LXXXIV
"Nor see I recompense, which can repay
The mighty obligation that I owe;
Though of the garland I should disarray
My brows, and upon thee that gift bestow."
Rogero, on whom his sorrows press and prey,

Who loathes his life, immersed in that deep woe,
Little replies; the ensigns he had worn
Returns, and takes again his unicorn;

LXXXV
And showing himself spiritless and spent,
From thence as quickly as he could withdrew,
And from young Leo's to his lodgings went;
When it was midnight, armed himself anew,
Saddled his horse, and sallied from his tent;
(He takes no leave, and none his going view;)
And his Frontino to that road addrest,
Which seemed to please the goodly courser best.

LXXXVI
Now by straight way and now by crooked wound
Frontino, now by wood and wide champaign;
And all night with his rider paced that round,
Who never ceased a moment to complain:
He called on Death, and therein comfort found;
Since broke by him alone is stubborn pain;
Nor saw, save Death, what other power could close
The account of his insufferable woes.

LXXXVII
"Whereof should I complain," he said, "wo is me!
So of my every good at once forlorn?
Ah! if I will not bear this injury
Without revenge, against whom shall I turn?
For I, besides myself, none other see
That hath inflicted on me scathe and scorn.
Then I to take revenge for all the harm
Done to myself, against myself must arm.

LXXXVIII
"Yet was but to myself this injury done,
Myself to spare (because this touched but me)

I haply could, yet hardly could, be won;
Nay, I will say outright, I could not be.
Less can I be, since not to me alone,
But Bradamant, is done this injury;
Even if I could consent myself to spare,
It fits me not unvenged to leave that fair.

LXXXIX
"Then I the damsel will avenge, and die,
(Nor this disturbs me) whatsoe'er betide;
For, bating death, I know not aught, whereby
Defence against my grief can be supplied.
But I lament myself alone, that I
Before offending her, should not have died.
O happier Fortune! had I breathed my last
In Theodora's dungeon prisoned fast!

XC
"Though she had slain, had tortured me before
She slew, as prompted by her cruelty,
At least the hope would have remained in store
That I by Bradamant should pitied be:
But when she knows that I loved Leo more
Than her, that, of my own accord and free,
Myself of her, I for his good, deprive,
Dead will she rightly hate me or alive."

XCI
These words he said and many more, with sigh
And heavy sob withal accompanied,
And, when another sun illumed the sky,
Mid strange and gloomy woods himself espied;
And, for he desperate was and bent to die,
And he, as best he could, his death would hide;
This place to him seemed far removed from view,
And fitted for the deed that he would do.

XCII
He entered into that dark woodland, where
He thickest trees and most entangled spied:
But first Frontino was the warrior's care,
Whom he unharnessed wholly, and untied.
"O my Frontino, if thy merits rare
I could reward, thou little cause" (he cried)
"Shouldst have to envy him, so highly graced,
Who soared to heaven, and mid the stars was placed.

XCIII
"Nor Cillarus, nor Arion, was whilere
Worthier than thee, nor merited more praise;
Nor any other steed, whose name we hear
Sounded in Grecian or in Latin lays.
Was any such in other points thy peer,
None of them, well I know, the vaunt can raise;
That such high honour and such courtesy
Were upon him bestowed, as were on thee.

XCIV
"Since to the gentlest maid, of fairest dye,
And boldest that hath been, or evermore
Will be, thou wast so dear, she used to tie
Thy trappings, and to thee thy forage bore:
Dear wast thou to my lady-love: Ah! why
Call I her mine, since she is mine no more?
If I have given her to another lord,
Why turn I not upon myself this sword?"

XCV
If him these thoughts so harass and torment,
That bird and beast are softened by his cries;
(For, saving these, none hears the sad lament,
Nor sees the flood that trickles form his eyes)
You are not to believe that more content

The Lady Bradamant in Paris lies;
Who can no longer her delay excuse,
Nor Leo for her wedded lord refuse.

XCVI
Ere she herself to any consort tie,
Beside her own Rogero, she will fain
Do what so can be done; her word belie;
Anger friends, kindred, court, and Charlemagne;
And if she nothing else can do, will die,
By poison or her own good faulchion slain:
For not to live appears far lesser woe,
Than, living, her Rogero to forego.

XCVII
"Rogero mine, ah! wonder gone" (she cried)
"Art thou; and canst thou so far distant be,
Thou heardest not this royal edict cried,
A thing concealed from none, expecting thee?
Faster than thee would none have hither hied,
I wot, hadst thou known this; ah! wretched me!
How can I e'er in future think of aught,
Saving the worst that can by me be thought?

XCVIII
"How can it be, Rogero, thou alone
Hast read not what by all the world is read?
If thou hast read it not, nor hither flown,
How canst thou but a prisoner be, or dead?
But well I wot, that if the truth were known,
This Leo will for thee some snare have spread:
The traitor will have barred thy way, intent
Thou shouldst not him by better speed prevent.

XCIX
"From Charles I gained the promise, that to none
Less puissant than myself should I be given;

In the reliance thou wouldst be that one,
With whom I should in arms have vainly striven.
None I esteemed, excepting thee alone:
But well my rashness is rebuked by Heaven:
Since I by one am taken in this wise
Unfamed through life for any fair emprize.

C
"If I am held as taken, since the knight
I had not force to take nor yet to slay;
A thing that is not, in my judgment, right;
Nor I to Charles's sentence will give way,
I know that I shall be esteemed as light,
If what I lately said, I now unsay;
But of those many ladies that have past
For light, I am not, I, the first or last.

CI
"Enough I to my lover faith maintain,
And, firmer than a rock, am still found true!
And far herein surpass the female train,
That were in olden days, or are in new!
Nor, if they me as fickle shall arraign,
Care I, so good from fickleness ensue;
Though I am lighter than a leaf be said,
So I be forced not with that Greek no wed."

CII
These things and more beside the damsel bright
('Twixt which oft sobs and tears were interposed),
Ceased not to utter through the livelong night
Which upon that unhappy day had closed.
But, when within Cimmeria's caverned height
Nocturnus with his troops of shades reposed,
Heaven, which eternally had willed the maid
Should be Rogero's consort, brought him aid:

CIII
This moves the haught Marphisa, when 'tis morn,
To appear before the king; to whom that maid
Saith, to the Child, her brother, mighty scorn
Was done; nor should he be so ill appaid,
That from him should his plighted wife be torn;
And nought thereof unto the warrior said;
And on whoever lists she will in strife
Prove Bradamant to be Rogero's wife;

CIV
And this, before all others, will prove true
On her, if to deny it she will dare;
For she had to Rogero, in her view,
Spoken those words, which they that marry swear;
And with all ceremony wont and due
So was the contract sealed between the pair,
They were no longer free; nor could forsake
The one the other, other spouse to take.

CV
Whether Marphisa true or falsely spake,
I well believe that, rather with intent
Young Leo's purpose, right or wrong, to break,
Than tell the truth, she speaks; and with consent
Of Bradamant doth that avowal make:
For to exclude the hated Leo bent,
And of Rogero to be repossest,
This she believes her shortest way and best.

CVI
Sorely by this disturbed, King Charlemagne
Bade Bradamant be called, and to her told
That which the proud Marphisa would maintain;
And Aymon present in the press behold!
— Bradamant drops her head, nor treats as vain,

Nor vouches what avows that virgin bold,
In such confusion, they may well believe
That fierce Marphisa speaks not to deceive.

CVII
Joy good Orlando and joy Rinaldo show,
Who view in valorous Marphisa's plea
A cause the alliance shall no further go,
Which sealed already Leo deemed to be;
And yet, in spite of stubborn Aymon's no,
Bradamant shall Rogero's consort be;
And they may, without strife, without despite
Done to Duke Aymon's, give her to the knight.

CVIII
For if such words have pass'd between the twain,
Fast is the knot and cannot be untied;
They what they vowed more fairly will obtain,
And without further strife are these affied.
"This is a plot, a plot devised in vain;
And ye deceive yourselves (Duke Aymon cried)
For, were the story true which ye have feigned,
Believe not therefore that your cause is gained.

CIX
"For granting what I will not yet allow,
And what I to believe as yet demur;
That weakly to Rogero so her vow
Was plighted, as Rogero's was to her;
Where was the contract made, and when and how?
More clearly this to me must ye aver.
Either it was not so, I am advised;
Or was before Rogero was baptized.

CX
"But if it were before the youthful knight
A Christian was, I will not heed it, I;

For 'twixt a faithful and a paynim wight,
I deem that nought avails the marriage-tie.
For this not vainly in the doubtful fight
Should Constantine's fair son have risked to die;
Nor Charlemagne for this, our sovereign lord
Will forfeit, I believe, his plighted word.

CXI
"What now you say you should before have said,
While yet the matter was unbroke, and ere
Charles at my daughter's prayer that edict made
Which has drawn Leo to the combat here."
Orlando and Rinaldo were gainsayed
So before royal Charles by Clermont's peer;
And equal Charlemagne heard either side,
But neither would for this nor that decide.

CXII
As in the southern or the northern breeze
The greenwood murmurs; and as on the shore,
When Aeolus with the god that rules the seas
Is wroth, the hoarse and hollow breakers roar,
So a loud rumour of this strife, that flees
Through France, and spreads and circles evermore,
Affords such matter to rehearse and hear,
That nought beside is bruised far or near.

CXIII
These with Rogero, those with Leo side;
But the most numerous are Rogero's friends,
Who against Aymon, ten to one, divide.
Good Charlemagne to neither party bends;
But wills that cause shall be by justice tried,
And to his parliament the matter sends.
Marphisa, now the bridal was deferred,
Appeared anew, and other question stirred;

CXIV
And said, "In that anther cannot have
Bradamant, while my brother is alive,
Let Leo, if the gentle maid he crave,
His foe in listed fight of life deprive;
And he, that sends the other to his grave,
Freed from his rival, with the lady wive."
Forthwith this challenge, as erewhile the rest,
To Leo was declared at Charles' behest.

CXV
Leo who if he had the cavalier
Of the unicorn, believed he from his foe
Was safe; and thought no peril would appear
Too hard a feat for him; and knew not how
Thence into solitary woods and drear
That warrior had been hurried by his woe;
Him gone for little time and for disport
Believed, and took his line in evil sort.

CXVI
This shortly Leo was condemned to rue:
For he, on whom too fondly he relied,
Nor on that day nor on the following two
Appeared, nor news of him were signified;
And combat with Rogero was, he knew,
Unsafe, unless that knight was on his side:
So sent, to eschew the threatened scathe and scorn,
To seek the warrior of the unicorn.

CXVII
Through city, and through hamlet, and through town,
He sends to seek Rogero, far and near:
And not content with this, himself is gone
In person, on his steed, to find the peer.
But of the missing warrior tidings none

Nor he nor any of the Court would hear
But for Melissa: I for other verse
Reserve myself, her doings to rehearse.

CANTO 46

ARGUMENT
After long search for good Rogero made,
Him Leon finds, and yields to him his prize:
Informed of all — already with that maid
He wives; already in her bosom lies:
When thither he that Sarza's sceptre swayed
To infect such bliss with impious venom hies,
But falls in combat; and, blaspheming loud,
To Acheron descends his spirit proud.

I
I, if my chart deceives me not, shall now
In little time behold the neighbouring shore;
So hope withal to pay my promised vow
To one, so long my guide through that wide roar
Of waters, where I feared, with troubled brow,
To scathe my bark or wander evermore.
But now, methinks — yea, now I see the land;
I see the friendly port its arms expand.

II
A burst of joy, like thunder to my ear,
Rumbles along the sea and rends the sky.
I chiming bells, I shrilling trumpets hear,
Confounded with the people's cheerful cry;
And now their forms, that swarm on either pier
Of the thick-crowded harbour, I descry.
All seem rejoiced my task is smoothly done,
And I so long a course have safely run.

III
What beauteous dames and sage, here welcome me!
With them what cavaliers the shore adorn!
What friends! to whom I owe eternity
Of thanks for their delight at my return.
Mamma, Ginevra, with the rest I see,
Correggio's seed, on the harbour's furthest horn.
Veronica de Gambara is here,
To Phoebus and the Aonian choir so dear.

IV
With Julia, a new Ginevra is in sight,
Another offset from the selfsame tree;
Hippolita Sforza, and Trivultia bright,
Bred in the sacred cavern, I with thee
Emilia Pia, and thee, Margherite,
Angela Borgia, Graziosa, see,
And fair Richarda d'Este, Lo! the twain,
Blanche and Diana, with their sister train!

V
Beauteous, but wiser and more chaste than fair,
I Barbara Turca, linked with Laura, know:
Nor beams the sun upon a better pair
'Twixt Ind and where the Moorish waters flow.
Behold Ginevra! that rich gem and rare
Which gilds the house of Malatesta so,
That never worthier or more honoured thing
Adorned the dome of Keysar or of king.

VI
If she had dwelt in Rimini of yore,
What time, from conquered Gaul returning home,
Julius stood fearing on the river-shore,
To ford the stream and make a foe of Rome,
He every banner would have bowed before

That dame, discharged his trophies, and such doom,
Such pact would have received as liked her best;
And haply ne'er had Freedom been opprest.

VII
The consort of my lord of Bozzolo
Behold! the mother, sisters, cousinhood;
Them of Torello, Bentivoglio,
Pallavigini's and Visconti's brood!
Lo! she to whom all living dames forego
The palm, and all of Grecian, Latin blood,
Or barbarous, all that ever were, whose name
For grace and beauty most is noised by Fame;

VIII
Julia Gonzaga, she that wheresoe'er
She moves, where'er she turns her lucid eyes,
Not only is in charms without a peer,
But seems a goddess lighted from the skies:
With her is paired her brother's wife, who ne'er
Swerved from her plighted faith — aye good and wise —
Because ill Fortune bore her long despite;
Lo! Arragonian Anna, Vasto's light!

IX
Anne gentle, courteous, and as sage as fair,
Temple of Love and Truth and Chastity:
With her, her sister dims all beauty, where
Her radiance shines. Lo! one that hath set free
Her conquering lord from Orcus' dark repair,
And him in spite of death and destiny
(Beyond all modern instance) raised on high,
To shine with endless glory in the sky.

X
My ladies of Ferrara, those of gay
Urbino's court are here; and I descry

Mantua's dames, and all that fair array
Which Lombardy and Tuscan town supply.
The cavalier amid that band, whom they
So honour, unless dazzled is mine eye
By those fair faces, is the shining light
Of his Arezzo, and Accolti hight.

XI
Adorned with scarlet hat, and scarlet pall,
His nephew Benedict, lo! there I see;
With him Campeggio and Mantua's cardinal;
Glory and light of the consistory;
And (if I dote not) mark how one and all
In face and gesture show such mighty glee
At my return, no easy task 'twould seem
So vast an obligation to redeem.

XII
With them Lactantius is, Claude Ptolemy,
Trissino, Pansa, and Capilupi mine,
Latino Giovenal, it seems to me;
Sasso, and Molza, and Florian hight Montine;
With him, by whom through shorter pathway we
Are led to the Ascraean font divine,
Julio Camillo; and meseems that I
Berna, and Sanga, and Flaminio spy.

XIII
Lo! Alexander of Farnese, and O
Learned company that follows in his train!
Phaedro, Cappella, Maddalen', Portio,
Surnamed the Bolognese, the Volterrane.
Blosio, Pierio, Vida, famed for flow
Of lofty eloquence of exhaustless vein;
Mussuro, Lascari, and Navagero,
And Andrew Maro, and the monk Severo.

XIV

Lo! two more Alexanders! of the tree
Of the Orologi one, and one Guarino:
Mario d' Olvito, and of royalty
That scourge, divine Pietro Aretino.
I two Girolamos amid them see,
Of Veritade and the Cittadino;
See the Mainardo, the Leoniceno,
Panizzato, Celio, and Teocreno.

XV

Bernardo Capel, Peter Bembo here
I see, through whom our pure, sweet idiom rose,
And who, of vulgar usage winnowed clear,
Its genuine form in his example shows.
Behold an Obyson, that in his rear
Admires the pains which he so well bestows.
I Fracastoro, Bevezzano note,
And Tryphon Gabriel, Tasso more remote.

XVI

Upon me Nicholas Tiepoli
And Nicholas Ammanio fix their eyes;
With Anthony Fulgoso, who to spy
My boat near land shows pleasure and surprise.
There, from those dames apart, my Valery
Stands with Barignan, haply to devise
With him how, evermore by woman harmed,
By her he shall not evermore be charmed.

XVII

Of high and superhuman genius, tied
By love and blood, lo! Pico and Pio true;
He that approaches at the kinsmen's side,
— So honoured by the best — I never knew;
But, if by certain tokens signified,

He is the man I so desire to view,
That Sannazaro, who persuades the nine
To leave their fountain for the foaming brine.

XVIII
Diligent, faithful secretary, lo!
The learned Pistophilus, mine Angiar here,
And the Acciajuoli their joint pleasure show
That for my bark there is no further fear.
There I my kinsman Malaguzzo know;
And mighty hope from Adoardo hear,
That these my nest-notes shall by friendly wind
Be blown from Calpe's rock to furthest Ind.

XIX
Joys Victor Fausto; Tancred joys to view
My sail; and with them joy a hundred more.
Women and men I see, a mingled crew,
At my return rejoicing, crowd the shore.
Then, since the wind blows fair, nor much to do
Remains, let me my course delay no more;
And turning to Melissa, in what way
She rescued good Rogero let me say.

XX
Much bent was this Melissa (as I know
I many times have said to you whilere)
That Bradamant in wedlock should bestow
Her hand upon the youthful cavalier;
And so at heart had either's weal and woe,
That she from hour to hour of them would hear:
Hence ever on that quest she spirits sent,
One still returning as the other went.

XXI
A prey to deep and stubborn grief, reclined
Mid gloomy shades Rogero they descried;

Firm not to swallow food of any kind,
Nor from that purpose to be turned aside;
And so to die of hunger he designed:
But weird Melissa speedy aid supplied;
Who took a road, from home forth issuing, where
She met the Grecian emperor's youthful heir;

XXII
Leo that, one by one, dispatched his train
Of followers, far and wide, through every bourn,
And afterwards, in person went in vain,
To find the warrior of the unicorn.
The wise enchantress, that will sell and rein,
Had on that day equipt a demon, borne
By him, in likeness of a hackney horse,
Constantine's son encountered in her course.

XXIII
"If such as your ingenuous mien" (she cried
To Leo) "is your soul's nobility,
And corresponding with your fair outside
Your inward goodness and your courtesy,
Some help, some comfort, sir, for one provide
In whom the best of living knights we see;
Who, save ye help and comfort quickly lend,
Is little distant from his latter end.

XXIV
"The best of knights will die of all, who don,
Or e'er donned sword and buckler, the most fair
And gentle of all warriors that are gone,
Or who throughout the world yet living are,
And simply for a courteous deed, if none
Shall comfort to the youthful sufferer bear.
Then come, sir, for the love of Heaven, and try
If any counsel succour may supply."

XXV

It suddenly came into Leo's mind
The knight of whom she parlayed was that same,
Whom throughout all the land he sought to find,
And seeking whom, he now in person came.
So that obeying her that would persuade
Such pious work, he spurred behind the dame;
Who thither led (nor tedious was the way)
Where nigh reduced to death the stripling lay.

XXVI

They found Rogero fasting from all food
For three long days, so broken down; with pain
The knight could but upon his feet have stood,
To fall, albeit unpushed, to ground again.
With helm on head, and with his faulchion good
Begirt, he lay reclined in plate and chain.
A pillow of his buckler had he made,
Where the white unicorn was seen pourtraid.

XXVII

There thinking what an injury he had done
To his lady love — how ingrate, how untrue
To her had been — not simple grief alone
O'erwhelmed him, to such height his fury grew,
He bit his hands and lips; while pouring down
His cheeks, the tears unceasing ran, and through
The passion that so wrapt his troubled sprite,
Nor Leo nor Melissa heard the knight.

XXVIII

Nor therefore interrupts he his lament,
Nor checks his sighs, nor checks his trickling tears.
Young Leo halts, to hear his speech intent;
Lights from his courser, and towards him steers:
He knows that of the sorrows which torment

Love is the cause; but yet from nought appears
Who is the person that such grief hath bred;
For by Rogero this remains unsaid.

XXIX
Approaching nearer and yet nearer, now
He fronts the weeping warrior, face to face,
Greets with a brother's love, and stooping low,
His neck encircles with a fast embrace.
By the lamenting Child I know not how
Is liked his sudden presence in that place;
Who fears annoy or trouble at his hand;
And lest he should his wish for death withstand.

XXX
Him with the sweetest words young Leo plied,
And with the warmest love that he could show,
"Let it not irk thee," to the Child he cried,
"To tell the cause from whence thy sorrows flow;
For few such desperate evils man betide,
But that there is deliverance from his woe,
So that the cause be known; nor he bereft
Of hope should ever be, so life be left.

XXXI
"Much grieve I thou wouldst hide thyself from me,
That known me for thy faithful friend and true;
Not only now I am so bound to thee,
That I the knot can never more undo;
But even from the beginning, when to be
Thy deadly foeman I had reason due.
Hope then that I will succour thee with pelf,
With friends, with following, and with life itself.

XXXII
"Nor shun to me thy sorrow to explain,
And I beseech thee leave to me to try

If wealth avail to free thee from thy pain,
Art, cunning, open force, or flattery,
If my assistance is employed in vain,
The last relief remains to thee to die:
But be content awhile this deed to shun
Till all that thou canst do shall first be done."

XXXIII
He said; and with such forceful prayer appealed;
So gently and benignly soothed his moan;
That good Rogero could not choose but yield,
Whose heart was not of iron or of stone;
Who deemed, unless he now his lips unsealed,
He should a foul discourteous deed have done.
He fain would have replied, but made assay
Yet twice or thrice, ere words could find their way.

XXXIV
"My lord, when known for what I am (and me
Now shalt thou know)," he made at last reply,
"I wot thou, like myself, content wilt be,
And haply more content, that I should die.
Know me for him so hated once by thee;
Rogero who repaid that hate am I;
And now 'tis many days since with intent
Of putting thee to death from court I went.

XXXV
"Because I would not see my promised bride
Borne off by thee; in that Duke Aymon's love
And favour was engaged upon thy side.
But, for man purposes, and God above
Disposes, thy great courtesy, well tried
In a sore need, my fixt resolve did move.
Nor only I renounced the hate I bore,
But purposed to be thine for evermore.

XXXVI
"What time I as Rogero was unknown,
Thou madest suit I would obtain for thee
The Lady Bradamant; which was all one
As to demand my heart and soul from me.
Whether thy wish I rather than mine own
Sought to content, thou hast been made to see.
Thine is the lady; her in peace possess;
Far more than mine I prize thy happiness.

XXXVII
"Content thee, that deprived of her, as well
I should myself of worthless life deprive;
For better I without a soul could dwell
Than without Bradamant remain alive.
And never while these veins with life-blood swell
Canst thou with her legitimately wive:
For vows erewhile have been between us said;
Nor she at once can with two husbands wed."

XXXVIII
So filled is gentle Leo with amaze
When he the stranger for Rogero knows,
With lips and brow unmoved, with stedfast gaze
And rooted feet, he like a statue shows;
Like statue more than man, which votaries raise
In churches, for acquittance of their vows.
He deems that courtesy of so high a strain
Was never done nor will be done again;

XXXIX
And that he him doth for Rogero know
Not only that goodwill he bore whilere
Abates not, but augments his kindness so,
That no less grieves the Grecian cavalier
Than good Rogero for Rogero's woe.
For this, as well as that he will appear

Deservedly an emperor's son — although
In other things outdone — he will not be
Defeated in the race of courtesy;

XL
And says, "That day my host was overthrown,
Rogero, by thy wond'rous valour, though
I had thee at despite, if I had known
Thou was Rogero, as I know it now,
So me thy virtue would have made thine own,
As then it made me, knowing not my foe;
So hatred from my bosom would have chased,
And with my present love have straight replaced.

XLI
"That I Rogero hated, ere I knew
Thou was Rogero, will I not deny.
But think not that I further would pursue
The hatred that I bore thee; and had I,
When thee I from thy darksome dungeon drew,
Descried the truth, as this I now descry,
Such treatment shouldst thou then have had, as thou
Shalt have from me, to thine advantage, now;

XLII
"And if I willingly had done so then,
When not, as I am now, obliged to thee;
How much more gladly should I now; and when,
Not doing so, I should with reason be
Deemed most ungrateful amid ingrate men;
Since thou foregoest thine every good for me!
But I to thee restore thy gift, and, more
Glady than I received it, this restore.

XLIII
"The damsel more to thee than me is due;
And though for her deserts I hold her dear,

If that fair prize some happier mortal drew,
I think not I my vital thread should shear:
Nor would I by thy death be free to woo:
That from the hallowed bands of wedlock clear
Wherein the lady hath to thee been tied,
I might possess her as my lawful bride.

XLIV
"Not only Bradamant would I forego,
But whatsoe'er I in the world possess;
And rather forfeit life than ever know
That grief, through me, should such a knight oppress.
To me is thy distrust great cause of woe,
That since thou couldst dispose of me no less
Than of thyself, thou — rather than apply
To me for succour — wouldst of sorrow die."

XLV
These words he spake, and more to that intent,
Too tedious in these verses to recite;
Refuting evermore such argument
As might be used in answer by the knight:
Who said, at last, "I yield, and am content
To live; but how can I ever requite
The obligation, which by me is owed
To thee that twice hast life on me bestowed?"

XLVI
Melissa generous wine and goodly cheer
Thither bade carry, in a thought obeyed;
And comforted the mourning cavalier,
Who would have sunk without her friendly aid.
Meanwhile the sound of steeds Frontino's ear
Had reached, and thither had he quickly made:
Him Leo's squires at his commandment caught,
And saddled, and to good Rogero brought;

XLVII
Who, though by Leo helped, with much ado
And labour sore the gentle courser scaled.
So wasted was the vigour which some few
Short days before, in fighting field, availed
To overthrow a banded host, and do
The deeds he did, in cheating armour mailed.
Departing thence, ere they had measured more
Than half a league, they reached an abbey hoar:

XLVIII
Wherein what of that day was yet unworn
They past, the morrow, and succeeding day;
Until the warrior of the unicorn
His vigour had recruited by the stay.
He, Leo, and Melissa then return
To Charles's royal residence; where lay
An embassy, arrived the eve before,
Which from the Bulgars' land a message bore.

XLIX
Since they that had for king proclaimed the knight
Besought Rogero thither to repair
Through these their envoys deeming they would light
On him in Charles's court, where they should swear
Fidelity, and yield to him his right;
And he from them the crown receive and wear.
Rogero's squire who served this band to steer
Has published tidings of the cavalier.

L
He of the fight has told which at Belgrade
Erewhile Rogero for the Bulgars won;
How Leo and his sire were overlaid,
And all their army slaughtered and undone;
Wherefore the Bulgars him their king had made;

Their royal line excluding from the throne:
Then how Ungiardo took the warrior brave,
And him to cruel Theodora gave.

LI
He speaks with that of certain news, which say
How good Rogero's jailer was found dead,
The prison broke and prisoner away:
Of what became of him was nothing said.
— Towards the city by a secret way
(Nor was his visage seen) Rogero sped.
He, on the following morning, and his friend,
Leo, to Charles's court together wend.

LII
To Charles' court he wends; the bird he bore
Of gold with its two heads — of crimson hue
Its field — and that same vest and ensigns wore,
As was erewhile devised between the two;
And such as in the listed fight before
His bruised and battered armour was in shew.
So that they quickly knew the cavalier
From him that strove with Bradamant whilere.

LIII
In royal ornaments and costly gown,
Unarmed, beside him doth young Leo fare.
A worthy following and of high renown
Before, behind him, and about him are.
He bowed to Charlemagne, who from his throne
Had risen to do honour to the pair:
Then holding still Rogero by the hand,
So spake, while all that warrior closely scanned.

LIV
"Behold the champion good, that did maintain
From dawn till fall of day the furious fight;

And since by Bradamant nor taken, slain,
Nor forced beyond the barriers was the knight,
He is assured his victory is plain,
Dread sir, if he your edict reads aright;
And he hath won the lady for his wife:
So comes to claim the guerdon of the strife.

LV
"Besides that by your edict's tenor none
But him can to the damsel lift his eyes,
— Is she deserved by deeds of valour done,
What other is so worthy of the prize?
— Should she by him that loves her best be won,
None passes him, nor with the warrior vies;
And he is here to fight against all foes
That would in arms his right in her oppose."

LVI
King Charlemagne and all his peerage stand
Amazed, who well believed the Grecian peer
With Bradamant had striven with lifted brand
In fight, and not that unknown cavalier.
Marphisa, thither borne amid the band,
That crowded round the royal chair to hear,
Hardly till Leo made an ending staid;
Then prest before the listening troop, and said:

LVII
"Since here Rogero is not, to contest
The bride's possession with the stranger knight,
Lest he, as undefended, be opprest,
And forfeit so without dispute his right,
On his behalf I undertake this quest,
— His sister I — against whatever wight
Shall here assert a claim to Bradamant,
Or more desert than good Rogero vaunt."

LVIII
She spake this with such anger and disdain,
Many surmised amid the assistant crew,
That, without waiting leave from Charlemagne,
What she had threatened she forthwith would do.
No longer Leo deemed it time to feign;
And from Rogero's head the helm withdrew;
And to Marphisa, "For himself to speak,
Behold him here and ready!" cried the Greek.

LIX
As looked old Aegeus at the accursed board,
Seeing it was his son to whom — so willed
His wicked consort — that Athenian lord
Had given the juice from deadly drugs distilled;
Whom he, if he had recognized his sword
Though but a little later, would have killed;
So looked Marphisa when, disclosed to view,
She in the stranger knight Rogero knew;

LX
And ran forthwith to clip the cavalier;
Nor could unclasp her arms: with loving show
Charlemagne, Roland, and Rinaldo, here
And there, fix friendly kisses on his brow.
Nor him Sir Dudon, nor Sir Olivier,
Nor King Sobrino can caress enow:
Nor paladin nor peer, amid the crew,
Wearies of welcoming that warrior true.

LXI
Leo, who well can play the spokesman, now
That warlike band hath ceased to clip the knight,
Tells before Charles and all that audience, how
Rogero's daring, how Rogero's might,
— Albeit to his good squadron's scathe and woe —

Which at Belgrade he witnessed in that fight,
So moved him that they overweighed all harms
Inflicted on him by the warrior's arms.

LXII
So that to her Rogero being brought,
Who would all havoc of the youth have made,
He setting all his family at nought,
Had out of durance vile the knight conveyed;
And how Rogero, that the rescue wrought
By Leo might be worthily repaid,
Did that high courtesy; which can by none,
That ever were or e'er will be, outdone;

LXIII
And he from point to point continuing, said
That which Rogero had for him achieved;
And after, how by sorrow sore bested,
In that to leave his cherished wife he grieved,
He had resolved to die, and, almost dead,
Was only by his timely aid relieved;
And this he told so movingly, no eye
Remained, amid those martial many, dry.

LXIV
So efficaciously he after prayed
To the obstinate Duke Aymon, not alone
The stubborn sire of Bradamant he swayed,
And to forego his settled purpose won;
But that proud lord in person did persuade
To beg Rogero's pardon, and his son
And son-in-law to be beseech the knight;
And thus to him his Bradamant was plight.

LXV
To her, where, of her feeble life in doubt,
She in a secret chamber made lament,

Through many a messenger, with joyful shout
And mickle haste, the happy tidings went.
Hence the warm blood, that stagnated about
Her heart, by her first sorrow thither sent,
Ebbed at this notice in so full a tide,
Well nigh for sudden joy the damsel died.

LXVI
Of all her vigour is she so foregone,
She cannot on her feeble feet rely:
Yet what her force must needs to you be known,
And what the damsel's magnanimity.
None doomed to prison, wheel or halter, none
Condemned some other evil death to die,
About whose brows the sable band is tied,
Rejoices more to hear his pardon cried.

LXVII
Joys Clermont's, joys Mongrana's noble house,
Those kindred branches that fresh know to view.
With equal grief Count Anselm overflows,
Gan, Falcon, Gini and Ginami's crew:
Yet they meanwhile beneath contented brows
Conceal the dark and envious thoughts they brew.
As the fox waits the motions of the hare,
They wait their time for vengeance, and forbear.

LXVIII
Besides that oftentimes before the rage
Of Roland and Rinaldo on them fell,
Though they were calmed by Charles's counsel sage,
And common danger from the infidel,
They had new cause for grief in Bertolage
Slain by their foemen and Sir Pinnabel:
But they concealed their hatred, and endured
Those griefs, as of the matter ill assured.

LXIX

Those envoys of the Bulgars that had made
For Charles's court (as hath erewhile been shown),
Hoping to find the knight, whose shield pourtrayed
The unicorn, elected to their throne,
Bless the good fortune which their hope repayed,
Seeing that valiant warrior, and fall down
Before his feet, and him in humble speech
Again to seek their Bulgary beseech;

LXX

Where kept for him in Adrianople are
The sceptre and the crown, his royal due:
But let him succour to his kingdom bear;
For — to their further scathe — advices shew
Constantine doth a mighty host prepare,
And thitherward in person moves anew;
And they — of their elected king possest —
Hope the Greek empire from his hands to wrest.

LXXI

He accepts the realm, by their entreaties won;
And, to afford them aid against their foes,
Will went to Bulgary when three months are done;
Save Fortune otherwise of him dispose.
When this is heard by that Greek emperor's son,
He bids Rogero on his faith repose;
For since by him the Bulgar's realm is swayed,
Peace between them and Constantine is made;

LXXII

Nor needeth he depart in haste, to guide
His Bulgar bands against the Grecian foe;
For all that he had conquered far and wide,
He will persuade his father to forego.
None of the virtues, in Rogero spied,

Moved Bradamant's ambitious mother so,
Or so to endear her son-in-law availed,
As hearing now that son a sovereign hailed.

LXXIII
The rich and royal nuptials they prepare
As well befits him, by whose care 'tis done,
'Tis done by Charles; and with such cost and care
As if 'twere for a daughter of his own.
For such the merits of the damsel are,
And such had all her martial kindred shown,
Charles would not think he should exceed due measure
If spent for her was half his kingdom's treasure.

LXXIV
He a free court bids cry; whither his way
Securely every one that wills may wend;
And offers open lists till the ninth day
To whosoever would in arms contend;
And bids build bowers afield, and interlay
Green boughs therein, and flowers and foliage blend;
And make those bowers so gay with silk and gold,
No fairer place this ample world doth hold.

LXXV
Guested within fair Paris cannot be
The countless foreign bands that thither fare;
Who, rich and poor, of high and low degree,
And Greeks and Latins and Barbarians are.
There is no end of lord and embassy
That thither from all ends of earth repair;
All lodged conveniently, to their content,
Beneath pavilion, booth, and bower and tent.

LXXVI
The weird Melissa against the coming night
With singular and matchless ornament

Had for that pair the nuptial chamber dight;
Whereon long time before she had been bent:
Long time before desirous of the rite
Had been that dame, presageful of the event;
Presageful of futurity, she knew
What goodly fruit should from their stems ensue.

LXXVII
She had prepared the genial, fruitful bed,
Under a broad pavilion; one more rich,
Adorned, and jocund, never overhead
(Did this for peace or war its master pitch)
Was in the world, before or after, spread;
And this from Thracian strand had borne the witch.
The costly prize from Constantine she bore,
Who for disport was tented on that shore.

LXXVIII
She with young Leo's leave, or rather so
The Grecian's admiration to obtain,
And a rare token of that art to show,
Which on Hell's mighty dragon puts the rein,
And at her pleasure rules that impious foe
Of Heaven, together with his evil train,
Bade demons the pavilion through mid air
To Paris from Constantinople bear.

LXXIX
From Constantine that lay therein, who swayed
The Grecian empire's sceptre, at mid-day
This with its cordage, shaft whereby 'twas stayed,
And all within and out, she bore away;
And of the costly tent, through air conveyed,
For young Rogero made a lodging gay.
The bridal ended, this her demon crew
Thither, from whence 'twas brought, conveyed anew.

LXXX

Two thousand tedious years were nigh complete,
Since this fair work was fashioned by the lore
Of Trojan maid, warmed with prophetic heat;
Who, 'mid long labour and 'mid vigil sore,
With her own fingers all the storied sheet
Of the pavilion had embroidered o'er;
Cassandra hight; that maid to Hector brave
(Her brother he) this costly present gave.

LXXXI

The curtiest cavalier, the kindliest shoot
That ever from her brother's stock should grow
(Albeit she knew far distant from its root,
With many a branch between, should be that bough)
In silk and gold upon the gorgeous suit
Of hangings had she wrought in goodly show.
Much prized that gift, while living, Priam's son,
For its rare work and her by whom 'twas done.

LXXXII

But when by treachery perished Priam's heir,
And Greeks the Trojans scathed in cruel sort,
When her gates opened by false Sinon were,
And direr ill was done than tales report,
This plunder fell to Menelaus' share,
Wherewith to Egypt's land he made resort;
There left it to King Proteus, Egypt's lord,
In ransom for his prisoned wife restored;

LXXXIII

She Helen hight: her Menelaus to free,
To Proteus the pavilion gave away;
Which, passing through the line of Ptolemy,
To Cleopatra fell; from her in fray
Agrippa's band on the Leucadian sea

Bore off the treasure, amid other prey.
Augustus and Tiberius heired the loom,
Kept till the time of Constantine in Rome:

LXXXIV
That Constantine, whom thou shall ever rue
Fair Italy, while the heavens above are rolled.
Constantine to Byzantium, when he grew
Weary of Tyber, bore the tent of old.
Melissa from his namesake this withdrew,
Its pole of ivory and its cord of gold,
And all its cloth with beauteous figures fraught;
Fairer Apelles' pencil never wrought.

LXXXV
Here the three Graces in gay vesture gowned
Assisted the delivery of a queen.
Not in four ages in this earthly round
Was ever born a boy so fair of mien.
Jove, Venus, Mars, and Mercury renowned
For fluent speech, about the child are seen:
Him have they strewed, and stew with heaven's perfume,
Ambrosial odours and aetherial bloom.

LXXXVI
Hippolytus a little label said,
Inscribed upon the baby's swaddling clothes.
By the hand him Fortune leads in age more staid;
And Valour as a guide before him goes.
An unknown band in sweeping vest arraid,
With long descending locks, the tapestry shows,
Deputed by Corvinus to desire
The tender infant from his princely sire.

LXXXVII
He reverently parts from Hercules' side,
From her, his lady mother, Eleanor;

And to the Danube wends; where far and wide
They meet the boy, and as a god adore.
The prudent king of Hungary is descried,
Who does due honour to his ripened lore,
In yet unripe, yea, raw and tender years,
And ranks the stripling above all his peers.

LXXXVIII
One is there that in his green age and new
Places Strigonia's crozier in his hand.
Him ever at Corvinus' side we view;
Whether he doth in court or camp command,
Whether against the Turk, or German crew
The puissant monarch leads his martial band,
Watchful Hippolytus is at his side,
And gathers virtue from his generous guide.

LXXXIX
There is it seen, how he his blooming age
Divides mid arts and wholesome discipline:
The secret spirit of the ancient page
There Fuscus well instructs him to divine:
"This must thou shun, that follow" — seems the sage
To say — "if thou immortally wouldst shine."
Fashioned withal with so much skill and care
By her who wrought that work, their gestures were.

XC
A cardinal he next is seen, though young
In years, at council in the Vatican;
Where for deep wisdom graced by eloquent tongue,
With wonder him the assembled conclave scan.
"What will he be" — they seem to say among
Themselves — "when he is ripened into man?
Oh! if on him St. Peter's mantle fall,
What a blest aera! what a happy call!"

XCI
That brave youth's liberal pastimes are designed
In other place; on Alpine mountain hoar
Here he affronts the bear of rugged kind;
And there in rushy bottom bays the boar:
Now on his jennet he outgoes the wind,
And drives some goat or gallant hind before;
Which falls o'ertaken on the dusty plain,
By his descending faulchion cleft in twain.

XCII
He is descried, amid a fair array
Of poets and philosophers elsewhere
This pricks for him the wandering planets' way;
These earth, these heaven for his instruction square.
Some chant sad elegies, some verses gay
Lays lyric or heroic; singers there
He with rich music hears; nor moves a pace
But what in every step is sovereign grace.

XCIII
The first part of the storied walls pourtraied
That noble prince's gentle infancy.
Cassandra all beside had overlaid
With fears of justice, prudence, modesty,
Valour, and that fifty virtue, which hath made
With those fair sisters closest amity;
I speak of her that gives and that bestows.
With all these virtues gilt, the stripling glows.

XCIV
In this part is the princely youth espied
With that unhappy duke, the Insubri's head;
In peace they sit in council at his side,
Together armed, the serpent-banner spread.
The youth by one unchanging faith is tied

To him for ever, well or ill bested;
His followers still in flight before the foe,
His guide in peril, his support in woe.

XCV
Him in another quarter you descry,
For his Ferrara and her duke in fear,
Who by strange proofs doth sift, and certify
To his just brother, vouched by tokens clear,
The close device of that ill treachery,
Hatched by those kinsmen whom he held most dear;
Hence justly he becomes that title's heir,
Which Rome yet free bade righteous Tully bear.

XCVI
Elsewhere in martial panoply he shone,
Hasting to help the church with lifted blade;
With scanty and tumultuous levy gone
Against well-ordered host in arms arraid:
And lo! the coming of that chief alone
Affords the priestly band such present aid,
Extinguished are the fires before they spread.
He came, he saw, he conquered, may be said.

XCVII
Elsewhere he stands upon his native strand,
Fighting against the mightiest armament,
That whensoever against Argive land,
Or Turkish, from Venetian harbour went;
Scatters and overthrows the hostile band,
And — spoil and prisoners to his brother sent —
Nothing reserves save that unfading bay;
The only prize he cannot give away.

XCVIII
Upon those figures gazed the courtly crew,
But read no meaning in the storied wall:

Because there was not any one to shew
That these were things hereafter to befall.
Those fair and quaintly fashioned forms they view
With pleasure, and peruse the scrolls withal:
But Bradamant, to whom the whole was known,
By wise Melissa taught, rejoiced alone.

XCIX
Though not instructed in that history
Like gentle Bradamant, the affianced knight
Remembers how amid his progeny
Atlantes often praised this Hippolyte.
— Who faithfully could verse such courtesy,
As Charlemagne vouchsafed to every wight?
With various games that solemn feast was cheered,
And charged with viands aye the board appeared.

C
Who is a valiant knight, is here descried;
For daily broke a thousand lances lay:
Singly to combat or in troops they ride;
On horseback or afoot, they mix in fray.
Worthiest of all Rogero is espied,
Who always conquers, jousting night and day;
And so, in wrestling, dance, and every deed,
Still from its rivals bears away the meed.

CI
On the last day, when at their festive cheer
Was seated solemnly the assembled band,
Where at Charles' left was placed the wedded peer,
And Bradamant upon his better hand,
Across the fields an armed cavalier,
Of semblance haughty, and of stature grand,
Was seen to ride towards the royal table;
Himself and courser wholly clothed in sable.

CII
The King of Argier he; that for the scorn
Received from her, when on the bridge he fell,
Never to clothe himself in arms had sworn,
Nor draw the faulchion nor bestride the sell,
Till he had like an anchoret outworn
A year and month and day in lowly cell.
So to chastise themselves for such like crimes
Were cavaliers accustomed in those times.

CIII
Albeit of Charles and Agramant the Moor
Had heard the several fortunes while away,
Not to foreswear himself, he armed no more
Than if in nought concerned in that affray:
But when the year and month were wholly o'er,
And wholly past was the succeeding day,
With other courser, harness, sword, and lance,
The king betook him to the court of France.

CIV
He neither lighted from his horse, nor bowed
His head; and, without sign of reverence due,
His scorn for Charlemagne by gestures showed,
And the high presence of so fair a crew.
Astound and full of wonder stood the crowd,
Such license in that haughty man to view.
All leave their meat, all leave their talk, to hear
The purpose of the stranger cavalier.

CV
To Charles and to Rogero opposite,
With a loud voice, and in proud accent, "I
Am Rodomont of Sarza," said the knight,
"Who thee, Rogero, to the field defy;
And here, before the sun withdraws his light,

Will prove on thee thine infidelity;
And that thou, as a traitor to thy lord,
Deserv'st not any honour at this board.

CVI
"Albeit thy felony be plain and clear,
Which thou, as christened, canst not disavow;
Nathless to make it yet more plain appear,
This will I prove upon thee; and, if thou
Canst find a knight to combat for thee here,
Him will accept; — if one be not enow —
Will four, nay six accept; and will maintain
My words against them all in listed plain."

CVII
Rogero, with the leave of Pepin's son,
Uprose at that appeal, and thus replied:
That he — nor he alone — but every one,
Who thus impeached him as a traitor, lied;
That so he by his king had ever done,
Him none could justly blame; and on his side,
He was prepared in listed field to shew
He evermore by him had done his due.

CVIII
He can defend himself; nor need he crave
Another warrior's help that course to run;
And 'tis his hope to show him he would have
Enough, perhaps would have too much, of one.
Thither Orlando and Rinaldo, brave
Olivier, and his white and sable son,
Thither good Dudon and Marphisa wend;
Who fain with that fierce paynim will contend.

CIX
They tell Rogero that, as newly wed
The combat he in person should refuse.

"Take ye no further pains," the warrior said,
"For such would be for me a foul excuse."
The Tartar's arms were brought, which cut the thread
Of more delay and of all further truce:
With spurs Orlando deck'd the youthful lord,
King Charlemagne begirt him with the sword.

CX
Marphisa and Bradamant in corslet case
His breast, and clothe him in his other gear.
Astolpho led his horse of noble race:
Sir Dudon held his stirrup: far and near
Rinaldo and Namus made the mob give place,
Assisted by the Marquis Olivier.
All from the crowded lists they drive with speed,
Evermore kept in order for such need.

CXI
The pale-faced dames and damsels troop, in guise
Of pigeons round the lists, a timid show;
When, homeward bound, from fruitful field they rise,
Scared by wide-sweeping winds, which loudly blow,
Mid flash and clap; and when the sable skies
Threat hail and rain, the harvest's waste and woe:
A timid troop, they for Rogero fear,
Ill matched they deem with that fierce cavalier.

CXII
So him deemed all the rabble; and so most
Of those bold cavalier and barons thought;
In that they had not yet the memory lost
Of what that paynim had in Paris wrought,
When singly fire and sword the warrior tost,
And much of that fair town to ruin brought;
Whose signs remained, and yet will long remain:
Nor ever greater havoc plagued that reign.

CXIII

Bradamant's heart above those others' beat:
Not that she deemed the Saracen in might,
Or valour which in the heart-core hath its seat,
Was of more prowess than the youthful knight;
Nor (what oft gives success in martial feat
That with the paynim was the better right.
Yet cannot she her some ill misgivings quell.
But upon those that love such fear sits well.

CXIV

Oh! in her fear for him, how willingly
She battle for Rogero would have done!
If lifeless on the listed field to lie
Surer than sure, — in fight with Ulien's son.
More than one death would she consent to die,
If she withal could suffer more than one,
Rather than she in that unhappy strife
Would see her cherished consort risk his life.

CXV

But prayer availed not on the damsel's part
To make Rogero leave to her the quest:
She then with mournful face and beating heart
Stood by to view that pair to fight addrest.
From right and left the peer and paynim start,
And at each other run with lance in rest.
The spears seem ice, as they in shivers fly.
The fragments birds, that mount through middle sky.

CXVI

Rodomont's lance which smote in the career
Upon mid-shield, yet harmed it little; so
Perfect was famous Hector's iron gear,
Hardened by Vulcan's hand, and safe from blow.
As well against the shield his levelled spear

Rogero guides, and that good buckler — though
Well steeled within and out, with bone between,
And nigh a palm in thickness — pierces clean;

CXVII
And — but his lance resists not that fierce shock,
And at the first assault its splinters fly,
And bits and fragments of the shivered stock
Seem fledged with feathers they ascend so high;
Were his arms hewn from adamantine rock,
The spear would pierce the paynim's panoply;
And end that battle: but it breaks withal,
And on their croups both staggering coursers fall.

CXVIII
With bridle and with spur the martial pair
Raise their proud horses nimbly from the ground;
And having broke their spears, with faulchions bare
Return, to bandy fierce and cruel wound.
Wheeling with wondrous mastery, here and there,
The bold and ready coursers in a round,
The warriors with their biting swords begin
To try where either's armour is most thin.

CXIX
Rodomont had not that hard dragon-hide
Which heretofore had cased the warrior's breast;
Nor Nimrod's trenchant sword was at his side;
Nor the accustomed helm his temples prest.
For on that bridge which spanned the narrow tide,
A loser to Dordona's lady, vest
And arms suspended from the votive stone
He left; as I, meseems, erewhile have shown.

CXX
Clad was the king in other goodly mail;
Yet not like that first panoply secure:

But neither this, nor that, nor harder scale
Could Balisarda's deadly dint endure;
Against which neither workmanship avail,
Enchantment, temper, nor prime steel and pure.
So here so there Rogero plied his sword,
He more than once the paynim's armour bored.

CXXI
When Rodomont beholds in that fierce close
His widely crimsoned arms, nor can restrain
The greater portion of those griding blows
From biting to the quick, through plate and chain,
He with more fury, with more rage o'erflows,
Than in mid winter the tempestrous main
Flings down his shield, and with both hands outright
Lays at Rogero's helm with all his might.

CXXII
With that excessive force, wherewith the gin,
Erected in two barges upon Po,
And raised by men and wheels, with deafening din
Descends upon the sharpened piles below,
With all his might he smote the paladin
With either hand; was never direr blow:
Him the charmed helmet helped, or — such its force —
The stroke would have divided man and horse.

CXXIII
As if about to fall, the youthful lord
Twice nodded, opening legs and arms; anew
Rodomont smote, in that he would afford
His foe no time his spirits to renew:
Then threatened other stroke; but that fine sword
Bore not such hammering, and in shivers flew;
And the bold Saracen, bereft of brand
Was in the combat left with unarmed hand.

CXXIV

But not for this doth Rodomont refrain:
He swoops upon the Child, unheeding aught:
So sore astounded is Rogero's brain;
So wholly overclouded is his thought.
But him the paynim well awakes again,
Whom by the neck he with strong arm has caught,
And gripes and grapples with such mighty force,
He falls on earth, pulled headlong from his horse.

CXXV

Yet leaps from earth as nimbly, moved by spleen
Far less than shame; for on his gentle bride
He turned his eyes, and that fair face serene
Now troubled the disdainful warrior spied.
She in sore doubt her champion's fall had seen;
And well nigh at that sight the lady died.
Rogero, quickly to revenge the affront,
Clutches his sword and faces Rodomont.

CXXVI

He at Rogero rode, who that rude shock
Shunned warily, retiring from his ground,
And, as he past, the paynim's bridle took
With his left had, and turned his courser round;
While with his right he at his rider struck,
Whom he in belly, flank and breast would wound;
And twice sore anguish felt the monarch, gored
In flank and thigh, by good Rogero's sword.

CXXVII

Rodomont, grasping still in that close fight
The hilt and pommel of his broken blade,
Layed at Rogero's helmet with such might,
That him another stroke might have dismaid:
But good Rogero, who should win of right,

Seizing his arm, the king so rudely swayed,
Bringing his left his better hand to speed,
That he pulled down the paynim from his steed.

CXXVIII
Through force or skill, so fell the Moorish lord,
He stood his match, I rather ought to say
Fell on his feet; because Rogero's sword
Gave him, 'twas deemed, advantage in the fray.
Rogero stands aloof, with wary ward
As fain to keep the paynim king at bay.
For the wise champion will not let a wight
So talk and bulky close with him in fight;

CXXIX
Rogero flank and thigh dyed red beheld,
And other wounds; and hoped he would have failed
By little and by little, as it welled;
So that he finally should have prevailed.
His hilt and pommel in his fist yet held
The paynim, which with all his might he scaled
At young Rogero; whom he smote so sore,
The stripling never was so stunned before.

CXXX
In the helmet-cheek and shoulder-bone below
The Child was smit, and left so sore astound,
He, tripping still and staggering to and fro,
Scarce kept himself from falling to the ground.
Rodomont fain would close upon his foe;
But his foot fails him, weakened by the wound,
Which pierced his thigh: he overtasked his might;
And on his kneepan fell the paynim knight.

CXXXI
Rogero lost no time, and with fierce blows
Smote him in face and bosom with his brand;

Hammered, and held the Saracen so close,
To ground he bore that champion with his hand.
But he so stirred himself, again he rose:
He gripes Rogero so, fast locked they stand.
Seconding their huge vigour by address,
They circle one another, shake, and press.

CXXXII

His wounded thigh and gaping flank had sore
Weakened the vigour of the Moorish king:
Rogero had address; had mickle lore;
Was greatly practised in the wrestlers' ring:
He marked his vantage, nor from strife forbore;
And, where he saw the blood most freely spring,
And where most wounded was the warrior, prest
The paynim with his feet, his arms, and breast.

CXXXIII

Rodomont filled with spite and rage, his foe
Takes by the neck and shoulders, and now bends
Towards him, and now pushes from him; now
Raises from earth, and on his chest suspends;
Whirls here and there and grapples; and to throw
The stripling sorely in that strife contends.
Collected in himself, Rogero wrought,
To keep his vantage taxing strength and thought.

CXXXIV

So shifting oft his hold, about the Moor
His arms the good and bold Rogero wound;
Against his left flank shoved his breast, and sore
Strained him with all his strength engirdled round.
At once he past his better leg before
Rodomont's knees and pushed, and from the ground
Uplifted high in air the Moorish lord;
Then hurled him down head foremost on the sward.

CXXXV

Such was the shock wherewith King Rodomont
With battered head and spine the champion smote,
That, issuing from his wounds as from a font,
Streams of red blood the crimsoned herbage float.
Rogero, holding Fortune by the front,
Lest he should rise, with one hand griped his throat,
With one a dagger at his eyes addrest;
And with his knees the paynim's belly prest.

CXXVI

As sometimes where they work the golden vein
Within Pannonian or Iberian cave,
In unexpected ruin whelm the train
By impious avarice there condemned to slave,
So with the load they lie opprest, with pain
A passage can their prisoned spirit have:
No less opprest the doughty paynim lay,
Pinned to the ground in that disastrous fray.

CXXXVII

Rogero at his vizor doth present
His naked poniard's point, with threatening cry,
That he will slay him, save he yields, content
To let him live, if he for grace apply.
But Rodomont, who rather than be shent
For the least deed of shame, preferred to die,
Writhed, struggled, and with all his vigour tried
To pull Rogero down, and nought replied.

CXXXVIII

As mastiff that below the deer-hound lies,
Fixed by the gullet fast, with holding bite,
Sorely bestirs himself and vainly tries,
With lips besmeared with foam and eyes alight,
And cannot from beneath the conqueror rise,

Who foils his foe by force, and not despite;
So vainly strives the monarch of Argier
To rise from underneath the cavalier.

CXXXIX
Yet Rodomont so twists and strives, he gains
The freedom of his better arm anew;
And with the right hand, which his poniard strains,
For he had drawn his deadly dagger too,
Would wound Rogero underneath the reins:
But now the wary youth the error knew
Through which he might have died, by his delay
That impious Saracen forthwith to slay;

CXL
And smiting twice or thrice his horrid front,
Raising as high as he could raise in air
His dagger, buried it in Rodomont;
And freed himself withal from further care.
Loosed from the more than icy corse, to font
Of fetid Acheron, and hell's foul repair,
The indignant spirit fled, blaspheming loud;
Erewhile on earth so haughty and so proud.

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