Orlando Furioso

by Ludovico 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 scarcely 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 supprest. 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.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ORLANDO FURIOSO ***

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