

his death, Torquato was unwilling to recognize it among his works. Menagio, in his preface to "Aminta," remarks, that the "Rinaldo" was "the work of a youth, but of a youthful Tasso." Verily, the child is father of the man!

But though engaged in his poetical compositions, Tasso did not neglect the general cultivation of his mind. He held literature in the highest veneration, and attended all the lectures of the professors on the profoundest branches of education. Soon after the publication of his "Rinaldo," he received the gratifying compliment of being invited by the bishop of Narni to enter the university of Bologna, which had just been re-established by Pope Pius the Fourth and the good bishop, Donato Cesi, who sought for young men of the most promising talent to become leaders in his new school. The time passed here by Tasso was well improved; and he was just prepared to take his degree in theology and philosophy, when certain ill treatment he received, in consequence of being supposed the author of some idle pasquinades upon the college, so offended him, that he took an abrupt leave of Bologna, forgetting, in his fiery impatience, the debt of gratitude he owed the bishop.

He now reverted to the idea of the epic poem, the plan of which he had sketched while at Bologna, and to which he had directed all his studies. He had collected from the works of the most celebrated writers all that could aid him in his project; and he once more entered his name as student at Padua, and devoted himself unremittingly to his classical pursuits. At the end of his first term, Torquato visited his father at Mantua. The happiness of the old man, then seventy years old, at this meeting, was only equalled by that of his son; and the joyous hope which the parent expressed at the prospect of his glorious future, made a deep impression on the heart of Tasso. "He said to me," observed the poet, "that his love for me had made him forget that which he had for his poem; that no glory in the world—no perpetuity of fame—could be ever so dear to him as my life; and nothing more delightful to him than my reputation." What a beautiful picture of a poet father and a poet son! The former forgetting his own literary offspring and poetical aspirations in the dazzling brilliancy of his son's morning light. Bernardo Tasso was no mean poet; and had not Torquato Tasso so far eclipsed him, he would have taken high rank among the bards of Italy.

Anxious that Torquato should have some support, which would allow him to pursue his literary tastes untrammelled by the fear of want, Bernardo

made every exertion to procure him some situation; and finally succeeded in securing for him an appointment about the person of Cardinal D'Este. Many of Torquato's friends advised him not to accept it, but to keep his genius unfettered by the bondage of a courtier's life. Its wings, they contended, must be clipped, when it could fly only in humble obedience to a patron's command. And happy would it have been for him had he followed their advice; but he had not yet learned how much better it is to depend upon one's own resources than on the caprices of the great.

Soon after his appointment, he accompanied the cardinal to Rome; and it was on his return from this journey that he first met the princess Lucretia and her sister Leonora, whose influence over his fate was so remarkable. These ladies, who had been educated by their mother, Renata, daughter of Louis the Twelfth, king of France,—a woman endowed with the highest accomplishments of her sex—were gifted and lovely beyond any of their countrywomen. To exquisite personal beauty they added brilliant and cultivated minds, and a high appreciation of all intellectual acquirements. When Tasso first saw them, Lucretia was thirty-one and Leonora thirty years of age; but the elegance of their persons, and their amiable dispositions, had preserved the gracefulness of youth undiminished. The fame of the "Rinaldo" had prepared them to admire Tasso; and his pleasing manners soon rendered him a favourite. They introduced him to the notice of the Duke Alphonso, their brother, and to the most distinguished persons of the court.

Here Tasso remained, in the midst of the courtly circle, playing the part of the Laureate—writing sonnets for all courtly occasions, epithalamiums for wedding festivities, dirges for the noble dead, and in his leisure hours laboring upon his grand poem, till 1570, when he received a summons from the Cardinal D'Este, to accompany him to France, whither he was called to attend to his diocese, which had suffered from the rapid increase of the Hugonots. Before his departure, he made arrangements, like a careful merchant, for the disposal of his literary property, in case of his death. "Since life is frail," says this testament, "if it should please God to take me while on my journey to France, I pray Signor Ercole Rindonelli to take charge of my property. And first, as regards my compositions; I would have him collect my amatory sonnets and madrigals, and give them to the world. For the rest, whether amatory or not, which I have written in the service of my friends, I desire they