

of the leading heroes. It would be wrong to suppose that for these reasons Tasso lacked originality. While his quiet nature allowed him to choose a path already travelled, and although on many occasions he was imposed upon by contemporary writers and critics far superior to himself, yet, like a true genius his imitations are never servile, and what is remarkable he was nowhere so successful as when he depended entirely on the resources of his own mind. When he follows the inspiration of his own heart, he becomes grand and noble; and it must be confessed that the romantic side of true Christian chivalry has in him its truest painter. Take for instance, the twelfth Canto in which the beautiful episodes of Clorinda's birth, of her combat with Tancred her lover, and her happy death after being baptized a Christian, are related. It is the most pathetic incident in the whole poem, and is surpassed by no poet ancient or modern. Even Tasso's warmest admirers cannot but regret that he saw proper to take so many notions on the conduct of his epic from Homer. Godfrey of Bouillon, a noble type of the chivalrous and chaste knight, though modelled on Agamemnon, lacks the proud brilliancy shewn by the leader of the Grecian hosts. The anger of Rinaldo, the hero of *Jerusalem Delivered*, cannot be compared to the divine wrath of Achilles. The women in Tasso's Epic are certainly far inferior to those of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.

These faults however, are covered by virtues which place the Italian Epic among the masterpieces of human genius. The verses are exquisitely polished and harmonious; perhaps too much so at times; it is said that some were written as many as fifty times by their author. The poem, moreover, is carefully planned, and marked by great unity of action throughout. In this respect it is totally unlike the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto which preceded it. Ariosto made his work embrace so many distinct episodes that in order to give the end some connection with the beginning he brings back reason to the crazy Orlando in a bottle from the moon, and Roland snuffs in his lost reason through the nose. Tasso possesses another grand feature—

he wrote for all classes. From Milton down the majority of modern epic writers are appreciated only by the student, and completely understood by the learned. Our poet wins a warm place in the hearts of all his readers by his simplicity of style and sweetness of verse. When we add to these facts, that the poem is highly moral and religious—the work of a good Catholic—we naturally expect a great deal. Nor are we disappointed.

Tasso's account of the allegory of *Jerusalem Delivered*, to which we referred at the opening of this essay, is, to say the least, a most ingenious one. There seems to be some doubt as to whether all these details were in his mind when he wrote the Epic. Yet it seems evident that our poet had before him a broad sense of the battle of life figured by the Holy War. It was certainly no after-thought that made Godfrey stand for the guiding powers of Reason, and Rinaldo for the combatant powers in Life. The Italian poet declares his Epic to be a mirror of life; maintaining that in heroic poetry two natures should be joined, one of imitation which pleases man, the other of allegory which inculcates virtue and knowledge. In a work of this kind man must be considered as a compound of soul and body with all their inherent propensities. Some writers have had regard only for the speculative part of man's nature and hence have dealt almost exclusively with the higher powers of his soul. The *Divine Comedy* of Dante represents the contemplative side of human life; in the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Aeneid* we have a pleasing mixture of both. The contemplative man is solitary; Dante and Aeneas therefore are unaccompanied when they visit the lower regions; likewise Ulysses when he leaves Calypso. Agamemnon and Achilles on the other hand represent civil life, and are described as being leaders of men, and greater in war than in wisdom. This is but natural. The Reason is best figured in one man, whereas political life and heroic deeds live with the multitude.

So Tasso has made Godfrey the man of Understanding; and he is rightly chosen to head the other heroes who in different ways typify the lesser faculties of the soul which are the servants of reason. Rinaldo is a man of marvellous courage and