

digestion. The medicine which was employed to remove it acted too violently on his constitution, and his malady assuming the alarming form of consumption, on the night of the 6th June, 1533, he breathed his last, lamented not only by all Italy but by the whole of Europe, who had been charmed by the fascinating variety of his muse.

His funeral was honored by the presence of the noblest in Ferrara, and was rendered remarkable by the presence of a large body of monks, who, contrary to their order, followed his remains to the grave. He was laid in a humble tomb in the church of San Benedetto. Years after, Agostino Masti, a gentleman of Ferrara, raised above it a noble mausoleum, worthy of the poet.

ARIOSTO's life was far more happy than that of any of the great poets who preceded him. Unlike Dante, his own country appreciated his services, and rewarded his zeal and political talent. Unlike Petrarch, his life was gladdened by the devotion of the woman he loved, and the sweet ties of home and affection; early dissipation had not polluted his mind and made him, like Boccaccio, the victim of unrelenting remorse, seeking peace and finding none. His choleric temperament was his greatest misfortune, but that was incident to the peculiar constitution of his mind, which was like his own poetry, rapid in its changes, open to every feeling; now quick, impetuous, impulsive; anon gentle, tender, soft, and yielding to every emotion. He is the most beloved of the poets among his own countrymen. Foreign nations give the crown to Tasso, but the Italians themselves place it upon the head of Ariosto.

He well understood the nature of his own mind, when he refused the urgent solicitations of Cardinal Bembo, that he would write, as Petrarch had done, in the Latin language. He knew that as a votary of the Latin muse he could only rank second, but he aspired to the first rank of Italian composition; in that walk he had none but Dante to compete with, and their minds were so entirely different that it could scarce be called competition. What Ariosto wanted in sublimity he atoned for by the greater smoothness and harmony of his style and his fidelity to nature in his portraits. His heroes are heroes indeed, but violent without rashness; his heroines are feminine and lovely, and nature itself is adorned, not distorted, by his art.

The plan of the 'Orlando Furioso' was suggested by the 'Orlando Innamorato,' a work written by Matteo Briardo, who was governor of Reggio at the time of Ariosto's birth. It was an unfinished poem in imitation of the *Iliad*, founded on the loves of Roland and Angelica, with the siege of

Paris to represent that of Troy; and Briardo being possessed of good poetical powers, with a strong and lively imagination, it forms a fine introduction to the *Orlando Furioso*.

The early life of Ariosto was almost a repetition of that of his brother poets. His genius displayed itself when he was very young, in the composition of a play called *Pyramus and Thisbe*, which he taught his brothers and sisters to perform; but his father, though pleased with the poetical taste he discovered, dreaded its influence in his after life. He had destined him for the study of the law, hoping he might rise, by the patronage of the noble house of Ferrara, to a high station; and he deemed the love of the Muses so entirely incompatible with a proper attention to his legal studies, that he forbade him to write or read poetry or any work of the imagination, and, like the father of David, kept a jealous eye on his poetic tastes.

This thralldom galled the high spirit of the young poet, and he at times thought of throwing off his father's protection, which was rendered so irksome by this restraint upon his mind and taste; but he was relieved from it, as Petrarch had been before under the same circumstances, by the death of his parent. But to this succeeded new cares, the family were left without the means of support, and Ariosto's pride and bitter feelings called upon him to devote himself to providing for their necessary wants. Day and night he laboured forthem, and he would not return to his favorite pursuits, till he was taken under the protection of the Cardinal D'Este and received from him a regular income. In one of his satires he has left a description of his peculiar feelings and situation at this period of his life.

'My father dies, thenceforth with care oppressed,  
New thoughts and feelings fill my harass'd breast;  
Homer gives way to lawyers and their deeds,  
And all a brother's love within me pleads.  
Fit suitors found, two sisters soon are wed,  
And to the altar without portions led.  
With all the wants and wishes of their age,  
My little brothers next my thoughts engage;  
And in their father's place I strive untir'd,  
To do what'er that father's love inspired.  
Thus watching how their several wills incline,  
In courts, in study, or in arms to shine;  
No toil I shun their fair pursuits to aid,  
Still of the snares that strew their path afraid;  
Nor this alone, though press we quick to land,  
The bark's not safe till anchored on the strand.'

The duties thus pleasantly described, Ariosto performed with the utmost care and diligence. He became indeed the father of his family. His person has been described by his biographers as being large and well formed, except his shoulders, which were disproportioned and gave him an