

thise with his joys and sorrows, could only feed on itself. Overwhelmed with emotion, Cornelia threw herself into his arms and sobbed her welcome. A strange sight, and one deemed worthy the painter's pencil.* The beautiful and richly-dressed lady, every article upon and around her speaking of wealth, just recognising, in the travel-stained wanderer, her *brother*—the son of genius! It was long before they were either of them sufficiently composed to speak; and before Cornelia expressed her own deep feelings of anxiety, or listened to the sad details of her brother's sufferings, she constrained him to refresh himself by the bath and the rest he so much needed.

Thus did Torquato Tasso appear among his friends, after the imprisonment which the pride of Alphonso, Duke of Ferrara, had condemned him to endure, for the crime of loving his sister. Fostered and caressed as he had been by all Italy, the favored of princes, and encouraged as he was by the Lady Leonora, who, won by the poet's fame, and gratified by the homage he rendered her, received his attentions with complacency; what wonder then, he forgot the distance between himself and his patron's sister, and dared to hope for an alliance with her.

The rash act, that of publicly saluting the princess before a crowded assembly, which was the immediate cause of his confinement, can only be excused by the incipient madness which fevered his brain and clouded his sense of propriety. But the cruel rigor of Alphonso, in his long imprisonment for so slight an offence, which should have been tried rather by the Court of Love, and punished by frowns and simple banishment from his lady's presence, will never be forgotten or forgiven; and wherever the "Jerusalem," with its spirit-stirring scenes and tender pictures, is read and loved, Alphonso's name will be banned as a tyrant who would have crushed a genius so formed to delight the world.

Tasso seemed from his birth to be marked out as misfortune's child. His father, Bernardo Tasso, a poet of some reputation, but better known as the parent of the illustrious Torquato, was secretary to San Severino, prince of Salerno, and he shared his honor and disgrace. The prince having made a complaint to Charles the Fifth against the viceroy of Naples, who had striven to introduce the Inquisition into the kingdom, was condemned to death, and the cruel sentence pronounced not only against him, but his secretary, and his son, the future poet, not then nine years old. With great difficulty

they escaped by night from the fatal punishment, and withdrew to Rome, where the young poet composed verses, and compared his escape to the adventures of Ascanius and Æneas flying from Troy.

The Jesuits had just established one of their celebrated colleges at Rome, and the young Torquato was placed under their care; and so rapid was the development of his mind, that the most wonderful stories are told of his progress. His father was exceedingly anxious that he should study civil law, not realizing what drudgery it would be to the poetic mind of his son to give up the dreamy luxury of Belles Lettres for the dry commentaries of Justinian. He therefore sent him to Padua, where, instead of attending to his studies,

"He waved his magic wand,
Peopling the groves from Araby : and lo !
Fair forms appeared, murmuring melodious verse."

He composed many beautiful pastorals and odes, which pleased his friends so much that they persuaded him to commence a larger work. Thus encouraged he began his "Rinaldo," although with much fear lest his father should discover it, and forbid a design which must necessarily withdraw his mind from his more important duties. But he had the satisfaction of learning, when it did come to Bernardo's ears, that he should be left to finish his poem undisturbed; and also that he should be permitted, if he desired, to change his present duties for the more agreeable studies of philosophy.

When he had completed his poem, Torquato sent it, with a trembling heart, to undergo the ordeal of his father's judgment. He feared his critical taste, which was admirable; and he knew that a parent's feelings would not bias his opinion. It would, perhaps, be impossible fully to estimate the happiness of Bernardo when he had perused the work, and found it so far superior, that it became, in his eyes, a forerunner of his son's future fame. He readily yielded his consent to its being published; and in April, 1562, when its author was but eighteen, it appeared, under the auspices of Cardinal D'Este, to whom it was dedicated.

Great was the fame gained for the youthful author. It attracted the attention of men of letters; and all united in its praise. The enthusiastic admiration with which it was received must have added not a little stimulus to Tasso's love of poetry, and encouraged him to cultivate the talent which gave so fair a promise. Later ages have judged more calmly of "Rinaldo;" and, though none of his works were more popular during his life-time, it has passed away. Even before

* A picture representing this scene, is, or was a short time since, in the gallery of the Louvre.