

had been shewing portions of his work in manuscript to some of his so-called friends, but, unfortunately for his own peace of mind, he condescended to pay minute attention to the suggestions of these courtiers, none of whom possessed in any degree the poetical taste of Tasso himself. Their criticisms worried his sensitive nature to such an extent that he began to suspect their intentions. He thought himself surrounded by enemies, and felt sure that the Inquisition would pronounce his poem heretical. This was the beginning of a long train of hardships for our poet; it is a striking evidence of what over-zealous friends may do for us at times. His mind gradually grew weaker. Being placed in the Franciscan convent at Ferrara, he suspected the monks of a design to poison him; and later on he turned all the powers of his mind against the nobleman who had been his patron and admirer. At last he had to be shut up in a lunatic asylum. While here, he learned with great disgust that his *Goffredo*, the first name he gave this epic, had been misprinted at Venice. An edition revised by Tasso, with the name changed to *Jerusalemme Liberata* was published at Parma in 1581, and passed through six editions within a year. The author further revised his poem in 1593, calling it *Jerusalemme Conquistata*. This edition has been set aside, however, as giving evidence that the poet's mind was losing its best powers. Tasso repaired to Rome in 1594 to be made Laureate of Italy, but his health gave way entirely. He was tenderly cared for in the monastery of St. Onofrio, and Cardinal Cinzio came to him at the hour of his death, April 25th, 1595, with the Pope's benediction. "This," said Tasso "is the crown with which I hope to be crowned. It is not the glory of the poet's laurel, but the glory of the blessed in heaven."

The English student of *Jerusalem Delivered* is at a great disadvantage in having no translation which gives with any degree of accuracy the spirit of the original. We have depended on that of Fairfax who published his *Godfrey of Bulloigne* in 1600. He was a good poet, but certainly not a great one. Although he has translated stanza for stanza, yet he allowed himself much freedom, giving in his own

fashion the sense of each stanza; adorning as he went with interwoven figures of speech and bits of classical mythology. The exquisite sweetness which we know to be characteristic of Tasso is lost. In a word, when the Italian poet said a hero was like Mars, our English Fairfax said Mars would be afraid of him. Yet this translation still holds a high place in our literature, being, it is said, among the books "that so did please our Eliza and our James," and have not lost their pleasantness with the lapse of time, as is proven by the fact that a new and elegant edition was published in 1890 under the care of Henry Morley.

*Jerusalem Delivered* is a romantic treatment of the First Crusade, begun by Peter the Hermit, and supported by Pope Urban II. in the Council at Clermont. Godfrey of Bouillon, after pawning his dominions to obtain sufficient money to go to the Holy Land, was made leader of this pious undertaking, and set out for Palestine in 1096. He captured Antioch, defeated the Moslems with great loss at Dorylaeum, reached Jerusalem in 1099, and captured the city after a five week's siege. He refused, however, to be crowned with gold where his Saviour had been crowned with thorns. On his death the following year, his brother Baldwin succeeded as King of Jerusalem. At the opening of Tasso's poem the Crusaders are encamped on the plains south of Antioch, which city had just been taken. Though true to history in the main points, our poet introduced much fiction, especially in the leading characters. He has also made use of supernatural agents which according to many have weakened instead of strengthening his Epic. Yet Tasso did this only after mature consideration; it is only one of the many features he has borrowed from Homer. His poem has a double origin. While its substance and spirit are essentially Christian, and deal with the romantic chivalry of the Middle Ages, the form of the poem is classical and has much in common with the Iliad. There is one great action, the siege of Jerusalem, which was for Tasso what the siege of Troy was for Homer. Like Homer also, he makes use of views from the walls of the besieged city, in order to shew to advantage the qualities