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PART I.—ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

*Torquato Tasso and his Biographers.** By W. W. IRELAND, M.D.

When one compares the few details left us about the life of Shakspere with the wealth of materials for writing the biography of Tasso we might suppose that there would be little doubt about the main facts in the life of the great Italian poet. Nevertheless some of the most important passages in his life have been the subject of controversy for the last 300 years. These questions especially regarded the treatment Tasso met with from the ducal family of Este, and unless we understand these relations correctly, we may totally misconceive the character of the poet and all the later events of his life. It seems strange that such questions have remained so long undecided; but biographers and critics are often much better acquainted with books and texts and languages than with human nature. A fine illustration of this is furnished by the *Life of Tasso* † by the Rev. Mr. Milman. Here we may refer the reader to a paper in this Journal of January, 1877. The author, whose initials are A. C. M., though his study of the life of Tasso had apparently gone no further than a perusal of Milman's book, was able to show many of the errors into

* Angelo Solerti, "Vita di Torquato Tasso." Turin and Rome, 1895 (3 volumes octavo). "Luigi, Lucrezia e Leonora D'Este, Studi di Guiseppe Campori e Angelo Solerti." Turin, 1888. Angelo Solerti, "Ferrara e la Corte Estense nella seconda metà del Secolo Decimosesto. I Discorsi di Annibale Romei, Gentiluomo Ferrarese." Città di Castello, 1891. "Opere Minore in Versi di Torquato Tasso," Edizione Critica a cura di Angelo Solerti. Bologna, 1891 (2 volumes). Pier de Nolhac e Angelo Solerti, "Il Viaggio in Italia di Enrico III. re di Francia e le Feste a Venezia, Ferrara, Mantova e Torino." Turin, 1890. "Genio e Pazzia in Torquato Tasso." Luigi Roncoroni. Turin, 1896.

† "The Life of Torquato Tasso," by the Rev. R. Milman. London, 1850.

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which the biographer had fallen. In truth Mr. Milman, although he took up the traditional view that Tasso was the victim of vindictive persecution by the Machiavelian Duke of Ferrara, yet was too candid to repress a number of facts which, in the eyes of an able psychologist, showed that his whole treatment of the life of Tasso was founded upon a complete misconception or ignorance of the ordinary symptoms of mental derangement.

A previous biographer, by a careful study of the published materials of the poet's life, had come to a correct view of his mental condition. Dr. Black's *Life of Tasso* * is a much superior work to that of Mr. Milman, though it is somewhat too prolix for readers in the present day. Of late years some Italian scholars have made very laborious inquiries into this subject, and the light now thrown upon the events of the poet's life and the different personages with whom he came in contact is so complete and searching that it is impossible any longer to defend the old traditional errors about Tasso which are commemorated in the poem of Byron. Last year, on the three hundredth anniversary of the death of Tasso, Solerti gave to the world his long promised *Vita di Torquato Tasso,* the consummation of his persevering studies, some of the results of which had been given in previous publications. In the first volume of his work, which fills 883 pages, Solerti deals with the life of Tasso. In the second and third volumes, which together make 750 pages, are given Tasso's letters, some of them hitherto unpublished, with other documents about his life and writings, and copies from the portraits and medallions of the poet. There are also engravings of some places rendered memorable by events in his life. An enormous amount of learning and critical skill has been expended in making this work as complete as possible.

Torquato's family can be traced as far back as 1194. They took their name from a hill in the valley of the Brembo which was called Tasso or Taxis from the yew trees which grew abundantly around the tower where they lived for generations. Increasing in wealth and importance they came to a mansion house in the neighbouring town of Bergamo. Solerti gives a genealogical tree of the family, which includes nine generations, down to Bernardo Tasso, the father of Torquato. The Tassi had many members who earned

* "The Life of Torquato Tasso, with an historical and critical account of his writings," by John Black, in 2 volumes. Edinburgh and London, 1810.

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renown as generals, diplomatists, and ecclesiastics. Omodeo Tasso had the merit of reviewing the institution of regular posts in the fourteenth century in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and Flanders. His descendants gained wealth and distinction by becoming generals of the post in these countries. Several branches of the family received titles of nobility from different sovereigns in Europe; and one founded the princely house of Thurn and Taxis. It appears that all the Italian branches of this once vigorous and prosperous family have now become extinct, at least in the male line.

Bernardo Tasso was born at Venice in 1493. He was left an orphan at the age of 18, with two sisters, and it was with difficulty that he could find means to continue his studies at Padua. During the course of an eventful life, changing like a bird from bough to bough, he became secretary to Renée, the daughter of King Louis XII. of France, who was married to the Duke Hercules of Ferrara. This princess favoured the Reformed Religion and corresponded with John Calvin, who spent some months at Ferrara under a feigned name. She afterwards openly avowed her Protestant views, which gave great annoyance to her husband, who held his principality of the Papal See. In the end she was separated from her children and kept for some time in confinement. Bernardo Tasso was employed in important missions as a secretary and diplomatist. As a poet he gained a good reputation in his own day. Becoming secretary to Ferrante Sanseverino, Prince of Salerno, he accompanied the expedition of the Emperor Charles to Tunis in 1535. After a life of toil, dependence, and anxiety, a vision of love and happiness shone on his autumnal days. In 1536 he contracted a marriage with Portia di Rossi, a lady of a noble Neapolitan family who was entitled to a large dowry. They settled at Sorrento on the Bay of Naples. With true Italian frankness Bernardo writes how happily his days went by with his lovely young wife and his little daughter Cornelia. He hoped for a son who would continue the name of Tasso, and he was working at an epic poem, *The Amadigi, or Amadis of Gaul,* which was to secure his memory from the assaults of death and time. A son was born who died in infancy; not long after Bernardo was called away to follow San Severino to the war with France. It was during this war that Torquato was born on the 11th March, 1544. Bernardo was now about fifty years of age.

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A month after the birth of this child the French defeated the Imperialists at the battle of Cerisoles. San Severino greatly distinguished himself in conducting the retreat of the Spanish infantry and checking the advance of the French. After this Bernardo visited France and Flanders and did not return to his home till January, 1545, when he first saw his infant son. On his return Bernardo spent two happy years with his wife and children at Salerno. In 1547, Don Pedro de Toledo, the Spanish Viceroy of Naples, attempted to introduce the inquisition into the Italian kingdom, which met with violent opposition. San Severino undertook to lay the case of the recusants before the Emperor Charles, who was then at Nuremberg. In this mission he was seconded by Bernardo. Their representations were not without success; but the Prince found on his return that he had so mortally offended the Viceroy that he could no longer live safely at Naples. Leaving his wife in Naples (1551), Bernardo followed his patron, who went to France, and arranged to support Henry II. in an invasion of Naples. San Severino even went to Constantinople to obtain the help of the Turks, who sent a fleet which ravaged the coast of Calabria and anchored in the Bay of Naples. Bernardo, who took an active part in these negotiations, was declared a rebel, his house was seized, and his property confiscated. He had now to live on what the exiled Prince of Salerno could afford. Apparently the Rossi family had not been on cordial terms with him, and they now took advantage of his discredit with the Neapolitan Government to withhold the payment of their sister's dowry, so that Portia was left in poverty with her two children.

After two years' attendance on the French Court, Bernardo had to abandon the hope of his patron San Severino returning to Naples as the Viceroy under Henry II. He now came back to Italy, in 1554, to resume his wandering and unsettled life. Amongst these cares and afflictions Torquato Tasso attained the age of ten years. He received his first education at a college of the Jesuits, who took care to deepen the religious instruction begun by his pious mother. He says in a letter that "the Jesuit Fathers under whose discipline I was educated, made me communicate when I was about nine years of age, though I was so well grown and my mind showed such signs of maturity that I might have passed for a youth of twelve." In the year 1554 Portia was driven by the persecutions of her relations to seek

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refuge with her daughter Cornelia in a nunnery at Naples, and Torquato was sent to meet his father at Rome. In after years he recalled in some pathetic verses how cruel fortune had torn him away from the arms of his tender mother, and the kisses bathed with tears which she gave him at parting. Bernardo was lying ill when his son arrived at Rome. He had the charge of Christopher Tasso, the son of a relative, and the education of the two boys became the object of his anxious care. Befriended by the new Pope, Paul IV., his prospects seemed to improve, and he was providing a home for his wife and daughter when he received news of the death of his wife after a sudden illness of only twenty-four hours' duration. In a letter to a friend Bernardo bewails her death, and accuses himself, through vain ambition and affection to his prince, of leaving her in the power, not of brothers but of enemies, not enemies but pitiless wild beasts, and of a mother not a mother, but to her children a bitter enemy, not a woman, but in sooth an infernal fury. He states his suspicions that Portia was poisoned, and laments the condition of his daughter left in the hands of enemies without a friend save a wretched father, poor, old, distant, and in disgrace with fortune.

In order to keep hold of Portia's dowry her brothers got Torquato declared a rebel, because he had gone at the age of ten to meet his father at Rome. Soon after war broke out between the Pope Paul IV. and Philip II., and the Duke of Alva's advance upon Rome scared away Bernardo, who found refuge with the Duke of Urbino.

The later years of Bernardo's life were passed in Northern Italy, where he was befriended, not only by the Duke of Urbino, but by the Dukes of Mantua and of Ferrara, acting as secretary, diplomatist, or courier, a changeful, toilsome, and difficult life. Dr. Black has suggested that the miseries of need in sight of wealth and splendour, and dependence in sight of power, which the younger Tasso shared with his father, may have laid the foundation of the deep melancholy of his later years. He recalls the observation of Burns about his own frequent depression of spirits. "Extreme sensibility," says the Scottish poet, "irritated and prejudiced on the gloomy side, by a series of misfortunes and disappointments, at that period of my existence when the soul is laying in her cargo of ideas for the voyage of life, is, I believe, the principal cause of this unhappy frame of mind." Nevertheless, although we know

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that the younger Tasso sympathised with the fortunes of his father, and there is extant a pathetic letter in which he begs for pecuniary assistance for him, there is a want of proof that those miseries made any abiding impression on his mind. The happiness of young people is not so dependent upon circumstances. The hardships endured by Burns were of a much rougher sort. The bright, handsome, wonderfully precocious boy received much kindness from his father's friends, and shared in many of the luxuries of his father's patrons. If genius increases men's sensibility to pain and disappointment, it also increases the zest of their hopes and enjoyments.

During all his straits and anxieties Bernardo never neglected the education of his son, who was trained by the best instructors in all the learning of the Renaissance. At the age of sixteen he was sent to the University of Padua to study law like Petrarch and Ariosto, and like these poets he neglected that dry study for literature. Going to spend his first vacation with his father at Venice, Torquato gained his consent to return to Padua as a student of philosophy and rhetoric. Bernardo had got his *Amadigi* published in 1560. He had altered many passages in his poem in the hopes of gaining the indulgence of Philip II. of Spain, to whom it was dedicated. This made no impression on that inflexible monarch, nor did the poem meet with the reception which the author hoped for from the Italian patrons of literary merit. Bernardo could not fail to be pleased with his son's verses, though it was said that he never could think them better than his own.

The events of Torquato's life were well adapted to bring his poetical genius to an early bloom. In the short time of ten months he wrote a poem celebrating the exploits of the Paladin Rinaldo. It was published at Venice in 1562, dedicated to the Cardinal Luigi of Ferrara. Torquato, though now only eighteen, was at once recognised as a poet of the first rank. From Padua he was attracted to the ancient University of Bologna, living on a subsidy granted by the Duke of Urbino.

Torquato afterwards wrote that his youth was subjected to the sway of love, and Solerti takes much pains to find out the names of the golden-haired beauties of Lombardy who inspired the sonnets of three hundred years ago.

Tassino, as he was called, was denounced as the author of a pasquinade turning some scholars and professors of the

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University into ridicule. Although he denied the authorship, it was thought that, as he could repeat forty or fifty verses of it off by heart, he must have had something to do with the composition of the satire. One witness said that Tassino had not enough of talent to write it. Menaced with arrest he fled from Bologna. In a tirade written against him Tassino was abused as *omni genere vitiorum infamis*, and the less suspicious testimony of two of his cousins leads us to believe that Torquato had taken part in the frolics and dissipation of the wilder students of Bologna.

In 1564 he returned to Padua to continue his studies, and in the following year he entered into the service of the Cardinal Luigi of Este. Torquato, introduced by his father to this illustrious family, had already made a visit to Ferrara, where he had gained friends and fallen in love with one of the ladies of the Court, the beautiful Lucretia di Bendidio. He arrived on the last day of October of 1565, in the midst of the preparations which were being made to give a splendid reception to the Princess Barbara of Austria, who was to become the second wife of the Duke Alfonso II. Tasso was presented by the Cardinal Luigi to his sister the Princess Lucretia. The Princess Leonora was at that time suffering from illness, and he did not see her till later. Their brother, the reigning Duke Alfonso II., now a man of thirty-two years, was endowed with great vigour both of mind and body, reputed a master in war affairs, fond of the society of learned men, a great patron of literature and music. He was of a restless temperament, and in an uneasy position, emulous of rank, jealous and punctilious, and when offended, an implacable enemy. His relations with the literary men whom he attracted to Ferrara were particularly unfortunate. This has injured his reputation with posterity; but every new research seems to remove imputations against his character, which on the whole stands out favourably when compared with other princes of his time. His generosity was kept up at the expense of his subjects, who were heavily taxed while the dykes against the Po were ill kept up; but their complaints were at the time little regarded amidst the brilliant pageantry of the Court.

The poet Guarini had warned Tasso of the corruption of Ferrara, and the insecure life of a courtier; but in those days the favour and patronage of the great were almost the only support by which a man could live if he devoted himself to literature. The Cardinal Luigi appears in Solerti's pages

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as pushed when a young man into the Church to hold rich benefices in Italy and France. He was in no way religious, fond of pleasures, given to women, suffering much from gout, often quarrelling with his elder brother, hating trouble and business, a spendthrift, greedy of money, and always in debt. Tasso's duties at Court seem to have been mainly ornamental, writing sonnets and attending the Duke on State occasions. The Cardinal left him ample leisure for writing his poems, in the composition of which he took a lively interest. Lucretia was a woman of vigorous health, fond of pleasures and amusements, ambitious, intriguing and vindictive, the heroine of a drama of adulterous love. The Princess Leonora was always in weak health, never well for three months at a time, suffering apparently from heart disease. She was a woman of spirit, and during the absence of the Duke governed the principality so as to gain the love of the people. From her letters it appears that she was much occupied with the lawsuits of her brother Luigi, whose part she took against Alfonso. Though friendly to Tasso, there is no evidence that Leonora ever regarded the poet with especial favour, and in the end she proved a lukewarm protectress.

Lucretia on the other hand was a true patroness of the arts and poetry, showed a warm admiration for the poet, and evidently came into much closer relations with him. Lucretia was now about thirty years of age, Leonora twenty-eight, and Torquato Tasso was twenty-one. In person his lofty stature distinguished him even amongst tall men;* he was thin but well-proportioned. He had a fair complexion, a high square forehead, brown hair, the beard somewhat lighter, eyebrows finely pencilled, large blue quick eyes, the nose somewhat aquiline, the lips pale and thin, and the teeth white. What strikes us in his portraits is the large portion of the head in front of the ear. The expression was

* The person and appearance of Tasso are described in great detail by his friend Manso; see "Vita di Torquato Tasso scritta da Gio Battista Manso, Napolitano," Venice, 1621, p. 236. Solerti reproduces many of his portraits. Some of them, especially those from Bergamo, have little resemblance to the others. It is difficult to get Manso's description to agree with some traits in the portraits. Here are some particulars which are not included in the description above. The head was large and prominent at the base and at the occiput, but in the middle rather depressed at the temples than round. The forehead was large and square. As Tasso got older he lost much of his hair, becoming almost bald. The mouth was rather large, the teeth white, large and thick, and the chin square. There was a looseness in his motions and carriage which disappointed expectation, but his countenance and expression had an air of majesty.

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generally grave, he was little inclined to mirth. He was short-sighted, had a slight stammer, and was apt to repeat the last word. Not only was he versed in all the learning of the Universities of his time, and the accomplishments and graces of Courts, but he was skilful in fencing and tilting. Under such distinguished patronage Torquato Tasso entered into this gay and polished Court, in the bloom of youth, yet already a famous poet, seeking honour above all things, fond of distinction, unguarded in his speech, generally temperate in his habits, but a lover of fine wines, seeking the smiles of the ladies of the Court and not in vain.

From Ferrara Torquato was suddenly called to the aid of his father. Worn out with toil and age, Bernardo had left the office of Secretary in Criminal Procedures to the Duke of Mantua for the easier situation of Chief Magistrate of Ostia, a little town on the Po, where he died on the 5th September, 1569, at the age of seventy-six. Bernardo was a strikingly handsome man of a powerful constitution. In his mental activity and his fondness for poetry, as well as his restless disposition, Torquato was the true heir of his father. As Bernardo observed that his son had inherited the talents of his mother, we may conclude that Portia was a woman of superior mental ability as well as of moral worth.

In the autumn of 1570 Tasso went with the retinue of the Cardinal to France, where he spent five months. Anne of Este, Luigi's eldest sister, was the wife of the Duke of Guise. At this time the Protestants were being flattered in preparation for the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

On his return to Italy in the spring of 1571 he quitted the service of the Cardinal. The cause of this change is not certainly known, but at any rate Tasso appeared a gainer, for he now entered the immediate service of the Duke of Ferrara, receiving a much more liberal allowance. Solerti tells us his salary amounted to 15 golden scudi, equal to about 110 lire a month. It appears that this was about the highest pay in the Duke's Court. Guarini, the celebrated poet, did not get half so much. In 1573 he had completed the *Aminta*, a pastoral drama. It was performed at Ferrara, and met with much favour throughout Italy. It shares with *Il Pastor Fido* of Guarini, published twelve years later, the reputation of being the most beautiful composition of the kind in the Italian tongue. Soon after this the Duke gave Tasso the office of Professor of Geometry. The duties were light, for

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he had only to lecture on holidays, and the salary, though small, was no doubt a pleasant addition to his income, for the poet, who took little care of money, was generally in debt. He now turned his full attention to the composition of the great epic poem which was to place him by the side of Virgil. Tasso had learned much of the picturesque aspect of things; he had wandered through Italy and France and knew their fairest cities; had conversed with famous warriors and statesmen, and received the changing lessons of adversity and prosperity. Above all, he had the genius to drink inspiration from all sources; what his father had vainly struggled for his more gifted son could easily attain. Caressed by noble ladies, the favourite of a prince, admired as a great poet, holding in his hand the cup of immortality, he seemed to have attained the summit of earthly felicity only to give a pathetic illustration of the vanity of human hopes.

In the August of 1574 Tasso had scarcely finished the last canto of *Jerusalem Delivered* when he was seized with a quartain ague, which lasted for many weeks. In the middle of November he records that he was unable to write a letter with his own hand from languor and weakness. Seven years before he had been ill for a month at Mantua nigh to death, suffering from a fever of some kind which, he noted, weakened his memory for a time. The principality of Ferrara was exposed to the malaria from the overflow of the Po. Intermittent fever sometimes affects the brain, but it can scarcely be a cause of mental derangement save to those predisposed. In Torquato's case there is no record of any hereditary neurosis, but from this illness we may trace a train of symptoms which gradually swelled into significance. In the spring of 1575 he was in better health, and commenced to make journeys to Padua and the neighbouring cities to obtain the opinions of learned men about passages in the *Jerusalem Delivered.* Cantos of the poems were sent here and there to professors of rhetoric, and to divers learned men at Rome, Florence, Venice, and elsewhere. These pundits were much flattered at being consulted by so famous a poet, and returned showers of criticisms, objections, and suggestions. The metaphysicians pointed out how the epic transgressed the rules of Aristotle; the ecclesiastics wished that the love passages should be struck out or frozen down, and scented heresy in the bits about magic and enchanters. Some of them hinted that the Pope would

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refuse his license to the poem being printed. Tasso replied to his critics in long letters. Nevertheless he had serious misgivings about the whole plan, doubts about particular passages, and fears about the success of his great poem. The commotion of his mind was increased by anxieties that his manuscripts were lost, and fears that copies were being taken, and that a pirated edition would be printed somewhere. He writes that he was so impatient to see the poem printed that every month's delay seemed a thousand years. "What a wretch I am," he exclaimed; "every one wishes to be my tyrant. I do not refuse advisers if they will content themselves with being merely such." Yet after the first revision, which occupied eight months, the over-fastidious poet set agoing a new one, which lasted ten months, to his own farther vexation.

Tasso had now got tired of Ferrara, and made some overtures, through his friend Scipio Gonzaga, to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. This was calculated to give dire offence to Alfonso, who used to exact a promise from his officials that they would not seek service with another prince without his permission; besides, he especially hated the Medici, with whom he had a long dispute about precedence.

During the summer of 1575 Tasso was again ill, suffering from fever, exhaustion, and confusion in the head. He was distracted by doubts about the existence of God, the creation of the world, the sacraments of the Church, and the authority of the Pope. Though taking some part in the dissipation of a luxurious Court Tasso's mind was deeply religious, not of the kind to keep easily fluttering in scepticism. Distracted with fears of damnation he went to the inquisitor at Bologna and confessed his doubts. Whether such an unusual procedure startled that functionary, or whether Tasso gave other signs of mental aberration, is not known, but the astute priest evidently laid little stress upon the poet's revelations, and Tasso himself thought he did not treat them seriously enough, and was not contented with the absolution granted.

It does not appear that the Duke abated in his kindness to the poet, and Lucretia, now become Duchess of Urbino, had him much in her company. They were both fearful that Tasso would spoil the poem by his changes and corrections, and were desirous that he should publish it at once. The *Jerusalem Delivered* has many passages complimentary to the family of Este and to Alfonso, who wished

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his name to be associated with an immortal work. He received offers from the Cardinal de Medici which he would neither accept nor dismiss. He applied to be made historiographer to the family of Este and then regretted when his request was granted. He feared that he could not write a true history without offending some of his patrons. He was in continual dread that his letters were opened and his poems copied, yet he would not desist sending them about all over Italy. In his letters to Gonzaga he bewails his want of resolution, which he fears will prove his ruin. He beseeches his friend to show none of his letters either to a stranger or to any of his family. "Something, I know not what, is whirling through my mind."

The old story that traces all Tasso's misfortunes to his having fallen hopelessly in love with the Princess Leonora, and the deep offence which this gave to her brother, has gained world-wide currency. It forms the theme of Goethe's beautiful drama of *Torquato Tasso*. Some of the verses expressing his first emotions on being presented to the princess are often quoted as showing his unhappy love. They scarcely prove more than the deep admiration which the Court poets of that age were allowed to express in verse for the great ladies whose rank raised them above every other feeling but adoration. As is laid down by Romei, a contemporary writer, "for love to resolve itself into desire it is necessary that the reason should consent to it, but if the beauty resides in too lofty a subject, as in a princess, the hope of union and mutual love being forbidden by the light of reason, the affection dissolves not into amorous desire, but into deep reverence." However, the view that Tasso was really in love with Leonora derives support from the testimony of Manso, his friend and biographer; but if such a feeling existed, it could hardly have been of an engrossing character. So far from there being any proof that Tasso ever nourished a deep and pervading passion, such as Petrarch bore to Laura de Sade, there are many proofs of the fleeting character of his amours. Indeed, he openly proclaims his inconstancies in his verses. "I tried many ladies and found the hearts of many soft to me, but I was hard. I never had a lasting care for a fixed object, and my loves were always inconstant and never burning." According to Serassi,* the author of the first

* "La Vita di Torquato Tasso," scritta dall'Abate Pierantonio Serassi. Roma, 1785.

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critical biography of Tasso, who appears as a defender of the house of Este, Leonora was a princess of saintly virtues who kept apart from the vanities of the world, and if there were ever any tender relations between the poet and his patronesses it is much more likely that they were with Lucretia. Serassi tells us that at this time Tasso was only kept from quitting Ferrara by his passion for Eleanora, the young Countess of Scandiano. He celebrates in verse her beautiful lips, which he touched for a moment to find, like Tantalus, deceived—

> That nought remains behind the empty kiss
> But love's fell poison rankling at the heart.

In another canzone he intimates that if he cannot raise his hopes to gain the love of the Countess, he will not disdain the empire of her waiting maid. We read too of other Leonoras and Lauras. Solerti,* who is exempt from the ordinary weakness of biographers to stand as the indiscriminate advocate of their heroes, mentions some confessions which are not creditable to Tasso as probably owing to incipient insanity. His anxieties were varied by intervals of calm or fits of epicurean gaiety. It seems natural to suppose that a man in Tasso's position should be the object of envy and hatred, and that some of the intrigues and plots which he discovered were so far real as to confirm him in his suspicions. He writes to Gonzaga about a treacherous friend whom he calls Brunello. He had lent this person the key of his chamber when on a visit to Modena, and a report came to his ears that Brunello was seen to enter his quarters during the night accompanied by a locksmith. Tasso succeeded in finding the locksmith, who confessed that he had been to the court to open a door of which the key had been lost. Tasso believed this was to obtain access to a closet in which his secret papers were kept, and guessed that Brunello's design was to make himself acquainted with the strictures on the *Jerusalem Delivered* which had been sent by the various critics with whom he had been corresponding so long.

There are several discordant versions about a quarrel which Tasso got into about this time. The poet had an altercation with a courtier, and this person answering defiantly, Tasso gave him a blow in the face, in the hall of the palace. Soon after the man, with his three

* Vol. i., pp. 247-9.

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brothers, set upon Tasso, who defended himself with great prowess till his adversaries fled. Manso, who writes that the rencounter took place beyond the city gate of Ferrara, tells us that the whole four set upon Tasso with drawn swords, and that the poet gained such renown from his brave defence that it passed into a proverb at Ferrara that no one equalled Torquato either with the pen or the sword.* His unworthy adversaries fled to Florence till the affair blew over. Tasso accuses this courtier of opening a chest containing his secret papers, about which he believed every one was interested. He wrote to the Marquis of Monte complaining that during the last eight months he had suffered much, especially from servants, who had stolen many of his precious papers, and though their wickedness was well known to himself and many, it was rather cloaked than punished by the judges. He entreats the Marquis to send him a servant and to threaten and get the Duke of Urbino to threaten him with the severest punishment if he behaved ill. "Tell him," Tasso adds, "that my word will be taken with regard to the propriety or impropriety of his conduct, for judicial proof cannot at this place and in such a case be expected." Eight days after, receiving no reply, he writes another letter repeating this request. By this time the poet had quarrelled with a good many of his critics and literary friends, with Guarini amongst others.

The singularity of the poet's behaviour seems only to have increased the kindness and solicitude of the Duke and his sisters. Lucretia especially did her utmost to calm and divert his anxieties and dissuade him from imprudent steps; but one evening, irritated by the presence of a servant, who was perhaps instructed to watch him, Tasso ran at the man with a knife. This happened on the evening of the 17th June, 1577, as we learn from a letter of Maffeo Veniero, a patrician of Venice and a well-known poet, at that time residing in Ferrara, in which he says: "Tasso was yesterday incarcerated for having in a chamber of the Duchess of Urbino drawn a knife upon a servant; but he has been arrested rather on account of his disorder and in order to have an opportunity to cure him than to get him punished.

* Manso's account ("Vita," p. 73), which seems to me a probable one, is contradicted by Serassi ("Vita del Tasso," Lib. ii., p. 235), who publishes the fragment of a letter from Tasso about the affray. Solerti ("Vita," Vol. i., p. 239) reduces it to an attempt on the brothers to cudgel Tasso. It is, however, clear from the action of the Duke and the flight of the brothers that the affair was of some importance.

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He has some strange humours of being guilty of the sin of heresy and of the fear of being poisoned, which I believe arises from melancholic blood confined at the heart and fuming to the brain. A miserable case for one of his worth and goodness."* The Duke was at his country seat of Belriguardo. On learning what had happened he instructed the steward of the palace to tell Tasso plainly that his mind was deranged and that he must submit to medical treatment. He listened to this message with astonishment; but thanked the Duke and promised to obey. Through the friendly hands of the steward Tasso sent a pathetic letter to the Duke asking to be allowed to return to his quarters. Alfonso sent his own physician to attend him. It was thought not safe to let him back to his rooms till bars had been put on the windows, and two men were appointed to watch him. He was allowed to return by the end of the month. He begged that the keepers should withdraw from his room as he could not close an eye while they were there, and this was granted. On the 2nd of July the Princess Leonora came with the doctor to see him, and on the 6th he was sent to Belriguardo.

(*To be concluded.*)

Statistics dealing with Hereditary Insanity, based on upwards of a Thousand Cases occurring in the Essex County Asylum. By JOHN TURNER, M.B., Senior Assistant Medical Officer.

Fifty years ago Baillarger† showed from a study of 453 cases that insanity is one third more frequently transmitted from the mothers to the children than from the fathers, and that in the case of sons the transmission is as frequently from one parent as from the other, and in the case of daughters the disposition to insanity is inherited twice as frequently from the mother as from the father. Leubuscher‡ apparently referring to some later statistics of Baillarger's dealing with 600 cases, found that:—

1. Insanity on the side of the mother is of more importance from an hereditary point of view than on that of the father, owing to its being more frequently transmitted

* Serassi, "Vita," p. 247.

† "Recherche Stat. sur l'Héredité de la Folie," *Ann. Med. Psych.*, 1844. Quoted by Greisinger (*N. Syd. Soc. Transl.*, p. 154).

‡ *Journ. Psych. Med.*, Vol. i., p. 264.

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