

passed by ; but He who died for them while they were yet sinners, still pleads with them when they love Him unworthily. He seeks the fullest love from those who wound and grieve Him by their lack of warmth. He knows that absence will not make the heart grow fonder as we sometimes foolishly say. Nothing but a full and happy fellowship will secure it—"If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Therefore in His wise, patient and wonderful love He stands and knocks and pleads for welcome.

"Behold, I knock ! Methinks if on My face
 Thou wouldst but rest thine eyes,
 Wouldst mark the crown of thorns, the sharp nails trace,
 Thou couldst not Me despise !
 Thee have I yearned for with a love so strong,
 Thee have I sought so earnestly and long ;
 My road led from a cross unto this place ;
 Behold, I knock !"



The heart of Tasso.

By MARY BRADFORD WHITING.

TO the great majority of English-speaking people, not only the writings, but the personality of Dante, is as familiar as that of our own Shakespeare. The pale, worn face, with the sad eyes and the strenuous mouth, is known to all ; the woes, the wanderings, and the exiled death, are a page of human history with which we are fully as well acquainted as are the great Italian's fellow-countrymen. With Torquato Tasso the case is different. As the author of the "Gerusalemme Liberata," his name is widely known, but comparatively few of those who have thus heard of him know the history of those sorrows, which, in spite of the lavish endowments of his brilliant youth, brought him to his death at the age of fifty-one, a penniless wanderer, broken in health and in fortune.

Both Goethe and Byron, in their poems upon the fate of Tasso, have assigned the same cause for this tragedy—viz., an unhappy love for Leonora d'Este, the sister of his patron, Duke Alfonso of Ferrara. It is only in later days that a more complete study of historical documents has thrown doubt upon this romantic legend, and that Tasso's own words have been given their due weight in evidence :

“ Pure non fermai la stabil cura
 In saldo oggetti, ed incostante amori
 Furo i miei sempre e non cocenti ardori.”
 (“ Yet never did I fix a stable heart
 On settled objects, and inconstant loves
 Were ever mine, not passion's burning fire.”)

The lovely young princess of the legend, in devotion to whom Tasso is supposed to have worn away, not only his wits, but his very life, was in reality a confirmed invalid, nine years older than the poet, seldom able to leave her couch, caring little for literature and art, but with a talent for keeping accounts, and possessed of a practical common sense that enabled her to govern the State successfully as Regent during a lengthy absence of the Duke. That she was much interested in Tasso, and showed him many favours, there is abundant evidence, but not all the care that has been expended on the examination of contemporary records and of the Court archives of Ferrara has availed to bring to light the story of any love passages between them.

And in such a case as this, it must be remembered, negative evidence may be considered as tantamount to positive proof. In a Court like that of Ferrara, eager eyes and envious tongues abounded—every recipient of ducal favours was the object of fierce jealousy ; and if there had been the least chance of thus rousing Alfonso's anger, a host of spies would have flocked to him with the tidings that the presumptuous poet had dared to woo the Princess Leonora !

And yet, even when it is robbed of this long-cherished romance, few life-stories are more full of human interest than the story of the heart of Tasso, tossed to and fro on the waves

of passion and disappointment, and sinking at last like a frail barque under the stress of the storm. The son of Bernardo Tasso, a man of good family and distinguished talents, Torquato was born in exceptionally favourable circumstances, and for a while all went well with him. His mother belonged to one of the noble families in Naples, and at the time of his birth in 1544, his father was the Secretary of the Prince of Salerno; but when he was only twelve years old his mother died, and his father, believing her to have been poisoned by some of her relations, broke away from Naples and went to Urbino.

Urbino, the seat of the Della Rovere family, was at that time a centre of learning and art, and the young Torquato, who was the constant companion of the heir to the dukedom, enjoyed its advantages to the full. It was little wonder, therefore, that his mind was set, not on the "dusty purlieus of the law," for which his father designed him, but on the glowing realms of poetry and romance; and though he went through a course of legal study at Padua, his poem "Rinaldo," written when he was only eighteen, convinced Bernardo that he possessed the true poetic gift.

From this moment his destiny was marked out for him. A poet in those days was bound to attach himself to the service of some wealthy patron; the reading public as we know it now did not exist, and the only hope for an author was the exercise of personal favour and protection. Among the Princes of Italy the Este family had always been distinguished for magnificence and generosity. Ariosto had been the favourite of an earlier Duke, and now that the Duchess Renata and her sober-minded followers had left Ferrara, her son Alfonso threw all his energies into an attempted revival of the glories of the Renaissance. It is difficult at the present day, while watching the prosaic everyday life in the streets of the quiet Lombardian town, to revive in imagination the splendours of those glittering times of which the chroniclers tell! Yet still the great red castle, circled by the deep waters of the moat in which so many tragedies lie hidden, stands as stern and strong as when Alfonso's Court

held revel within its walls, and in the frescoes of the Schifinoia Palace the pageant of the past is once more unrolled.

It was a feverish, glowing, restless life, into which Torquato Tasso was introduced as the protégé, first of the Cardinal Luigi d'Este, the younger brother of the Duke, and then of Alfonso himself—a life full of crowding interests and of ever-fresh excitement, a life of luxury, intrigue, and self-indulgence, the worst atmosphere possible for a young poet whose brain was on fire with romantic fancies, and whose nature was sensitive and susceptible to the last degree. Pastoral plays, concerts, masques, dances, banquets, followed one another in breathless succession; vast sums of money were lavished on these entertainments, and Alfonso's fame spread through the length and breadth of Italy. Himself a good actor, he required the co-operation of all his friends and followers, and the mad pursuit of pleasure drove all serious business into the hands of corrupt hirelings. The Cardinal, Luigi d'Este, was even more dissipated than his brother. He rebelled with all his might against the Sacred Orders which had been imposed upon him by his family for reasons of policy, and he solaced himself by every extravagance in his power; while the two Princesses, Lucrezia and Leonora, were possessed of a love of excitement fully as keen as that of their brothers.

To Tasso this gay and fevered life seemed at first one of supreme enjoyment. His contemporaries tell us that he had handsome features and a tall and graceful figure; he was well-born, amply supplied with means, and highly accomplished in all knightly exercises: in every way, therefore, he was fitted to play a distinguished part, and he was flattered on all sides—the Duke and his brothers loaded him with favours, and the Princesses allowed him to make one of their charmed circle. The fact that he was a poet only increased his claims to attention. The days of Grub Street were not yet, and courtiers and nobles were agreed that a celebrated man of letters was one of the most precious possessions of a Prince. Like a skilful general, or a valuable racehorse, he was to be jealously guarded

from those who might try to steal him away, and the more completely that he could be made dependent upon his patron the better.

It was during this halcyon time that Tasso wrote the best known of all his works, the "Gerusalemme Liberata," an epic poem of the first Crusade, with Godfrey for its hero, which he embellished with charming love-tales and with romantic episodes. At the time of its completion he was only thirty-one, but his life was already more than half over, and the remaining twenty years brought him nothing but the anguish of a slowly breaking heart.

His first grief was connected with his work. Instead of publishing his great poem, and leaving it to the judgment of the world, he submitted it to one friend after another, each of whom disapproved of it for some separate and equally cogent reason. To satisfy them all was impossible, but, unhappily for himself, Tasso essayed the task, omitting, altering, revising, until his already over-strained brain was utterly wearied out, and the manuscript of the poem which was one day to delight all readers was ignominiously relegated to the oblivion of an upper shelf.

It was not unnatural, under these circumstances, that he should long for a change of scene, but an attempt to transfer himself to the Court of Florence brought down Alfonso's anger upon him in full measure. The Duke of Ferrara was a generous patron in many respects, but Tasso, according to the ideas of the times, was his own possession, body, soul, and spirit, and that he should try to escape from the service of his owner was a crime of the deepest dye. The tension at last became so unbearable that the poet fled in disguise and sought refuge with his sister at Sorrento; but with one of those strange contradictions that are inherent in human nature, he was no sooner free than he longed for his chains once more, and he wrote to Alfonso entreating to be taken back.

The Duke consented, but after a few months the same restlessness returned upon the poet. Again he fled, and again

he wrote with a plea for forgiveness. Once more Alfonso took him back, but unfortunately he arrived at Ferrara at the moment that the preparations for the Duke's third marriage were in full swing; no one had time to attend to him, and his wounded susceptibilities drove him into a frenzy. Puzzled and irritated by his conduct, Alfonso ordered him to be taken to the madhouse of St. Anna, and here he remained for seven years.

Byron, in his "Lament of Tasso," speaks with thrilling indignation of the

"Long years of outrage, calumny and wrong,"

which the poet endured at the hands of the Este family; and, again, in "Childe Harold" draws a contrast between their shame and his well-deserved glory:

"And Tasso is their glory and their shame.
Hark to his strain, and then survey his cell!
And see how dearly earned Torquato's fame
And where Alfonso bade his poet dwell.
The miserable despot could not quell
The insulted mind he sought to quench, and blend
With the surrounding maniacs, in the hell
Where he had plunged it. Glory without end
Scattered the clouds away, and on that name attend

"The tears and praises of all time; while thine
Would rot in its oblivion—in the sink
Of worthless dust, which from thy boasted line
Is shaken into nothing—but the link
Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think
Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn;
Alfonso! how thy ducal pageants shrink
From thee! if in another station born,
Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou mad'st to mourn."

The cell which goes by the name of Tasso's prison is still preserved, and as one looks at the wretched stones upon which Byron scratched his signature, his indignation can be understood; but in justice to Alfonso it must be remembered that later researches have produced no evidence to show that this was really the place where he was confined, and that, though the madhouse itself was doubtless a miserable place enough, it was the custom of the time more than the Duke's

inhumanity that must be blamed. Nor was Byron better informed on the cause of the outbursts of rage that terrified Tasso's friends and brought him to this sorry pass. Everyone loves a lover, and it is not surprising that the story of his concealed passion for Leonora d'Este should have grown up around his name; but there can be little doubt that the shipwreck of his life was brought about, not by his love for another, but by the storms and tempests of his own nature. His sensitive temperament could bear no slights, and any fancied neglect drove him simply beside himself. Continual brooding over his troubles produced hallucinations; and it was not wonderful that such a lively imagination as his should picture evil spirits as haunting his solitude, upsetting his ink, and throwing his papers into confusion!

Nor was this all that he had to endure: a helpless prisoner, his possessions had been placed under the control of others, and advantage was taken of his captivity to publish the "Gerusalemme Liberata" without his permission. Editors and publishers gained a rich harvest, but no reward came to the author; and when at the end of seven years the Duke of Mantua procured his release, he found himself poor and homeless, with a mind too greatly injured by his sufferings to write anything of lasting value.

It was only in the last years of his life that any gleam of good fortune came to cheer him. Arriving in Rome in November, 1594, he was received with great honour, and admitted to a private audience of the Pope, Clement VIII. Clement informed him it was intended to mark the reverence due to his genius by presenting him with a laurel crown in the Capitol, as had been done in the case of Petrarch, adding: "We have destined you the crown of laurel, that from you it may receive as much honour as in times past it has conferred on others."

The ceremony was to be a pageant, in which all the population of the city were to join, and for this reason it was agreed to defer it until the spring, the Pope meanwhile granting him

a handsome pension that he might be secured from any further pecuniary troubles. But the tragedy of Tasso's life was not yet over : before he had begun to enjoy his long-delayed prosperity, symptoms of illness returned, and, longing for a fresher air than the city could afford, he asked the Pope's permission to retire to the Monastery of St. Onofrio, on the Janiculum Hill.

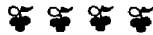
The little church is scarcely changed since the days of Tasso ; and, standing in its quiet portico, it is easy to picture the scene that took place four hundred years ago, when the great coach of Cardinal Cinthio, Tasso's special patron, came labouring up the slope, and the Prior of the monastery came out to meet the dying poet. The land was bright with April sunshine during these last weeks of his life, and the oak-tree is still shown under which he loved to sit and converse with his friends as long as his failing strength allowed him.

"It avails not now to speak of my relentless fortune," he wrote to his friend Constantini, "nor to complain of the ingratitude of the world, which has gained the victory of conducting me indigent to the tomb, while I fondly hoped that the glory which (whatever it may think) this age shall derive from my writings would not entirely leave me without reward. I have caused myself to be conducted into this Monastery of St. Onofrio, not only because the air of it is praised by the physicians as better than any in Rome, but also that I may begin at this exalted place, and with the intercourse of these devout fathers, my conversation in heaven."

The story of Tasso's heart had reached its last page. "I thank God that after so many storms He has brought me to a quiet haven," he said, as he lay upon his death-bed, nor could the failure of his earthly hopes affect him now. "It is not the poet's crown that I hope to wear," he said, "but the crown of glory among the blessed."

"In manus tuas, Domine !" were the last words that breathed from his lips, and in that keeping we may believe that he found peace, even though we own with Byron that sorrow and disappointment followed him all the days of his life :

“ Peace to Torquato’s injured shade ! ’twas his
 In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
 Aim’d with her poison’d arrows—but to miss.
 Oh, victor unsurpassed in modern song !
 Each year brings forth its millions : but how long
 The tide of generations shall roll on,
 And not the whole combined and countless throng,
 Compose a mind like thine ! though all in one
 Condensed their scattered rays, they would not form a sun.”



The Missionary World.

BY THE REV. A. J. SANTER,

Formerly C.M.S. Missionary, India.

THAT the evident fact of India’s restlessness at the present time is full of significance for the missionary cannot be denied. And it appears to be a call from God to all interested in the spiritual welfare of our great dependency to mark well the onward march of events, and use the occasion for guiding the newly awakened enthusiasm of Swadeshism into a proper—*i.e.*, a Christian—channel. Swadeshism of the right sort—a true patriotism—is not a thing to be contemned. Indians may be perfectly loyal British subjects and at the same time remain absolutely Oriental in heart and manner of life. The problem now pressing itself upon the attention of the missionaries is how to make use of Eastern religious fervour and thought within proper bounds, and at the same time to avoid the appearance of wishing to force upon the awakening and developing Native Church the rigid forms and rules to which the Western mind has become accustomed. The question often arising in the mind of workers in the field, as quoted in the *C.M.S. Gazette*, is: “How are we to de-Westernize Christianity? How are they to be taught that Jesus is the Universal Saviour, Indian as much as English, and not a Saviour just for the West?” One step in this direction has been made, as we learn from the *North India Gleaner*, by the method adopted by Mr. Stokes, and sanctioned by the C.M.S., of becoming a Christian *sunnyasi*, or fakir, roaming about at will preaching the Gospel. Dr. Pennell, too, in his book, just published, “Among the Wild Tribes of the Afghan Frontier,” “has shown what a holiday jaunt of this nature can effect in the way of opening iron-bound doors.” In connection with the same subject an interesting account is given in the *C.M.S. Gazette* by the Rev. N. Tubbs of the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel, Allahabad, of the effect produced on the young men of that institution by the life of a Christian *sunnyasi* who had come on a visit. Mr. Tubbs writes that Ishananda Swami is a *sunnyasi*, or fakir, who has become a Christian, but, like Justin Martyr of old, he does not discard the philosopher’s cloak, but still goes about dressed in the familiar saffron robes of the religious ascetic. The hostellers were amazed at the idea. As they said in a public discussion in the common