duke gave him an apartment in his palace, where he lived in peace and affluence, and proſecuted his work ; which he now determined to dedicate to the duke, and which was publiſhed by his patrons, book by book, as he finiſhed them.

When he was about 27, he publiſhed a paſtoral comedy called A*minta ;* which was received with univerſal applauſe, as a maſterpiece in its kind, and is the original of the *Pastor Fido* and *Filli di Scirο.*

In the 30th year of his age he finiſhed his J*eruſalem,* and the whole was reprinted and publiſhed together : the ſuc­ceſs of it was aſtoniſhing ; it was tranſlated into Latin, French, Spanish, and even the Oriental languages, almoſt as ſoon as it appeared.

But it was Taſſo’s fate to become wretched from the moment that he gained the summit of reputation: very ſoon after his Jer*uſalem* was publiſhed, he loſt his father, who died at Oſtia upon the Po, the government of which place had been given him by the duke of Mantua ; his J*eruſalem* was attacked by a ſwarm of ignorant but petulant critics, who gave the preference to the rhapsodies of Pulci and Boyardo ; and the perfidy of a friend drew upon him much greater misfortunes.

This friend was a gentleman of Ferrara, to whom Tasso had indiscreetly communicated ſome tranſactions of a very delicate nature concerning his patron the duke, with whom he lived. This ſecret being betrayed, Tasso reproached his friend for his treachery ; and this reproach was retorted in such a manner as provoked Taſſo to ſtrike him. A chal­lenge immediately enſued, and the opponents met and enga­ged ; but during the rencounter, three brothers of Taſſo’s antagoniſt came up, and all fell upon him together : Taſſo defended himſelf ſo well, that he wounded two of them, and kept his ground against the others till ſome people came up and parted them. This made a great noiſe at Ferrara, where nothing was talked of but the valour of Taſſo ; and it became a kind of proverb, “ That Taſſo, with his pen and his ſword, was ſuperior to all men.”

The duke being informed of the quarrel, baniſhed the brothers from his dominions, confiſcated their eſtates, and Taſſo himſelf he ſhut up in prifon, under pretence of ſecuring him from any future attacks of his enemies.

Taſſo found means to eſcape from this confinement, after having ſuffered it about a year ; and, being now about 34 years of age, retired to Turin, where he was ſoon known and recommended to the duke of Savoy, who ſhowed him many marks of eſteem and affection : but Tasso, fearing that the duke of Ferrara would require him to be delivered up, and that the duke of Savoy would chooſe rather to com­ply than forfeit the friendſhip of that prince, precipitately ſet out for Rome alone, and without proper necessaries for ſuch a journey.

He got ſafe, however, to Rome ; where he went directly to his friend Mauritio Cataneo, who received him with great kindneſs, and the whole city ſeemed to rejoice at the preſence of ſo extraordinary a perſon. He was viſited by prin­ces, cardinals, prelates, and all the learned in general. But being impatient of exile, he took meaſures to make his peace with the duke, and ſucceeded.

The duke received him with great appearance of ſatisfaction, and gave him freſh marks of his eſteem. But Taſſo having made ſome attempts on the princeſs Leonora, whom he has celebrated in ſeveral of his verſes, the duke her bro­ther, believing, or pretending to believe, that his ill conduct proceeded from a diſordered underſtanding, cauſed him to be ſtrictly confined in the hoſpital of St Anne. Taſſo ap­plied to the duke, by every friend he had, to releaſe him from this confinement ; but the duke coldly anſwered, that inſtead of endeavouring to procure the enlargement of a per­ſon in his condition, they ought rather to exhort him to ſubmit patiently to ſuch remedies as were judged proper for him. Taſſo was certainly diſordered in his mind, whether as the effect or cauſe of this confinement : he was conſcious that he laboured under ſome diſtemper, and he believed the cauſe of it to be ſupernatural, and fancied himſelf haunted by a ſpirit that continually diſordered his books and papers ; to which, however, the tricks played him by his keepers might contribute. He continued, notwithſtanding, to ſolicit the interpoſition of all the powers in Italy, to whom he could find means to apply, particularly the emperor and the pope; but without ſucceſs. At laſt, after he had been a prisoner ſeven years, Vincentio Gonzaga prince of Mantua came to Ferrara among other great perſonages, during the feſtivals and rejoicings that were held there on the marriage of Caeſar of Eſte with Virginia of Medicis, procured his liberty, and took him with him to Mantua, he being then in the 42d year of his age.

At Mantua he lived about a year in great favour with the prince, and in all the ſplendour and affluence which the favour of great princes confers : but he was weary of a ſtate of dependence, however ſplendid and luxurious ; and there­fore reſolved to go to Naples, and endeavour to recover his mother’s jointure, which had been ſeized by her relations when he went into exile with his father Bernardo. With this view he procured letters of recommendation to the vice­roy ; and having taken leave of the prince of Mantua, he went firſt to Bergamo, where he ſtaid ſome time, and from thence proceeded to Naples.

At Naples he immediately commenced a suit at law for the recovery of his right, and divided his time between a proſecution of that and his ſtudies. But during the sum­mer he retired to Biſaccio with one Giovanni Batiſta Manſo, with whom he had contracted an intimate friendſhip.

Taſſo, who was now in his 45th year, appeared to Manſo, while they were at Biſaccio, to be affected with a melan­choly, which had very singular effects ; he therefore very frequently queſtioned him about them ; and Taſſo told him that he had a familiar ſpirit, with whom he frequently and freely converſed. Manſo treated this as an illuſion, but Taſſo ſtill affirmed it to be real ; and telling him that the ſpirit would meet and converſe with him the next day, in­vited him to be preſent. Manſo coming at the hour ap­pointed, ſaw Taſſo fix his eyes with great earneſtneſs upon a window, and perceiving him to continue without motion, he called him ſeveral times by his name. Taſſo made no reply ; but at length cried out with great vehemence, “ There is the friendly ſpirit that is come to converſe with me ; look, and be convinced that what I have ſaid is true.” Manſo looked, not without tome ſurpriſe, but ſaw nothing except the sun-beams which ſhone through the window. He was juſt going to aſk where the pretended ſpirit was, when he was prevented by Taſſo’s ſpeaking with great ear­neſtneſs to ſome imaginary being, ſometimes putting queſtions, and ſometimes giving answers, in a manner ſo pleaſing, and with ſuch elevation of expreſſion, that Manſo had no deſire to interrupt him : the converſation at laſt ended by the ſuppoſed departure of the ſpirit ; when Taſso turn­ing round to his friend, aſked if his doubts were removed ? To which he made no reply, being ſo much amazed that he gladly waved all farther converſation on the ſubject.

Finding his law-suit not likely to be ſoon determined, he, went from Naples to Rome, where he continued about a year in high favour with Pope Sextus Quintus ; and then went to Florence, at the preſſing invitation of Ferdinando grand duke of Tuſcany, who had been cardinal at Rome when Taſſo firſt reſided there.