impressions of his gems which were in the slightest degree inferior or defective. Gradually the beauty and artistic character of his productions came to be known. He received a commission from the empress of Russia for a collection of about 15,000 examples; all the richest cabinets in Europe were thrown open to him for purposes of study and reproduction; and his copies were frequently sold by fraudulent dealers as the original gems. He exhibited in the Royal Academy from 1769 to 1791. In 1775 he published the first catalogue of his works, a thin pamphlet detailing 2856 items. This was followed in 1791 by a large catalogue, in two volumes quarto, with illustrations etched by David Allan, and descriptive text in English and French by Rudolph Eric Raspe, enumerating nearly 16,000 pieces.

In addition to his impressions from antique gems, Tassie executed many large profile medallion portraits of his con­temporaries, and these form the most original and definitely artistic class of his works. They were modelled in wax from the life or from drawings done from the life, and—when this was impossible—from other authentic sources. They were then cast in white enamel paste, the whole medallion being sometimes executed in this material; while in other cases the head only appears in enamel, relieved against a background of ground-glass tinted of a subdued colour by paper placed behind. His first large enamel portrait was that of John Dolbon, son of Sir William Dolbon, Bart., modelled in 1793 or 1794; and the series possesses great historic interest, as well as artistic value, including as it does portraits of Adam Smith, Sir Henry Raeburn, Drs James Beattie, Blair, Black and Cullen, and many other celebrated men of the latter half of the 18th century. At the time of his death, in 1799, the collection of Tassic’s works numbered about 20,000 pieces.

His nephew, William Tassie (1777-1860), also a gem­engraver and modeller, succeeded to James Tassie’s business and added largely to his collection of casts and medallions. His portrait of Pitt, in particular, was very popular, and cir­culated widely. When the Shakespeare Gallery, formed by Alderman Boydell, was disposed of by lottery in 1805, William Tassie was the winner of the prize, and in the same year he sold the pictures by auction for a sum of over £6000. He be­queathed to the Board of Manufactures, Edinburgh, an extensive and valuable collection of casts and medallions by his uncle and himself, along with portraits of James Tassie and his wife by David Allan, and a series of water-colour studies by George Sanders from pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools.

(J. Μ. G.)

**TASSO, TORQUATO** (1544-1595), Italian poet, was the son of Bernardo Tasso (1493-1569), a nobleman of Bergamo, and his wife Porzia de’ Rossi. He was born at Sorrento on the 11th of March 1544. His father had for many years been secretary in the service of the prince of Salerno, and his mother was closely connected with the most illustrious Neapolitan families. The prince of Salerno came into collision with the Spanish government of Naples, was outlawed, and was de­prived of his hereditary fiefs. In this disaster of his patron Tasso’s father shared. He was proclaimed a rebel to the state, together with his son Torquato, and his patrimony was sequestered. These things happened during the boy’s child­hood. In 1552 he was living with his mother and his only sister Cornelia at Naples, pursuing his education under the Jesuits, who had recently opened a school there. The precocity of intellect and the religious fervour of the boy attracted general admiration. At the age of eight he was already famous. Soon after this date he joined his father, who then resided in great indigence, an exile and without occupation, in Rome. News reached them in 1556 that Porzia Tasso had died suddenly and mysteriously at Naples. Her husband was firmly convinced that she had been poisoned by her brother with the object of getting control over her property. As it subsequently happened, Porzia’s estate never descended to her son; and the daughter Cornelia married below her birth, at the instigation of her maternal relatives. Tasso’s father was a poet by predilection and a professional courtier. When, therefore, an opening at the court of Urbino offered in 1557, Bernardo Tasso gladly accepted it. The young Torquato, a handsome and brilliant lad, became the companion in sports and studies of Francesco Maria della Rovere, heir to the dukedom of Urbino. At Urbino a society of cultivated men pursued the aesthetical and literary studies which were then in vogue. Bernardo Tasso read cantos of his *Amadigi* to the duchess and her ladies, or discussed the merits of Homer and Virgil, Trissino and Ariosto, with the duke’s librarians and secretaries. Torquato grew up in an atmosphere of refined luxury and somewhat pedantic criticism, both of which gave a permanent tone to his character. At Venice, whither his father went to superintend the printing of the *Amadigi* (1560), these influences continued. He found himself the pet and prodigy of a distinguished literary circle. But Bernardo had suffered in his own career so seriously from addic­tion to the Muses and a prince that he now determined on a lucrative profession for his son. Torquato was sent to study law at Padua. Instead of applying himself to law, the young man bestowed all his attention upon philosophy and poetry. Before the end of 1562 he had produced a narrative poem called *Rinaldo,* which was meant to combine the regularity of the Virgilian with the attractions of the romantic epic. In the attainment of this object, and in all the. minor qualities of style and handling, *Rinaldo* showed such marked originality that its author was proclaimed the most promising poet of his time. The flattered father allowed it to be printed; and, after a short period of study at Bologna, he consented to his son’s entering the service of Cardinal Luigi d’Este. In 1565, then, Torquato for the first time set foot in that castle at Ferrara which was destined for him to be the scene of so many glories, and such cruel sufferings. After the publication of *Rinaldo* he had expressed his views upon the epic in some *Discourses on the Art of Poetry,* which committed him to a distinct theory and gained for him the additional celebrity of a philosophical critic. The age was nothing if not critical; but it may be esteemed a misfortune for the future author of the *Gerusalemme* that he should have started with pronounced opinions upon art. Essentially a poet of impulse and instinct, he was hampered in production by his own rules.

The five years between 1565 and 1570 seem to have been the happiest of Tasso’s life, although his father’s death in 1569 caused his affectionate nature profound pain. Young, hand­some, accomplished in all the exercises of a well-bred gentleman, accustomed to the society of the great and learned, illustrious by his published works in verse and prose, he became the idol of the most brilliant court in Italy. The princesses Lucrezia and Leonora d’Este, both unmarried, both his seniors by about ten years, took him under their protection. He was admitted to their familiarity, and there is some reason to think that neither of them was indifferent to him personally. Of the cele­brated story of his love for Leonora this is not the place to speak. It is enough at present to observe that he owed much to the constant kindness of both sisters. In 1570 he travelled to Γaris with the cardinal. Frankness of speech and a certain habitual want of tact caused a disagreement with his worldly patron. He left France next year, and took service under Duke Alfonso II. of Ferrara. The most important events in Tasso’s biography during the following four years are the publi­cation of the *Aminta* in 1573 and the completion of the *Gerusa­lemme Liberata* in 1574. The *Aminta* is a pastoral drama of very simple plot, but of exquisite lyrical charm. It appeared at the critical moment when modern music, under Paiestrina’s impulse, was becoming the main art of Italy. The honeyed melodies and sensuous melancholy of *Aminta* exactly suited and interpreted the spirit of its age. We may regard it as the most decisively important of Tasso’s compositions, for its influ­ence, in opera and cantata, was felt through two successive centuries. The *Gerusalemme Liberata* occupies a larger space in the history of European literature, and is a more considerable work. Yet the commanding qualities of this epic poem, those which revealed Tasso’s individuality, and which made it