their sorrows, so romantic in their adventures, so tender in their emotions, rivet our attention, while we skip the battles, religious ceremonies, conclaves, and stratagems of the campaign. The truth is that Tasso’s great inven­tion as an artist was the poetry of sentiment. Sentiment, not sentimentality, gives value to what is immortal in the *Gerusalemme.* It was a new thing in the 16th century, something concordant with a growing feeling for woman and with the ascendant art of music. This sentiment, refined, noble, natural, steeped in melancholy, exquisitely graceful, pathetically touching, breathes throughout the episodes of the *Gerusalemme,* finds metrical expression in the languishing cadence of its mellifluous verse, and sustains the ideal life of those seductive heroines whose names were familiar as household words to all Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Tasso’s self-chosen critics were not men to admit what the public has since accepted as incontrovertible. They vaguely felt that a great and beautiful romantic poem was embedded in a dull and not very correct epic. In their uneasiness they suggested every course but the right one, which was to publish the *Gerusalemme* without further dispute. Tasso, already overworked by his precocious studies, by exciting court-life and exhausting literary industry, now grew almost mad with worry. His health began to fail him. He complained of headache, suffered from malarious fevers, and wished to leave Ferrara. The *Gerusalemme* was laid in manuscript upon a shelf. He opened negotiations with the court of Florence for an exchange of service. This irritated the duke of Ferrara. Alfonso hated nothing more than his courtiers leaving him for a rival duchy. He thought, moreover, that, if Tasso were allowed to go, the Medici would get the coveted dedication of that already famous epic. Therefore he bore with the poet’s humours, and so contrived that the latter should have no excuse for quitting Ferrara. Meanwhile, through the years 1575, 1576, 1577, Tasso’s health grew worse. Jealousy inspired the courtiers to calumniate and insult him. His irritable and suspicious temper, vain and sensitive to slights, rendered him only too easy a prey to their malevolence. He became the subject of delusions,— thought that his servants betrayed his confidence, fancied he had been denounced to the Inquisition, expected daily to be poisoned. In the autumn of 1576 he quarrelled with a Ferrarese gentleman, Maddalo, who had talked too freely about some love affair ; in the summer of 1577 he drew his knife upon a servant in the presence of Lucrezia d’Este, duchess of Urbino. For this excess he was arrested; but the duke released him, and took him for change of air to his country seat of Belriguardo. What happened there is not known. Some biographers have surmised that a com­promising *liaison* with Leonora d’Este came to light, and that Tasso agreed to feign madness in order to cover her honour. But of this there is no proof. It is only certain that from Belriguardo he returned to a Franciscan convent at Ferrara, for the express purpose of attending to his health. There the dread of being murdered by the duke took firm hold on his mind. He escaped at the end of July, disguised himself as a peasant, and went on foot to his sister at Sorrento.

The truth seems to be that Tasso, after the beginning of 1575, became the victim of a mental malady, which, with­out amounting to actual insanity, rendered him fantastical and insupportable, a misery to himself and a cause of anxiety to his patrons. There is no evidence whatsoever that this state of things was due to an overwhelming passion for Leonora. The duke, instead of acting like a tyrant, showed considerable forbearance. He was a rigid and not sympathetic man, as egotistical as a princeling of that age was wont to be. But to Tasso he was never cruel,—hard and unintelligent perhaps, but far from being that monster of ferocity which has been painted. The subsequent history of his connexion with the poet, over which we may pass rapidly, will corroborate this view. While at Sorrento, Tasso hankered after Ferrara. The court-made man could not breathe freely outside its charmed circle. He wrote humbly requesting to be taken back. Alfonso consented, provided Tasso would agree to undergo a medical course of treatment for his melancholy. When he returned, which he did with alacrity under those conditions, he was well received by the ducal family. All might have gone well if his old maladies had not revived. Scene followed scene of irritability, moodiness, suspicion, wounded vanity, and violent outbursts. In the summer of 1578 he ran away again; travelled through Mantua, Padua, Venice, Urbino, Lombardy. In September he reached the gates of Turin on foot, and was courteously entertained by the duke of Savoy. Wherever he went, " wandering like the world’s rejected guest,” he met with the honour due to his illustrious name. Great folk opened their houses to him gladly, partly in compassion, partly in admiration of his genius. But he soon wearied of their society, and wore their kindness out by his querulous peevishness. It seemed, moreover, that life was intoler­able to him outside Ferrara. Accordingly he once more opened negotiations with the duke ; and in February 1579 he again set foot in the castle. Alfonso was about to contract his third marriage, this time with a princess of the house of Mantua. He had no children ; and, unless he got an heir, there was a probability that his state would fall, as it did subsequently, to the Holy See. The nuptial festivals, on the eve of which Tasso arrived, were not therefore the occasion of great rejoicing to the elderly bridegroom. As a forlorn hope he had to wed a third wife ; but his heart was not engaged and his expectations were far from sanguine. Tasso, preoccupied as always with his own sorrows and his own sense of dignity, made no allowance for the troubles of his master. Rooms below his rank, he thought, had been assigned him. The princesses did not want to see him. The duke was engaged. Without exercising common patience, or giving his old friends the benefit of a doubt, he broke into terms of open abuse, behaved like a lunatic, and was sent off without ceremony to the madhouse of St Anna. This happened in March 1579; and there he remained until July 1586. Duke Alfonso’s long-sufferance at last had given way. He firmly believed that Tasso was insane, and he felt that if he were so St Anna was the safest place for him. Tasso had put himself in the wrong by his intemperate conduct, but far more by that incomprehen­sible yearning after the Ferrarese court which made him return to it again and yet again. It would be pleasant to assume that an unconquerable love for Leonora led him back. Unfortunately, there is no proof of this. His relations to her sister Lucrezia were not less intimate and affectionate than to Leonora. The lyrics he addressed to numerous ladies are not less respectful and less passionate than those which bear her name. Had he compromised her honour, the duke would certainly have had him murdered. Custom demanded this retaliation, and society approved of it. If therefore Tasso really cherished a secret lifelong devotion to Leonora, it remains buried in impenetrable mystery. He did certainly not behave like a loyal lover, for both when he returned to Ferrara in 1578 and in 1579 he showed no capacity for curbing his peevish humours in the hope of access to her society.

It was no doubt very irksome for a man of Tasso’s pleasure-loving, restless, and self-conscious spirit to be kept for more than seven years in confinement. Yet we must weigh the facts of the case rather than the fancies which