have been indulged regarding them. After the first few months of his incarceration he obtained spacious apart­ments, received the visits of friends, went abroad attended by responsible persons of his acquaintance, and corre­sponded freely with whomsoever he chose to address. The letters written from St Anna to the princes and cities of Italy, to warm well-wishers, and to men of the highest reputation in the world of art and learning, form our most valuable source of information, not only on his then condition, but also on his temperament at large. It is singular that he spoke always respectfully, even affection­ately, of the duke. Some critics have attempted to make it appear that he was hypocritically kissing the hand which had chastised him, with the view of being released from prison. But no one who has impartially considered the whole tone and tenor of his epistles will adopt this opinion. What emerges clearly from them is that he laboured under a serious mental disease, and that he was conscious of it. He complains that his disorder at times amounted to frenzy, after which his memory was weakened and his intellectual faculties enfeebled. He saw visions and heard phantom voices. Puck-like spirits made away with his books and papers. The old dread of poison, the old terror of the Inquisition, returned with greater violence. His bodily condition grew gradually worse; and, though he does not seem to have suffered from acute attacks of illness, the intellectual and physical constitution of the man was out of gear. Meanwhile he occupied his uneasy leisure with copious compositions. The mass of his prose dialogues on philosophical and ethical themes, which is very considerable, we owe to the years of imprisonment in St Anna. Except for occasional odes or sonnets—some written at request and only rhetorically interesting, a few inspired by his keen sense of suffering and therefore poignant—he neglected poetry. But everything which fell from his pen during this period was carefully preserved by the Italians, who, while they regarded him as a lunatic, somewhat illogically scrambled for the very offscourings of his wit. Nor can it be said that society was wrong. Tasso had proved himself an impracticable human being ; but he remained a man of genius, the most interesting personality in Italy. Long ago his papers had been sequestered. Now, in the year 1580, he heard that part of the *Gerusalemme* was being published without his per­mission and without his corrections. Next year the whole poem was given to the world, and in the following six months seven editions issued from the press. The prisoner of St Anna had no control over his editors ; and from the masterpiece which placed him on the level of Petrarch and Ariosto he never derived one penny of pecuniary profit. A rival poet at the court of Ferrara undertook to revise and re-edit his lyrics in 1582. This was Battista Guarini ; and Tasso, in his cell, had to allow odes and sonnets, poems of personal feeling, occasional pieces of compliment, to be collected and emended, without lifting a voice in the matter. A few years later, in 1585, two Florentine pedants of the Della Crusca academy declared war against the *Gerusalemme.* They loaded it with insults, which seem to those who read their pamphlets now mere parodies of criticism. Yet Tasso felt bound to reply ; and he did so with a moderation and urbanity which prove him to have been not only in full possession of his reasoning faculties, but a gentleman of noble manners also. Certainly the history of Tasso’s incarceration at St Anna is one to make us pause and wonder. The man, like Hamlet, was distraught through ill-accommodation to his circumstances and his age ; brain-sick he was undoubtedly ; and this is the duke of Ferrara’s justification for the treatment he endured. In the prison he bore himself pathetically, peevishly, but never ignobly. He showed a singular indifference to the fate of his great poem, a rare magna­nimity in dealing with its detractors. His own personal distress, that terrible *malaise* of imperfect insanity, absorbed him. What remained over, untouched by the malady, unoppressed by his consciousness thereof, dis­played a sweet and gravely-toned humanity. The oddest thing about his life in prison is that he was always trying to place his two nephews, the sons of his sister Cornelia, in court-service. One of them he attached to the duke of Mantua, the other to the duke of Parma. After all his father’s and his own lessons of life, he had not learned that the court was to be shunned like Circe by an honest man. In estimating Duke Alfonso’s share of blame, this wilful idealization of the court by Tasso must be taken into account. That man is not a tyrant’s victim who moves heaven and earth to place his sister’s sons with tyrants.

In 1586 Tasso left St Anna at the solicitation of Vincenzo Gonzaga, prince of Mantua. He followed his young deliverer to the city by the Mincio, basked awhile in liberty and courtly pleasures, enjoyed a splendid recep­tion from his paternal town of Bergamo, and produced a meritorious tragedy called *Torrismondo.* But only a few months had passed when he grew discontented. Vincenzo Gonzaga, succeeding to his father’s dukedom of Mantua, had scanty leisure to bestow upon the poet. Tasso felt neglected. In the autumn of 1587 we find him journeying through Bologna and Loreto to Rome, and taking up his quarters there with an old friend, Scipione Gonzaga, now patriarch of Jerusalem. Next year he wandered off to Naples, where he wrote a dull poem on *Monte Oliveto.* In 1589 he returned to Rome, and took up his quarters again with the patriarch of Jerusalem. The servants found him insufferable, and turned him out of doors. He fell ill, and went to a hospital. The patriarch in 1590 again received him. But Tasso’s restless spirit drove him forth to Florence. The Florentines said, “Actum est de eo.” Rome once more, then Mantua, then Florence, then Rome, then Naples, then Rome, then Naples—such is the weary record of the years 1590-94. We have to study a verit­able Odyssey of malady, indigence, and misfortune. To Tasso everything came amiss. He had the palaces of princes, cardinals, patriarchs, nay popes, always open to him. Yet he could rest in none. To rest would have been so easy, had he possessed the temperament of Berni or of Horace. But he was out of joint with the world. No sensuous comforts, no tranquillity of living, soothed his vexed soul. Gradually, in spite of all veneration for the *sacer vates,* he made himself the laughing-stock and bore of Italy.

His health grew ever feebler and his genius dimmer. In 1592 he gave to the public a revised version of the *Gerusalemme.* It was called the *Gerusalemme Conquistata.* All that made the poem of his early manhood charming he rigidly erased. The versification was degraded ; the heavier elements of the plot underwent a dull rhetorical development. During the same year a prosaic composition in Italian blank verse, called *Le Sette Giornate,* saw the light. Nobody reads it now. We only mention it as one of Tasso’s dotages—a dreary amplification of the first chapter of Genesis.

It is singular that just in these years, when mental disorder, physical weakness, and decay of inspiration seemed dooming Tasso to oblivion, his old age was cheered with brighter rays of hope. Clement VIII. ascended the papal chair in 1592. He and his nephew, Cardinal Aldobrandini of St Giorgio, determined to befriend our poet. In 1594 they invited him to Rome. There he was to assume the crown of bays, as Petrarch had assumed it, on the Capitol. Lean and worn out with sickness, ready to