212910

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OU_212910

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

# TALES FROM ARIOSTO

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
DALLAS · SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

LODOVICO ARIOSTO, FROM THE LONG-LOST PORTRAIT BY
DOSSO DOSSI.

*Frontispiece.*

# TALES FROM ARIOSTO

BY

J. SHIELD NICHOLSON

Sc.D., LL.D., F.B.A.

PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1913

COPYRIGHT

# CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| | INTRODUCTION | ix |
| I. | PROLOGUE: THE COMING OF ANGELICA | 3 |
| II. | THE FOUNTAIN OF HATE AND THE RIVER OF LOVE | 17 |
| III. | RODOMONT AND THE INVASION OF EUROPE BY THE SARACENS | 35 |
| IV. | FIRST MEETING OF ROGERO AND BRADAMANT | 61 |
| V. | ANGELICA, THE HERMIT, AND THE ORC | 87 |
| VI. | THE MARRIAGE OF ANGELICA AND THE MADNESS OF ORLANDO | 115 |
| VII. | MANDRICARDO AND DORALIS | 135 |
| VIII. | ZERBINO AND ISABELLA | 149 |
| IX. | RODOMONT AND ISABELLA | 177 |
| X. | ASTOLPHO RESTORES HIS SENSES TO ORLANDO | 197 |
| XI. | THE COMBAT IN LIPADUSA: THREE AGAINST THREE | 225 |
| XII. | ROGERO AND LEO AND BRADAMANT | 249 |
| XIII. | THE MARRIAGE OF BRADAMANT | 275 |

# ILLUSTRATIONS


FACE PAGE

Lodovico Ariosto, from the long-lost Portrait by Dosso Dossi . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Medoro and Cloridan finding the body of Dardinello on the battlefield . . . . . 119

Orlando hurling the heavy table on the robbers . 152

Saint John and Astolpho on the journey to the Moon 207

Saint John, Astolpho, and Father Time at the River of Oblivion . . . . . 214

Astolpho restores to Orlando his senses . . . 221

Flordelis at the tomb of Brandimarte . . . 246

Rogero revealed to Marfisa in the Court of Charlemagne . . . . . 288


The block of the Frontispiece has been kindly lent by the Proprietors of *The Connoisseur*, and the remaining illustrations are reproduced from the rare edition of the *Orlando Furioso* in four volumes, with plates by Cipriani, Greuze, and others, engraved by Bartolozzi and others, published by P. Plassan, Paris, 1795.

# INTRODUCTION

Lodovico Ariosto was born in Reggio, September 8, 1474, and died in Ferrara, June 6, 1533. The first edition of the *Orlando Furioso* was published in 1516, and the last revised by the author in 1532. The poem at once gained an immense success, and Panizzi says that at least 100,000 copies were printed in ten years from 1542 to 1551. The book was translated into the chief modern languages, and the fame of the author grew from century to century. The four hundredth anniversary of Ariosto's birth was the occasion of elaborate celebrations in Ferrara, and Italy's greatest modern poet, Giosuè Carducci, wrote of him with the enthusiasm we are accustomed to reserve for Shakespeare. It is said that the epithet of "the divine poet" was first given to Ariosto by Galileo, and the name has been handed down to our own times. Besides being one of the great poets of the world Ariosto is a prince of story-tellers. In this country, however, Ariosto is now very little read, and even the names of his chief characters are seldom heard. People speak of "rodomontades," but they do not know who Rodomont was.

# TALES FROM ARIOSTO

The object of the present venture is to do something to revive the interest of the ordinary English reader in Ariosto. The excellent works of Mr. Edmund Gardner[1] have got rid of a mass of false tradition and ill-founded criticism, and are invaluable for the serious student of the Renaissance and of its most representative writer. But to the ordinary reader these works may seem too elaborate for a beginning. The present volume is intended to give some of the chief stories of the *Orlando Furioso* in such a way as to bring out also the main plot.[2]

If it be asked what a man of my trade has to do with Italian poetry, I shall reply that my old master, Adam Smith, wrote an essay, much admired by Dr. Johnson, on Italian versification compared with English. The critic will there find the reason why "single rhymes occur very rarely in Ariosto," and the logical result of the comparison seems to be that Ariosto's poetry is best translated into English prose.

How I came to be so much interested in Ariosto that I wished to bring other people under the charm is perhaps best shown by a reference to my personal experience, which will also serve to explain incidentally why Ariosto has lost popular favour in this country.

Some time ago I happened to read again, after a

[1] *Dukes and Poets in Ferrara* (1904), and *Ariosto, the King of Court Poets* (1906).

[2] I had also written a *Life and Appreciation* of Ariosto for the ordinary English reader which was at first intended to be published with this volume. But I was advised that the *Tales* might appeal to a different class of readers, and in the meantime the publication of the *Life* is postponed.

very long interval, Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid*. I read the book simply for the story and the enjoyment of the mighty line, and I had no ulterior design of improving my mind, or recalling in an easy manner the classical studies of my youth, although no doubt the pleasure was enhanced by the remembrances of the Latin and old associations. The story, however, was the thing, and I was astonished by the full-bodied life of the translation. I found myself as interested in the plot and characters and the episodes as if I were reading a modern novel for amusement. In truth, the amusement of the modern novel seemed feeble in comparison.

I was encouraged to try other translations in verse, and next I read the *Lusiad* of Camoens, and in spite of the poverty of the translation (Mickle) the story lived and moved, and even all the poetry had not vanished. In this way I was led by an easy gradation to John Hoole's version of Ariosto. Judged by any of the usual tests of translators, Hoole is one of the worst. He has all the mannerisms and no spark of the brilliancy of Pope, and for the most part his verse is the very false gallop of commonplace. Hoole was indeed, as Sir Walter Scott said, the noble transmuter of the gold of Ariosto into lead, and we are told elsewhere that Hoole transmuted so much of the gold every day—no more, no less—until his task was done.

But in spite of Hoole, such was the native force of Ariosto, that the story moved and the people lived again. It happened that I had long had in my

possession a very rare edition of the *Orlando Furioso* in Italian, with fine plates,[1] which, except the plates, I had persistently neglected. The poverty of Hoole led me back to the wealth of the original, and once a beginning was made I read it and re-read it with increasing pleasure. I wondered how so divine a poet was now so little known in this country. I asked the leading authority if there was no better version in English than Hoole's, and he told me there was William Stewart Rose—his version. As a crib to the Italian Rose is excellent, but as a teller of tales for an English reader Rose is even less attractive than Hoole. Sir Walter, indeed, tells a story that when Rose's translation appeared, some one said (it was at a breakfast of Samuel Rogers's) that the Italian should be printed on the other side to assist the indolent reader to understand the English.

It is probably due, however, to a misunderstanding of the opinion given by Sir Walter on the merits of the translation by Rose that Ariosto has been neglected in this country for nearly a century past. Rose tells with pride in his preface that he had been encouraged to complete the translation by his friend Sir Walter himself, who had told him, with the wisdom of an oracle, that the doing of the work would be its own reward. This was interpreted to mean that Sir Walter approved of the translation, and this supposed approval sufficed to displace Hoole

[1] Paris, P. Plassan (1795), with plates by Cipriani, Cochin, Greuze, etc., engraved by Bartolozzi and others. A few of these plates are reproduced in the present volume.

from the English reading world. But however serious the defects of Hoole's translation, it proved itself to be readable by any ordinary reader who could read a story in "Popish" verse. Rose, except as a crib to the Italian, is unreadable; Hoole, before he was damned by Rose, ran through seventeen editions.

It is surely curious that, by an unfortunate accident, the genial encouragement of Sir Walter Scott should have been the chief cause of the neglect into which in this country his favourite poet has fallen. Every one knows that Byron called Scott the Ariosto of the North, though it is perhaps not so well known that in the same stanza he called Ariosto the Southern Scott. Certain it is that the influence of Ariosto on Scott was enormous. And oddly enough the influence came, in the first place, through the despised Hoole. When Scott was apprenticed to the law in his father's office he was so much interested in Hoole's translation that he saved up his pocket-money to get lessons in Italian so as to read Ariosto in the original. It is told also by Scott, in a fragment of the Autobiography, that when he was a student at the University he incurred the wrath of his Professor of Greek by comparing Ariosto to Homer, to the disadvantage of the latter. For a very long time Scott made a practice of reading Ariosto (and Boiardo, who was Ariosto's father in poetry) once a year. For the present purpose, however, the literary influence of Ariosto is of secondary importance; though in passing it may be recalled that he had already impressed his genius on Spenser

and Milton and even on Shakespeare, and most of all on Cervantes. To properly appreciate Don Quixote one must know the *Orlando Furioso*. Here again it is remarkable that the admiration of the Spaniard, by a singular perversion, has been as unlucky as that of the Scot. For it has been supposed that the very purpose of Cervantes was to ridicule the work of Ariosto. The critics know better, but the popular opinion is too deeply rooted to be moved out of its place.

It needs no showing that Ariosto is in the very front rank of poets, but there are other poets, with great names, who are much talked of and little read, except by professed students. The ordinary lover of romance, who, for example, can read with delight the extravagances of the *Arabian Nights*, does not go to Spenser for amusement, in spite of the gorgeous imagery and the Elizabethan language; and Spenser was professedly an imitator of Ariosto. But of Ariosto it has been truly said that of all poets he is most read over and over again, and that with him the pleasure grows with the familiarity. Once the reader gets over the preliminary difficulty of making a beginning, the charm is irresistible, even in Hoole's translation.

But for the English reader of the present day the preliminary difficulty is really considerable. The only version that gives the spirit of the original in English worthy of the subject is that by Sir John Harrington, "that witty fellow, my godson," as Queen Elizabeth called him. Unfortunately, however, the

book is so rare that it is difficult to get access to a copy even in a good library, and the price is prohibitive, except to the bibliomaniac who is also a lover of Ariosto. The language is also in many cases too robust for the present age; and the book is enriched with plates and notes that are now chiefly of antiquarian interest, so that a reprint seems improbable. But apart from the want of a good translation, the English reader of the present day is confronted by another serious obstacle in making a beginning of Ariosto, if he is reading merely for pleasure and not for literary culture or curiosity. The truth is that the *Orlando Furioso* is so complex in construction that the full effect can only be realised after intimate familiarity has been attained with the characters and episodes. On a first perusal the reader is bewildered by the wonderful interlacing of the different stories and the sudden intervention of new characters. In no writer are the transitions so abrupt and the intervals of suspended interest so prolonged. The *Orlando Furioso* is a conglomeration of stories of all kinds, from the most delicate and ideal romance to the broadest humour. And the stories are not simply held together as in the *Arabian Nights* by a connective tissue that is purely formal, but the main plot in Ariosto is developed in the telling of the stories, and the more one reads the more one is astonished at the constructive art of the poet. A story is left at the most interesting point and not taken up again until other incomplete stories have been interwoven with the main plot. There is

no preliminary description of the characters or of the scene of action. It seems at first sight as if Ariosto had pieced together a mass of stories in a kind of patchwork, and that the only interest of the plot was in the disentanglement and the postponement of the solution of the puzzle. It is as if Shakespeare had put into one great play a dozen tragedies and comedies and interspersed the scenes at random; and it is only after repeated readings that the method in the madness of Ariosto is seen and appreciated. The difficulty is increased by the fact that the stories are in themselves so vivid and interesting that the main plot is not seen or is forgotten; as in a great battle the main strategy is lost in the particular incidents. The complexity of the whole poem and the interest of the particular stories may be shown by a simple fact. It has been the practice of successive editors to give footnotes with references for the continuation of the story in hand. Probably the only translator who has not adopted this plan is the unfortunate Rose. By the aid of these guiding notes the reader may finish one story at a time, but he will not see the full bearing until the intervening stories have been read.

It may be asked how the work could have attained so sudden and great popularity when it first appeared. It must be remembered that the *Orlando Furioso* is in form a sequel to the *Orlando Innamorato* of Boiardo, and the readers of the new work were supposed to be familiar with the old. Apart from this, most of the characters are taken

from the general store of romantic legend with which the people of the age were familiar, and which indeed had become a part of popular tradition. Orlando (or Roland, to give the more familiar name in English) was as well-known and as real a personage as Charlemagne himself; or we might say that the Charlemagne of mediaeval tradition was as legendary as Roland. The current phrase "as romances tell" was familiar and full of meaning to all the men and women of the time from their youth up. The art of the poet lay more in the setting of the old than in the invention of the new. Even in the setting plagiarism was not a vice but a virtue. Spenser in the *Faerie Queene* introduced literal translations of whole stanzas from Ariosto, just as Ariosto had incorporated famous passages from the classical writers.

Besides the difficulty involved in the complexity of the story and the multitude of personages—and even the great Alexander Dumas himself is relatively simple—other troubles are put in the way of the reader both from the style and from the "machines" (to use the old term). Ariosto in the matter of style is not only the despair of any translator, but the despair also of the critic, and of the reader who is biased by the judgment of the critic. The footnotes of Hoole are sprinkled with apologies and lamentations, not for the poverty of the translation, but for the extravagances in the style of his original which refused to be put into any imitation of Pope's *Homer*. In truth, the style of Ariosto is as varied as that of Chaucer or Shakespeare. The heroic not

only verges on but passes into the mock heroic, and there is no gradual modulation. Ariosto delights in abrupt transitions, not merely from grave to gay but from epic tragedy to grotesque extravaganza. And between the extremes there are variations of all kinds. The variegated style of Ariosto is not the result, as might at first be supposed, of carelessness in composition or ignorance of the rules of "polite" literature. The poet took infinite pains in revising his verses; he put his doubts before his friends, and he knew the best men and women in a great age; he invited and pressed for suggestions of improvements. The marvel is that he did not file and polish until no freshness was left. But the most notable characteristic of the poem is its irrepressible vitality. The people are all real and living, and their actions are the actions of the living. No doubt there are morals to be extracted, and ideals and allegories, but only such as are to be extracted from the lives of men. In this respect there could be no sharper contrast than between Ariosto and Spenser. With the Italian the moral, if there is one, must be seen by the reader for himself, and the moral will vary with the reader just as the morals drawn from the book of life. With the English imitator the allegory is dominant and persistent; the characters are not persons but ideas, and ideas they remain to the end of the story.

In the matter of style the fascination of Ariosto grows with reading and re-reading, and with increased familiarity with the persons and the atmosphere of the poem. He is always a writer of romance; he is real but

not realistic. He cared no more than Shakespeare for accuracy in geography or history, and yet his places and people seem real just as the wood near Athens, and Duke Theseus, and the rude mechanicals, seem real.

In the same way Ariosto may be compared with Shakespeare in the use of the supernatural; and this leads up to the difficulties associated with the "machines," and the gods in and out of the machines. The reader must be warned that in Ariosto the magical and even the supernatural in the more narrow sense play an essential part. To begin with, there are the more simple forms of the marvellous. There is the celebrated flying horse, one of the most fascinating horses in fiction, described as a natural but very rare hybrid. There is the famous golden lance, which with a touch unseats the strongest rider. There is the ring which wards off other magic and makes its holder invisible at pleasure. There is the horn that with its blast terrifies the bravest. There are magicians and fairies and monsters and monstrosities of divers sorts; and all these wonders are as much parts of the story as the paladins and paynims. So far, however, there is not much difficulty; that is to say, if only the reader will take the magical of Ariosto as he does that of Shakespeare (or shall we say of Maeterlinck?) and does not search for allegories.

But beyond the magical there is the supernatural proper. The main action is the conflict between the Saracens and the Christians for the possession of Europe. On each side aid is summoned from the

ends of the earth; the fate of Christendom is in the balance. The greatest of the paladins is Orlando, and he has been gifted by God with an invulnerable body, and a perfection in all the virtues and graces of chivalry. But he forgets his duty to his God and king and becomes enslaved to the love of Angelica, "the fairest of her sex," but a Pagan and the enslaver of all men, Christian and Saracen. It is for this sin that madness comes upon Orlando—and the madness of Orlando is the title-rôle of the poem.

But although the supreme power is fundamental in the development of the great contest for Christendom, it is not obtruded and forced on the attention. The madness of Orlando seems simply the natural outcome of his despair on the loss of Angelica.

The human interest is never lost sight of or suppressed by the overwhelming powers of the supernatural. The contrast with Milton is as marked as with Spenser. The treatment of the religious elements by Ariosto is, indeed, so frankly artistic or classical that he has been censured by some of the older commentators for blasphemy. The reader familiar with mediaeval art and religion will see at once that the charge of blasphemy is simply incongruous.

It was quite in accord with the spirit of his works and of his life that Ariosto should have been buried in a church lamented, as Hoole says, by every good man,—though Hoole more than any one laments in his notes the "indefensible blasphemies" of his author. The present-day reader, however, is much

more likely to be afraid that a poet who introduces the powers and dominions of heaven will be not blasphemous but simply dull and sermonic. Let any one who fears to be enticed into an inferior *Paradise Regained* read, to begin with, the description of the journey of Astolpho to the moon under the guidance of Saint John for the recovery of the senses lost by Orlando, a series of scenes in which the fanciful imagination of Ariosto is at its best.

Another obstacle in the way of reading Ariosto that is likely to be formidable to the English reader, who has been dulled by the easy realism of modern fiction, is the gorgeous extravagance of the prowess of the heroes. But romance without extravagance (according to ordinary standards) is not romance, and the only true test is that of internal harmony, not of harmony with ordinary human nature. The best example of this extravagant prowess is Rodomont, who has given his name in all languages to the extremes of boastful daring and impossible feats of arms. But just as Quixotism gives a very false idea of the Don Quixote of Cervantes, so does "rodomontade" suggest a very false idea of the Rodomont of Ariosto. Again, the extravagances of the madness of Orlando must be taken with the setting in the poem, and not with reference to a medical work on insanity or the conventional madness of modern fiction. The madness of Orlando is in some ways like the madness of Ajax, though in origin and development quite different. In both cases the hero in his madness does the things that

he could not have done, even in the wildest passion, in his sanity. Amongst the virtues of chivalry one of the most pleasing was the friendly care always bestowed on the horse. In a tournament or even in battle it was considered heinous to wound the horse of an opponent with intention. Ariosto, unlike Scott or Homer, may forget to give the warriors themselves a sufficiency of meals and feasts, but he never forgets the horses ; even Rodomont in his blind fury for the loss of Doralis is made to sail down a river to give a rest to his wearied horse. But Orlando in his madness directs much of his fury against innocent horses. Nothing could show more forcibly the madness of the hero, though at first sight his ferocity in this direction seems inexplicable brutality.

If some of the ruling ideas of Ariosto seem to us rather worn by long use and imitation, there are other ideas in the *Orlando Furioso* which at the present time are exciting a very lively interest. The poet has created in Bradamant the ideal of the woman militant, and Bradamant is the central heroine of the whole poem. In battle or in single combat she is the equal of the greatest knights, and yet withal she never loses her woman's character. Her love for Rogero is love at first sight, and becomes the ruling power in all her thoughts and deeds. She is by turns fearful and jealous, self-effacing and wholly exacting, forgiving and unforgiving, variable as the wind and yet constant as the fixed star, just as if she had never donned armour. Even Marfisa,

who in some ways is the counterpart of Rodomont, is never brutally masculine, and shows her saving graces on occasions with delightful unexpectedness, as when she forbears to hang Brunello. The Amazons themselves are made quite reasonable, even in their savage laws against men,—granted the original provocation.[1] The devotion of Ariosto to women and the honour he paid to woman in his great poem are plainly genuine and sincere, and in marked contrast to the courtly flattery bestowed on his contemptible patron, Cardinal Ippolito. And although the woman militant plays a great part in the *Orlando Furioso*, perhaps the greatest triumph is Angelica, who never even wore a dagger.

There are no doubt passages and scenes in Ariosto, as in Chaucer and Shakespeare, which to the present age may seem too natural for our prevailing conventions; and Ariosto has been styled indelicate, just as he used to be called blasphemous. And with equal unreason; for the tone of a writer must be judged not merely by the negative test of reticence, but by the vital spirit that pervades his work. And the spirit of Ariosto is the spirit of health and vigour, and is ruled by courage and truth and courtesy. Courtesy has been for so long a time a receding virtue that we have now almost lost sight of it; but Ariosto makes "courtesies" the burden of his song, just as much as loves and deeds of daring, as is shown in the first couplet which he is

[1] The stories here referred to are not included in the present set, nor is the reply of Ariosto to Rodomont's famous invective against women, p. 182.

reported to have written over and over again, thus Englished by Harrington :

> Of Dames, of Knights, of armes, of love's delight
> Of courtesies, of high attempts I speake. . . .

I have wandered far from my starting-point, and it is time to return to the narrow range of the purpose of this volume. It is not within its compass to offer any contribution whatever to the serious study of Ariosto from any point of view. It occurred to me, after reading the "divine" poet many times with increasing pleasure, that he would still find many English readers (even in a bad translation) if only certain preliminary difficulties could be got over. The nature of some of these difficulties has already been indicated, and no doubt the greatest of all is that Ariosto is always beginning a new story before he has half finished a number of old ones. When his readers were more or less familiar with the characters and the setting from other sources this trouble was not so great, although this complex interlacing has often been considered as one of the defects of the poem as a whole. And yet it will be found that once the perspective has been realised this intermingling of stories has a peculiar fascination, and as Charles James Fox is reported to have said, there is not an incident out of harmony or superfluous. Certainly this intermingling is one of the reasons why the interest grows with familiarity.

Ariosto has been so long neglected in this

country that his stories, even the most celebrated, are now little known, even by hearsay, and the difficulty of reading the poem as a whole is thereby much increased.

My object has been to retell some of these stories in such a continuous way as to avoid the perplexities of the original presentation in disconnected fragments. The leading idea in the selection has been the bearing on the main plot. The volume does not profess to give all the stories,[1] or even the best representatives of all the different kinds. Apart from the *Tales* there is no attempt to give in prose selections of Ariosto's most famous poetry, *e.g.* the preludes to the Cantos. It will be found that the dominant note in this series is the romantic, and after all Ariosto is the father of modern romance.

The stories as here told are to be looked on as adaptations rather than translations. Although in some parts it has been found possible to follow the original text very closely, in other places the sense of proportion demanded expansion or contraction. It is hoped, however, that nothing is out of harmony with the spirit of Ariosto. The plan I adopted was to picture to myself the various scenes as they were unfolded, and to describe them in my own fashion. The plan is an old one, indeed the oldest method of story-telling. If the reader is induced to turn from these reminiscent repro-

[1] The constant reference to other stories is in accord with the practice of Ariosto, and suggests the complexity of the whole narrative.

ductions to the original the main purpose will be served. The conclusion of the whole matter may be put in the words of Charles James Fox in a letter to an intimate friend: "For God's sake learn Italian as fast as you can, to read Ariosto."

J. S. N.

EDINBURGH, *October* 1913.

# I

# PROLOGUE :
# THE COMING OF ANGELICA

# I

# PROLOGUE : THE COMING OF ANGELICA

> Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
> When Agrican with all his northern powers
> Besieg'd Albracca, as romances tell,
> The city of Gallaphrone, from whence to win
> The fairest of her sex, Angelica
> His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
> Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemagne ;
> Such and so numerous was their chivalry.
>
> MILTON, *Paradise Regained*, Bk. III. ll. 337-344.

THE coming of Angelica was ushered in by events which were destined to send their influences from Europe to Cathay, and back again to Africa and the uttermost isles of the seas, beyond fabulous Ireland. And for a long time the central personage in these wars and adventures was Angelica.

Charlemagne, King of France and Roman Emperor, was the leader of Europe against the assaults of the Saracens : of the followers of Christ against the followers of Mahomet. But unlike later wars of religion, this prolonged contest between the Christians and Pagans was carried on for the most

part, so far as the leaders were concerned (and in the histories little account is taken of the common people), in accordance with the unwritten laws of the courtesies of chivalry. Occasionally, no doubt, the Saracens (and the term was extended to all non-Christians) did not quite attain to the high standard of the Christian knights. But in general the relations of the combatants were ruled by courtesy. Charlemagne himself, in one period of peace, had taken to wife Galerana,[1] the sister of Marsilio, the Moorish king of Spain. And in the peaceful interludes of the great war it became the custom for Christians and Saracens to meet together and show their prowess in jousts and tournaments.

On one of these occasions Charlemagne had invited the cavaliers of both armies to a great feast and tournament in Paris. And to add to the joyousness of the festival the noblest and the fairest ladies who were within reach of the trumpets of fame were invited or commanded to appear, and, little knowing what would be the culmination, they answered the summons in full panoply; they did not anticipate the coming of Angelica.

The air resounded with martial music and the ringing of bells; and great war-horses in trappings of gold and jewels showed that their masters had spent more than their utmost, as the saying is, in magnificent and unheard-of display.

At the banquet on the opening day there were

[1] "Nine wives, whom he divorced with very little ceremony, attest the licence of the private life of Charlemagne."—HALLAM.

assembled, according to the true history of Archbishop Turpin, twenty-two thousand and thirty guests. King Charles the Great with joyous countenance sat in the midst of his paladins on a seat of gold at the great Round Table. In front of him were the Saracen kings who, according to their custom, and despising the custom of France, reclined on rich carpets (like mastiffs as the chronicler has it). To the right and the left of the Round Table were the crowned heads of Christendom—English, German, Lombard, Danish, and others. And next in order were the dukes and marquesses, and in the third rank the counts and cavaliers, all arranged in order of their dignities according to the nicest rules of precedence. But Gano and the rest of the Maganzese, who were destined to be the great betrayers, received more than their due of honour, and Rinaldo, who was too poor to make much display, received somewhat less, and in his heart he bitterly reviled his hereditary enemies.

In due time the joyous laughter and conversing of the guests was broken by the blare of trumpets, and there were brought in large dishes of gold laden with the most delicate viands. And to every noble the King sent a present of a golden cup or other treasure, finely worked, to keep in memory of him and the festival.

And Charlemagne, when he looked round and saw himself supported by so many kings and dukes and valiant cavaliers, began to hold the Saracens as light as sand driven before the wind.

Now there were at the banquet many great ladies, ennobled by name and more ennobled by beauty—Galerana and Alda and Clarice and Armellina, and others of renown, every one a fountain of honour, and the knights were showing them all courtesy and whispering their devotion, and none could have imagined that the chief guest was yet to come, and to come uninvited.

Suddenly, at the lower end of the great banqueting hall there appeared four huge giants of very fierce aspect. And in the midst of the giants was a youthful lady, followed by a single cavalier. And her beauty was like the beauty of the lily or the rose or the morning star, or to tell truth her beauty was beyond expression in similitudes, and never in the world was seen such beauty. And the beauty of the lady on the instant enchanted the eyes of the beholders so that they could see nothing else. Christians and Saracens sprang to their feet, and their feet followed their looks as if drawn by enchantment; and they left their own ladies disconsolate, and swarmed about the uninvited guest. And the lady, with joyous countenance, and a laugh to fill with love a heart of stone, advanced to Charlemagne, and in a sweet low voice addressed him in French, with a delicious undertone of the Arabian accent. And the great Roman Emperor looked from her golden hair into the blackness of her eyes, and wondered and worshipped and vowed nothing created could be more lovely. Now this was the story told by Angelica to Charlemagne, and

it was passed from mouth to mouth for many ages until it was made immortal in the verses of Boiardo.

"Great-hearted Lord," she began, "your valour and the prowess of your paladins are known over all lands even to the bounds of the ocean. And your glory gives me hope that the long fatigues of two wanderers from the ends of the earth who have come to do honour to your joyous estate will not be in vain. And that you may hear the reason of our coming, know that this knight is Uberto of the Lion, of gentle blood and high renown, and he has been unrightfully driven from his kingdom. I, too, was driven out with him, and I am his sister, and my name is Angelica. Upon the Tanais where we dwelt, two hundred days' journey from hence, news was brought to us of this tournament and of the great gathering of noble cavaliers here assembled; and how that for the prize of valour there was to be given to the victor neither the rule of a city nor gems nor treasure, but only a crown of roses. And my brother has determined to show his valour in this assembly of the flower of chivalry, man to man, against you all in turn, whether Christian or Pagan. And he will await all comers in the green meadow at the fountain where the great pine overshadows the Perron of Merlin.[1] Now the conditions of the

[1] The perrons, which are constantly spoken of in the old romances, were massive blocks of stone with steps, placed by the road-side or in forests to enable the knights in their heavy armour to mount or dismount. On these perrons knights-errant would hang their shields to defy all comers. The perron was sheltered by a tree, usually an elm.

combat are these : Whoever is unhorsed shall in nowise renew the fight in any manner, but without more ado shall yield himself prisoner to my brother ; but if Uberto is unhorsed he shall depart free with his giants, and the victor shall have—me."

And at the end of her words she knelt down before Charlemagne, and awaited his reply. And every man, Christian or Saracen, looked upon her with wonder. And most of all Orlando was overpowered by her beauty. And he drew near with trembling heart and changed countenance, but with eyes downcast, as if he were ashamed of this sudden love. Now, according to the chroniclers, up to the time he saw Angelica Orlando had never loved a maiden with passion, and he was accounted blameless and pure as a saint. But from that moment the love for Angelica overmastered every other impulse, and as the story tells he forgot for this love the claims of chivalry and of his Emperor; and he forgot his kindred and his vows to God, until by the eternal justice he was plunged in madness, and thereafter by the eternal mercy restored to forgetfulness and reason. And even in the beginning, when he saw her kneeling before Charles, he foresaw the greatness of his error and of his sin against God ; but the more he communed with his heart the stronger grew his passion, till it seemed that without Angelica he could not live.

And as it was with Orlando so it was with the rest of the assembled knights. Even Namus the old Duke of Bavaria, in spite of his years and grey

wisdom, fell in love with her quite simply. And Ferraù,[1] the young black-haired Saracen, was so transported by passion that but for his respect for his imperial host he would have snatched up the maiden and carried her off in spite of her giants. And Charlemagne himself was dazzled by her beauty, and in answer to her prayer talked to her of this and that to keep her in his sight; but at last, for very shame, he could withhold his answer no longer, and he swore by the gospels to grant her every request. And with her brother and the giants she departed.

The paladin second only to Orlando in renown was his cousin Rinaldo, the lord of Montalbano, and like the rest of the knights he also was seized with sudden love of Angelica. And in his case, as the story tells, his love was subjected to great and sudden changes of fortune; for soon after the beginning it was turned into bitter hatred, and then again into most ardent desire, and in the end was again changed into cold disdain. And these extraordinary transformations were wrought by wonderful means, as the story will tell.

Now this Rinaldo had a cousin named Malagigi (or as some have it Malagise). And in those days there were still on the earth those who had the power of divination, and who by the aid of spells written in books of magic could summon spirits from the depths. Malagigi was a master of this magical lore, and as soon as Angelica told her story to

[1] Ferraù, contracted from Ferracuto (sharp-iron), was a famous character in mediaeval romance.

Charlemagne he began to suspect it was false, and as soon as she had left the banqueting-hall he searched his book and summoned to his aid four spirits, and from them he learned that a plot was laid for the death of Charlemagne and the destruction of his court. Angelica, he found, was the daughter of Galaphrone, king of Cathay, and she was herself full of guile and versed in sorcery and magic. And she had been sent to the heart of Christendom by the evil old man, her father, together with her brother, whose real name was Argalia (and not Uberto), to bring about the ruin of the Christians. And to the youth he had given a horse black as charcoal, and in fleetness of foot quicker than the wind, Rabican by name; and he had gifted him also with impenetrable armour and an enchanted sword; but above everything his most precious gift was a golden lance wrought with the finest craft. And the virtue of the lance was so great that with the slightest touch it sent to earth the strongest warrior. With these arms he deemed his son would be invincible. And yet beyond the horse and arms he gave him a ring of the greatest and most incredible virtue; for if put in the left side of the mouth it made the holder invisible, and when worn on the finger was a protection against the strongest enchantment. But in carrying out his plot against the Christian powers he relied most of all on his daughter Angelica. For the sight of her natural beauty was such that it drew all men to love; and he planned that knight after knight should be ensnared to joust

for her as the prize, and being overthrown by the golden lance should be taken prisoner and sent to Cathay.

By the aid of his divination Malagigi discovered that Angelica had told in her story the things that never had been, and never would be, if her purpose held good. For nothing was further from the thoughts of Angelica than that she should be the prize in any tourney, and when she smiled so pleasantly on the emperor and his kings and his knights her thoughts were very different from their thoughts. And instead of being a whirlpool in devouring the loves of men, Angelica was a maiden of most disdainful and difficult virtue, although by no means stupidly good. And when she offered herself as a prize she had the courage born of knowledge hidden from others and played with a light heart in the plot designed by her father.

Now when all these things were revealed to Malagigi it seemed to him that the simplest way out of the difficulty was to kill Angelica. No sooner was the thought imagined than by the aid of his spirits he transported himself to the pavilion of Argalia, a work of most beautiful art which had been set up in the meadow near the Perron of Merlin. And beneath the great pine near the fountain Angelica was sleeping, with her golden hair pillowed on the flowered grass, and guarded by her four giants. And sleeping she seemed a thing more than human, a creature from some other world. And on her finger she wore the ring which her brother had

given her for her protection. Malagigi saw the maiden asleep on the flowery bank, and near by the giants, all four very fierce and wakeful. But Malagigi read out of his book the proper spell and down they sank in slumber. Then he drew his sword and stepped up to the sleeping princess with the design to put her instantly to death. But even as he raised his sword the fatal beauty of Angelica pierced his senses. He let fall the weapon, and thinking that Angelica, like her giants, was under his spells, he seized her in his arms. But the ring took all power from his enchantment, and on the instant Angelica awoke and shrieked for help. Argalia rushed unarmed from the tent and could not believe his eyes when he saw his sister in the arms of a Christian. He quickly seized a cudgel from one of the sleeping giants, but Angelica with the more nimble wit showed him the better way of vengeance. She cried to him, "Bind him, brother, before I let him go, for he is in the power of the ring." And Argalia tried to waken his giants, but they were fast under the spell; and he took a chain and with great trouble wound it about the arms and the legs and the shoulders and neck of Malagigi, so that from head to foot he was enchained. And when Angelica saw he was safely bound she seized his book of spells, and having in her infancy learned to read this kind of writing, in an instant the air was filled with spirits, from the earth and the sea and the sky, and they all asked her will. She bade them take up their old master and convey him to her father King Galaphrone,

with the message that she had sent to him the only enemy they had to fear. And whilst Angelica was arousing her giants, Malagigi was transported by the joyful spirits to Cathay, and there left lamenting at the bottom of a dungeon under the floor of the ocean. Thus was the way prepared for the jousting with Argalia for the prize of his fair sister.

But in the meantime a great dispute had arisen amongst the assembled knights for the first place in the tilting with Uberto. Orlando, though he was always the first in danger or duty and by universal assent was the most famous of warriors, Christian or Saracen, in the matter of rewards and honour always made light of his claims. But now such was his passion that he insisted on his right to the first place. And so great was the desire of the others that none would give way. And the banquet threatened to become a battle, until at last the tumult was stilled by an agreement to appeal to chance. The names of the suitors were written out by Archbishop Turpin, who vowed he was unmoved ; and to prove his word in his history of Charlemagne he never mentioned Angelica. And all the names, Christian and Saracen, were cast into a golden urn, and the knights were to joust in the order in which their names were drawn out by a little boy. And the first to be drawn was Astolpho, son of the king of England ; and the next the Spanish Moor, the swarthy Ferraù ; the third Rinaldo ; Charles himself was eighth, and thirty names were drawn before, to his great chagrin, there came that of Orlando.

Astolpho of England had no equal in beauty ; very rich he was in wealth, but richer in courtesy ; most graceful in attire and manner. In prowess he was not so famous ; many times he was unhorsed, but he always blamed his ill-fortune, and, gay and fearless, rode again to a fall. His armour was most splendid and worth a great treasure ; the shield was studded round with large pearls ; the mail was all golden ; and the helm was of measureless value with a jewel set in the midst of it, a ruby as big as a walnut (if the book of Turpin is to be believed). His surcoat was embroidered with leopards all of fine gold. Though the night was coming near, fearing nothing he set out, and when he reached the Perron of Merlin he loudly sounded his horn.

Argalia quickly armed himself cap-à-pie with a white surcoat, and in his hand he bore the golden lance that none could withstand. Courteously the knights saluted, and renewed the pact of the jousting, with Angelica for witness ; then having ridden apart the distance of half a bow-shot, they turned and charged ; and on the instant Astolpho was stretched on the sand and was again blaming his ill-fortune for the loss of the beautiful lady. The giants took him up and carried him to the pavilion, and when he was disarmed he was so pleasing in look and manner that Angelica had pity on him and treated him with all the courtesy possible to a prisoner.

# II

# THE FOUNTAIN OF HATE AND THE RIVER OF LOVE

## II

## THE FOUNTAIN OF HATE AND THE RIVER OF LOVE

THE day was far spent when Ferraù, who had drawn the next place to Astolpho for the jousting with Argalia, came to the pavilion and sounded his horn with such fury that every beast in the wood fled in dismay. But nothing daunted was Argalia. He quickly laced his enchanted helmet and girded on his sword and mounted Rabican. Now Rabican was the swiftest horse of those times. He was so light-footed that he left no trace on the sand of the shore or the dew of the meadow. In battle and in tilting he was not the equal of Baiardo, the famous horse of Rinaldo, but in fleetness he was unsurpassed. And in the tilting with Ferraù, Argalia relied not on his horse, but on his golden lance. No time was wasted in words, and Ferraù charged in the full confidence that he would gain Angelica in the first running. But no sooner did the golden lance touch his shield than his heart failed him, his cheek grew pale, and he fell heavily to earth. But when he struck the ground his vigour returned, and with it anger and shame and

fierce desire. He remembered nothing of the terms of the contest: he forgot that no other weapon was to be used, and that the conquered was to give himself up at once. In vain Argalia said to him, "You are my prisoner." Ferraù drew his sword and attacked the four giants who came to bind him. After a great fight, in which Argalia in true knightly fashion stood spectator, Ferraù killed the giants all four, though from the last he received a blow that took away his senses. Argalia, with the courtesy of true knighthood, helped him to recovery, and invited him to enter his pavilion, and again reminded him of the agreement. But Ferraù hotly denied that Charles had the power to make any compact that should bind a knight who was not his vassal, and he showed (not for the only time) that his standard of honour fell somewhat short of the standard of Christian chivalry. Quite regardless of the claims of the other knights to joust for possession of Angelica, Ferraù asked her hand of her brother as if nothing had been agreed on and nothing done. And Argalia was so enraged that, forgetting his golden lance, which whilst aiding Ferraù he had placed against a tree, he attacked him with his sword. For a long time they fought without any result, because the armour of Argalia was enchanted, and the body of Ferraù, except in one spot, had been made invulnerable. When at last, after many fruitless blows, they made a pause in the fighting, Ferraù renewed his demand for the hand of Angelica; and this time the brother, impressed by his prowess, assented on the condition that Angelica would agree,

for without her consent he could do nothing. But when the request was made to Angelica she took no time for consideration, but instantly refused, as befitted a princess who was sought after by all the world. The reason she gave for her refusal was that she did not like the complexion of the Moor; to Angelica, who was herself of the very fair race which, as all tradition tells, was the first to conquer India, the swarthiness of the Moor was repulsive. And she said to her brother, "I would rather drown myself in this water, or go begging through the world, than take this man for husband." And after this refusal she advised Argalia to flee away on Rabican and join her in the forest of Ardennes, where she said she herself was instantly going, because the plot for the jousting had failed.

The combat was renewed, and after a short time Argalia, as he was requested by his sister, fled away on Rabican, and was soon lost to sight in spite or Ferraù's efforts to pursue.

Now in his flight Argalia had forgotten his lance, and had also forgotten Astolpho his prisoner, who had been watching the duel with the keenest delight. And as soon as Astolpho saw that the field was clear, save for the dead giants, he sought for his horse, and put on his armour, and in place of his own lance, broken in his fall, he took the lance left by Argalia. But when he took it he did not know its powers, but thought that except for the golden ornamentation it was a common weapon. And seeing that he was now left alone he deemed it best to return to the

city, and tell the news to the rest of the knights who were waiting their turn for the jousting for Angelica.

And first of all he met Rinaldo, next to Orlando (as already told) the most famous of all the paladins of Charlemagne. And Rinaldo was so hot in his love for Angelica that he could no longer wait in the city, but was already close to the jousting place at Merlin's pine. And as soon as he had heard the story of the duel and the flight, without a word to him of the leopard (for so was Astolpho called), he set spurs to Baiardo and rushed away into the forest in pursuit of Angelica.

And Astolpho went on his way to the city, and there he met Orlando. And though Orlando was more madly in love than Rinaldo he kept his own counsel, and asked Astolpho, with a semblance of indifference, what was the outcome of the jousting. And, as before narrated, except in this one case Orlando never knew passion for woman, though in prowess, and in vigour and knightly strength, and in courtesy he was the mirror of perfect knighthood. And he was ever silent, and deep in his heart he kept his love for Angelica, and he listened to the babbling of the courtly Astolpho as if it were to him of no concern.

But no sooner was Astolpho gone than the great champion of Christendom threw himself on his couch in the very abandonment of love. And he longed for the sunset so that he might get away to the forest and find Angelica and kill his cousin Rinaldo. And every moment seemed to him a hundred years,

and yet in spite of his love he was ashamed to leave the command of Charlemagne except in secret. And when at last night fell, he put on a surcoat of the deepest red, with none of his well-known quarterings ;[1] and he took with him no squire and told none of his quest.

Now the three suitors—Ferraù, Rinaldo, and Orlando—in their search for Angelica took different ways. And the first to reach the forest of Ardennes was Rinaldo, thanks to Baiardo, and in the course of his search he came upon a little stream of clear water that almost surrounded a grove of shady trees. And in the middle of the grove the paladin found a beautiful fountain, built of white polished alabaster, and so richly ornamented with gold and jewels that it lighted up all the flowers round the grassy margin. And though Rinaldo knew it not, this was the fountain which had been built by Merlin with the purpose that, by its enchantment, Tristram might be cured of his love for Isoud. And the virtue of the water was this : If any knight drank of it the love he bore to his lady was driven from his heart, and in its place came hatred of equal passion.

And what Tristram had failed to find was found by Rinaldo. Tired out by the heat of the sun and his long riding, Rinaldo dismounted from Baiardo and threw himself on the bank of the fountain, and

[1] "During this time [in his early boyhood] Orlando was so poor that he was half naked. Four of his young friends bought some cloth to cover him. Two of them bought white and two red ; and from this circumstance Orlando took his coat-of-arms *del Quartiere*."—PANIZZI.

there, with a deep draught of the cold water, quenched at once his thirst and his love. So speedy was the change, that as he rose to his feet he wondered how he had come to follow after a thing so poor as Angelica; the beauty he had thought divine now seemed to him not only mean but repellent. In a word, he now hated Angelica as much as before he had loved her, and all his heart was changed by the power of the fountain. Proud in his new conceit he left the grove, and after a time came to another stream of clear water. And here, too, the banks were lighted with flowers, and where his path crossed the stream was a wide-spreading beech and a tall pine and a green olive tree. This water, though the paladin knew it not, was the river of love. And by no enchantment of Merlin, but of its own nature, it fired with madness the hearts of the coldest; and in the past by misadventure many a knight had drunk of the river and lost all his senses in love. Now Rinaldo had taken so deep a draught of the fountain of hate that the water of this second stream tempted him not. But enticed by the shade and flowers he loosed Baiardo to graze at his will, and he himself lay down to rest, and a deep sleep fell upon him. And as he slept a wonderful thing happened.

After Angelica had fled away from the combat between Ferrau and her brother she had wandered in the forest until she had come upon this river, and, tired and thirsty, had taken of the water. And the poets suppose that she was enticed to the river

by the divinity that rules the loves of mortals, who had been angered by the cold disdain with which she treated all her suitors, and was determined she should feel his power. Soon after she had drunk of the water she came upon the spot where, on a bank of flowers, Rinaldo lay deep in sleep. Suddenly her heart burned with love for him. She tied her palfrey to the pine, and looking at the knight she almost fainted with love and knew not what to do. And the lilies and the roses spoke to her in the language of love, and with her white hand she plucked the flowers and pulled the leaves, and gently threw them on the face of the lord of Montalbano. And he was suddenly awakened from his sleep, and he looked up into the face of the lady; and she smiled pleasantly in his eyes. And on the instant the countenance of Rinaldo was changed; he rushed to his horse, leapt into the saddle without touching the stirrups; shut his ears to the sweet words of the lady, and fled away at his topmost speed. And Angelica, bewitched by the water of the river of love, mounted her palfrey and followed hard after him, and as she rode she cried out to him to stay; and she made to him the same plaint that Venus made to Adonis: "More than my life I love you, and will you for guerdon give me death? Look back, I am no enemy, no traitor am I, but your true lover. And even if you mislike me, ride not so fiercely; death lurks on every side in the rough forest, and if harm befall you I shall die. Even if you hate me, ride not in such fury. Why should

you flee from me? See, I am not hard favoured. Why should you contemn me? All others pursue me, and it is I that flee." And many sweet entreaties she made, but all in vain, and Baiardo rushed out of the forest and Rinaldo vanished from her sight. And much Angelica grieved, and she was drawn back by remembrance to the spot where she had seen Rinaldo sleeping, and in her passion she threw herself on the bank of the stream and kissed the flowers on which he had rested, and at last in her sorrow she fell asleep.

In the meantime Ferraù had been searching the forest in a double quest: to find Angelica, and to find her brother to take vengeance for his flight. In the latter quest he succeeded first, for he came upon Argalia fast asleep, with Rabican, his fleet courser, tied to a tree. And Ferraù, though only a Saracen, was too courteous to awaken the sleeping warrior; but to make sure on this occasion that their combat should have an issue, he loosened Rabican and drove him away. Then, after tying his own horse, he sat down under a laurel and waited. And at last Argalia awoke, and was troubled to find his horse no longer there. But quickly Ferraù broke in: "Take no care for your horse. One of us two must die, and he who lives can take my steed. And it was I who loosed your horse so that you might not once more escape by flight." And Argalia made reply: "The fault was not mine, for I did only as my sister commanded. And take now war or peace as you choose; and you know well who

had the advantage in our first combat." Then they fought, and for long without result, for the armour of Argalia was enchanted, and could not be pierced, and so it was with the body of Ferraù, save in one spot. But at last Argalia, who was the more powerful, rushed on Ferraù and grappled with him, and they fell to the ground with Ferraù beneath. And as Argalia tried to crush the life out of him, Ferraù drew out his dagger (the poniard of mercy),[1] and beneath the armour he plunged the steel deep into the side of Argalia. And the youth felt death coming upon him, and he said to Ferraù: "One thing I ask of you, when I am dead. And on your chivalry do not deny me. Throw my body with all my armour into the deep river. And no man shall say hereafter that with such armour Argalia ought never to have been conquered. Let me be spared this shame." And Ferraù lamented over him, and vowed he had fought only for honour. And he promised to sink the armour with the body, but he asked that for four days he might keep the helmet, since his own was shattered, and he wished not to wander without disguise in the enemy's country. And as soon as Argalia died, the other bore him to the river, and there let him sink with all his armour except the helmet. And much the Saracen grieved over the death of the brother of Angelica, but, as the story tells, he forgot the oath he had made, and

[1] The dagger which the knights used was called the *poniard of mercy*, or simply *misericorde*, because it was used to compel the adversary to call out for mercy or die.

kept the enchanted helmet far beyond the four days.

In the meantime, Orlando had been searching for Angelica, lamenting his ill-fortune and fearing she had fallen into the hands of Rinaldo. And at last, just as the search seemed to be hopeless, he came to the spot where the maiden lay asleep. Of all women of all times Angelica was the most beautiful—a moon amongst the stars, says the poet ; and as she slumbered the flowers bent over her as if they loved her, and the enchanted river murmured of love, and love gleamed from her golden hair. And Orlando stood as if entranced and made no move to awaken her. He looked upon her face and knew not if he was dreaming or if he had been indeed uplifted to Paradise. Long he stood still and worshipped, more enchanted than if he had drunken of the waters of the river.

But in the midst of his reveries he was rudely aroused by Ferraù, who forgot that he had killed Argalia, and forgot everything else but his love, as soon as he saw Angelica. And with jealous anger he cried to Orlando: "She is mine ; I was the first to love her ; and you must leave her to me or take away my life." And Orlando made answer: "Go your way, Sir Knight, and seek not your own doom. On my faith I desire to injure no man ; but your presence so offends my eyes that if you stay I must kill you." And the other, with equal anger and scorn, threatened Orlando, and quickly the swords followed the words and a mighty battle began. And

the clashing of the steel wakened Angelica, and fearfully she mounted her palfrey and sped away. And Orlando entreated Ferraù of his courtesy to defer their contest and to let him follow his lady, but the Saracen hotly refused, and vowed that only the survivor of their mortal combat should follow Angelica. And the fight that ensued was the longest ever fought by Orlando, but in this story the end only is to be told. And the end came in this way. There came in sight a damsel clad in black, and as she rode she struck her face with her hands and cried out in her grief; and the burden of her cry was that God or man would help her to find Ferraù in the wilds of the forest. And when she reached the fighting knights, as was the custom of those times, when to ladies were entrusted messages of the greatest import, both stood still, and the mourning lady, with great earnestness, spoke to Orlando and said to him: "Sir, although I know you not, and you know not me, I pray you to grant my request and stay this combat with Ferraù. For I am in deep distress, and there is no other aid but in this knight." And Orlando, who was the perfection of courtesy, instantly offered to release Ferraù.

Now the lady was Fiordispina, the daughter of Marsilio the Moorish king of Spain, and her news was this: Gradasso, the king of Sericane, a country beyond India, had invaded Spain with a great host of over fifty thousand horsemen, and he had sworn to conquer Saracen and Christian alike. And already he had overrun Spain and shut up Marsilio and the

remnants of his force. And Marsilio was seeking aid on every side, and had sent even now to Charlemagne himself to meet the common peril; but most of all he wished to have Ferraù at his side.

Now the invasion of Europe by Gradasso was made not for plunder or for slaughter or even for the honours of conquest—for Gradasso was so mighty that he despised all these things; but the object of the invasion was to get possession of Baiardo the famous horse of Rinaldo, and Durindana the famous sword of Orlando. And in those days a horse and a sword were often accounted of more worth than kingdoms and their peoples.

But such was the love of Orlando for Angelica that, instead of returning to give his aid to his sovereign Charlemagne in fighting Gradasso, he set his face eastwards, and after many adventures he found Angelica besieged in Albracca in Cathay. But Ferraù departed with Fiordispina to Spain. In spite of the alliance between Charlemagne and Marsilio and the union of the Christian and Saracen forces, the war went against them; and Gradasso forced Marsilio and the Moors to become his allies, and together they drove Charles back on Paris and put in peril all Christendom. The peril was evaded by the reckless courage of Astolpho, aided by the power of the golden lance, although he did not know its virtue and deemed that his success was due to his own knightly skill and valour, as is told in another story.

But before this happened many battles were fought and many adventures and combats were fulfilled,—are

they not written in the history of Turpin and made to live again in the verses of Boiardo?

The reason of the defection of Marsilio from Charles and afterwards for the easy advance of Gradasso on Paris was the sudden disappearance of Rinaldo. For this paladin had been put by Charles in command of all the Christian forces. And he had been enticed away from his command, and far from Spain, by the devices of Angelica, whom he hated but who, since she drank of the river of love, sought by every means to bring him under her heart's dominion. And when she had returned to her father, King Galaphrone in Cathay, she had released Malagigi the captive cousin of Rinaldo on the condition that he should by means of his magic bring to her Rinaldo. And at the first trial Malagigi had succeeded. For Gradasso and Rinaldo had agreed to fight in single combat without witnesses on the shore of the sea. And Malagigi had deluded both with vain semblances, and at the last Rinaldo had followed what seemed to him the flying Gradasso on board a deserted ship, and when once he was on the vessel the semblance of Gradasso had vanished; and whilst the paladin sought for his enemy to no purpose, the ship under the magic of Malagigi sailed away far from land, with Rinaldo alone on board. And guided by its invisible crew of spirits it came to an island of delight where Angelica waited for her lover. But in spite of all her offers and enticements Rinaldo again fled from her presence with the utmost loathing. And being once more carried away in

the ship, he was led from one adventure to another, and at last he came to Albracca, and there took part in the siege, fighting against Angelica with hatred only equalled by her own love for him.

The chief of the besieging forces was Agrican, king of Tartary, to whom Angelica had been promised by her father in marriage, and he was trying to get by force what he could not obtain by favour. And on the side of Angelica were many champions, her suitors, and most notable of all Orlando. Against her were arrayed the kings and chiefs whom she had scorned ; and amongst her enemies was also Marfisa,[1] the fiercest of warrior queens, and unsurpassed in courage and prowess by any knight in that or any other age. And the siege of Albracca is as famous as the siege of Troy ; many were the combats before its walls, and many were the adventures that came to pass before Agrican was killed in single combat by Orlando.

After Gradasso, defeated by the golden lance, had gone away to his own country, and for the time had given up his quest of Rinaldo's horse and Orlando's sword, a new and greater danger threatened Charlemagne and Christendom. The Saracens, under Agramant, the Emperor of Africa, made a great invasion of France, being aided by their kindred in Spain, under their king, Marsilio.

But before the main invasion a descent had been made on the southern coast near Monaco

[1] Marfisa to begin with was allied with Galaphrone, but later on became the most bitter enemy of Angelica.

by Rodomont, king of Sarza. He was the most terrible of all the Saracens, and he wore for armour an impenetrable dragon-skin that he had inherited from his ancestor, Nimrod, the builder of the tower of Babel.

# III

# RODOMONT AND THE INVASION OF EUROPE BY THE SARACENS

## III

## RODOMONT AND THE INVASION OF EUROPE BY THE SARACENS

As Charlemagne was supreme ruler of Christendom, so was Agramant of Pagania. If Charlemagne could boast of his descent from Hector of Troy, Agramant could claim a direct blood relationship with Alexander the Great.

"I find it written in the book of Turpin," so narrates Boiardo, that Alexander the mighty king, after he had conquered all the earth and even shown his lordship over the air and the sea in his arrogance, was himself taken captive in the kingdom of Egypt by Elidonia, a maiden of that country ; and, charmed by her beauty, he lived with her *par amours*, and in honour of his love to her he built for her a great city on the sea, and he called the city Alexandria, and so it is called to this day. And after building this city Alexander made a journey to Babylon, and was there treacherously poisoned. Thereupon the whole world was upset, and one man took one piece and one man another, and there was war universal.

When Elidonia heard that the empire of Alexander

was in ruins she feared greatly, and knowing that she was soon to be a mother she fled alone in a little vessel and let it sail wheresoever it would. And she was driven by a gentle wind over a smooth sea till the keel grounded on a sandy shore where a fisherman was plying his nets. And she called to him and offered him a rich reward, and in his hut she waited the fulfilment of her time, and gave birth to three sons.

And the three sons grew up to be men of valour, and all Africa and the coasts of Barbary and the lands of the negroes came under their sway. And from the three sons the city of Tripolis got its name. And the nations of Africa submitted to them, not so much through stress of arms as through love of their gracious clemency; and they ruled from Egypt to Morocco and southwards to the nations beyond the great deserts. And two of the brothers died childless, but from the third sprang the kings of the Saracens who mastered Spain and part of Italy, and, storming through France, threatened all Christendom.[1] But in the last attack on France the Saracen king, Troiano, lost his life, and he left his kingdom to his son, who was only seven years old at the time of his father's death. This boy was Agramant. And he grew up tall and strong and beautiful as a man may be, but his eyes had the look of a bird of prey.

[1] Alexander the Great was a familiar figure in mediaeval tradition, and his conquest of the air and of the sea is an allusion to his being drawn in a car by birds and descending into the sea by means of a great diving-bell. His love for Elidonia is emphasised by Boiardo, because this origin of the Saracen kings continues the old struggle between the Greeks in the descendants of Alexander and the Trojans in the persons of Charlemagne and others who were descended from Hector. Cf. Panizzi, note on Boiardo, Book II. Canto I. st. 30.

## RODOMONT INVADES FRANCE

At the time this story begins Agramant had reached the age of twenty-two, and not a cavalier in all Africa dared to look him in the face save one only. This was Rodomont, king of Sarza, son of Ullieno. And he was even more proud and fierce than Agramant, and, moreover, he was a giant in stature. If Agramant was the Charlemagne of the Saracens, Rodomont was their Orlando, and the story of the invasion of Europe by the Saracens is centred in Rodomont.

Now when the siege of Albracca, in far Cathay, was at its height, Agramant, Emperor of Africa, called together a great council, and there were bidden to it two-and-thirty kings who owed him allegiance. And so wide were his dominions that it took four months before the full council was assembled. Thirty-two crowned heads came to Biserta, the capital of Agramant, and not one disobeyed the command. And in those days Biserta was a great city, though up to our times it never recovered from the ruin which it suffered afterwards at the hands of Orlando.

And the masses of the Saracens, owing to their numbers, were encamped in the plain outside Biserta, but the two-and-thirty kings made entry into the city for a grand festival.

The imperial palace of Agramant was a huge castle, and the sun never shone on a scene of greater magnificence and splendour. When the kings entered the great hall it seemed to them that the doors of Paradise had been thrown open. Five

hundred paces in length was this hall, and one hundred in breadth. The ceiling was of gold, inlaid with red and white and green. On the walls were sculptured in bas-relief all the glories of the great Alexander from birth to death, and over the walls were scattered shining rubies and sapphires. The sculptures also showed the last voyage of Elidonia, and her three boys playing with the fisherman's nets, and their conquest by war and peace of all Africa.

And as the kings traversed the great hall their hearts melted within them with wonder; and the trumpets blared and the cymbals clashed, and beautiful dancers gave them welcome, and all the air was filled with joyousness.

Above them all, exalted on a high throne, and in royal robes, sat King Agramant; and to him the other kings made obeisance, bowing with their faces to the earth. And Agramant rose up and gave them one and all the kiss of peace. Then he bade all below knightly rank leave the hall, so that there remained for the great council only the kings and the dukes and the marquises and the counts, and the cavaliers.[1] The thirty-two kings had seats of gold, and the other dignitaries, according to their worth, were placed in order below the great throne. And Agramant rose up and said:

"You have come at my command to this council, and I well know that the more you show me your affection, so much the more ought I to show unto

[1] The Saracens, like the Japanese of modern times, adopted European titles as they adopted the customs of chivalry.

you also love and honour. And it has always been my desire that your honour should be exalted equally with mine own. But it is not by hunting and dancing and making festivals for ladies in gardens of delight that our reputation—yours and mine—will be made to endure in the great world, but we must make it known by the drums of war. After death only fame is left, and truly miserable are they that strive not always to add to their fame —for life endures but a little time. And do not think that Alexander the Great, our ancestor, conquered the world by delicate banquets and festivals. His name is to this day known throughout the world; and his story shows that glory is only gained by the sweat of the body and by the naked sword. Wherefore I pray you, my valorous people, to keep in remembrance your own selves, and let the care of your own honour be dear to you; and I pray you, if ever I am to found my hopes on you, if indeed you love me as your lord, that you should voyage with me to France and make war upon King Charles and give new dominions to the laws of Mahomet."

And thereupon the king made an end of speaking, and waited in silence for a reply.

And the old king of Bugia, Branzardo, seeing that all eyes were turned to him, rose up in the assembly and said: "High-minded Lord, all that man knows must be put to the trial of example and experience, and since I am bound to give you my opinion, I shall say this: your expedition against Charles will be vain and end in ruin. And the

reason is plain. Charles has under his command veterans inured to war and trained in well-ordered discipline, and not given to fight, like your men, every man for his own hand; but you must take to battle raw levies, and they cannot stand against his veterans. And Alexander himself gives us an example: for he passed over the sea with soldiers grey with years but trained in disciplined bravery; and Darius, the king of Persia, brought against him a mixed multitude of men who knew not one another, and he led them only to discomfiture and death. And why should I recall your own race and the losses they suffered in Italy, and your own father Troiano, who lost his army and his life in war against the Christians? Therefore I say, in the name of God, give up this evil emprise and curb your ardour. My dearest Lord, if I oppose your wish, more than any other I have the right; for if you fail, then my grief will be of all the most heavy, for I have carried you in my arms, and to me you are not only my sovereign, but my son."

And King Branzardo knelt down before Agramant, and then returned to his place.

And there rose to his feet another old man, King Sobrino, and he had fought against the Christians and well he knew their country and their powers. And he said: "This grey beard may perchance seem to show that my spirit is failing, but by the power of Mahomet I swear that if my body is marked by time my spirit is as strong as when I fought against Rogero in Italy. Therefore do not think that it is

out of cowardice that I oppose your expedition, or out of fear for my own life, for but a little time have I to live, and the rest of my days I will spend as you may command. But I speak as your old servant, and I give what seems to me the best counsel. Two ways," said the old king, "are open for the attack on France. We may cross the sea direct, but on landing we should be met by the Christians in greater numbers; and, as I know, every man of theirs is equal to ten of ours. This way is the way of desperate folly. By the other way we should pass over at the Straits of Gibraltar, and your kinsman Marsilio, king of Spain, would join his forces to yours. Christendom, some will say, would then be at our mercy. But in my heart I think that the end will be more difficult than the beginning. For, granted we pass the mountains and overrun Gascony, we have still to reckon with Rinaldo who defends the pass at Montalbano. God save us all from his hands. And whilst we are held in check by Rinaldo, Charles will come down on us with all his paladins, and in all the world there are no such warriors, and they do not look for safety to walled cities but they fight in the open. And with Charles will come that accursed one, the strongest of all, Orlando, who took from Almonte his horn and Durindana, the sword that cuts through everything. Well I know the paladins, for I proved them when I fought by the side of King Agolant, your grandfather. And this is the end of my counsel: a third way is the best, and that is to leave them alone."

Now Rodomont, the king of Sarza, was a young man, a giant in frame; and he was so disdainful, so reckless in his courage, so arrogant in his pride, that he held all the world in scorn save his suzerain King Agramant. And he rose to his feet and said: "In every place whenever a flame is kindled it is at first feeble, though it grows in time to be a great fire. In the end, however, the greatest fire must little by little lose its light and die away into blackness. And as is the fire so is man; for after he has passed the freshness of vigour he loses keenness of sight and of mind. And this we see is the case of these two who have just spoken. Once on a time they were valiant and wise counsellors, but now they have lost their senses, for they do not see that the request of our mighty king is a command. And the greybeard is ever ready with counsel, and never with aid. But our lord the king does not ask you for counsel, if ye have understood his words, but he commands you, on your fealty and on your honour, to make with him the passage to France. And whosoever shall deny this royal mandate, he is a traitor, and must meet me in battle to the death."

Thus spake Rodomont, king of Sarza, with all the pride of arrogant youth, and he looked round on the assembly with superb disdain, as if none would venture to answer him. But in the council there sat the king of Garamanta. He was a priest of Apollo,[1]

[1] The Saracens, according to mediaeval tradition, worshipped Apollo and Trivigante (the Sun and the Moon), and looked on Mahomet as a god. Cf. Panizzi, *Romantic Poetry of the Italians*, p. 125 *sq.*

wise with the wisdom of more than ninety years—a reader of the stars, a diviner, and a great magician. His kingdom was a wide, flat plain, where not a tree raised its head, and he numbered the stars and measured the heavens with gaze unimpeded on every side.

Little cared this old king for the threats of Rodomont, and he rose up and said: "This youth thinks that he alone should speak and all the rest be silent. And if he pleases let him not hear me, and let him do unto me what evil he can; but do ye hear from me the words of the God, for my heart grieves not for Rodomont, but for the others. Hear, then, ye God-fearing people, this saying of the great God Apollo: All those who shall reach France after a toilsome and weary way shall there die and be cut into pieces—not one of you shall escape, great or small, and Rodomont, with all his power, shall be made food for the ravens of France."

He ended, and Rodomont laughed scornfully, as he heard the prophecy of the old man. And when at last he saw that he had ceased speaking, Rodomont with a loud voice broke out: "Whilst we are here I am content that you should prophesy according to your liking; but when we shall have crossed the sea and are wasting France with fire and sword, then no more shall you go about with your prophecies, for in that place I myself will be the prophet. To others you may threaten evil, but to me not; for I believe you not, and I think that a shrivelled brain and much wine make you devise the sayings of Apollo."

And many laughed when they heard this arrogant reply, for the young men of Africa longed for this great war. But the old men who had made the venture with Agolant, and who had proved our cavaliers, said to one another that this way was prepared the destruction of all Africa. And the great hall was filled with murmurs of many voices; but King Agramant rose up and stretched out his hand and quelled the clamour, and then, in a voice neither high nor low, he said: "It is my will at all hazards to make war on Charles the Great, and it is my will that every one of you should come; and it is mine to command and yours to obey. And do not think that after I have broken into fragments the kingdom of Charles that I shall rest from my labour. When I have conquered the countries of the baptized, I will go on conquering and to conquer, until the whole earth is under my dominion, and when I have subdued this world, then in heaven itself will I wage war."

And when he heard these words the gigantic Rodomont leaped to his feet and shouted with joy, "My king, my king, your name shall be heard wherever the sun makes day, and I swear with all my heart and mind that up to heaven or down to hell I will follow my king Agramant, or if he wills it go before."

And one and all the other chiefs vowed by their God Mahomet that over seas and mountains they would follow King Agramant to the last. And even the old men, who feared what the end might be, took

the oath with the light-heartedness of courage. But the king of Garamanta, the venerable soothsayer, again rose up and said: "My king, I also am willing to die if our race is bent on destruction, and I also would wish to go with you to Europe. Though well I know all will perish, what matters it to one who has already reached the fulness of years? But I pray you still hear me in this one thing, which I tell you on the part of Apollo if ye are indeed determined to pass over the seas. There is in your kingdom a paladin, who as I know from the stars has not his equal in prowess on the face of the earth. And Apollo gives you by me this message: If you shall take with you to France this baron you may there at least reap glory and honour for a time, and more than once drive King Charles before you. And if you ask who is this hero, I say to you that his mother, by name Galaciella, was sister to your own father. And the father of this paladin was the good Rogero, the flower and crown of Christian chivalry. And after he had been betrayed and slain and his city burned, his wretched wife, your father's sister, set sail for our country, and on a desolate shore gave birth to a boy and a girl, and she called the boy Rogero after his father. And I have heard that the sister is of all women now the most beautiful. Galaciella died in child-birth, and her children came into the power of a vavasor, who is a great magician and is also of your kingdom. And the name of this magician is Atlante, and he dwells on Mount Carena. And here he has made by the aid of his incantations

a wonderful garden which no man may enter. And knowing that the boy was to be the greatest warrior on the earth, he nourished him with the flesh and the marrow of lions; and he has trained him in every knightly exercise. And it is only if you take with you to France this Rogero that you may hope to conquer—at least for a time—the great Charles; and otherwise I declare to you that your race will perish, and you with them broken and dishonoured." Thus spake the venerable king, and Agramant believed in his words, because he was held in repute as a great prophet, and often in the past he had watched the courses of the stars and had foretold abundance and famine, peace and war. Wherefore Agramant determined to search all that mountain, and to find this valiant youth, who was to lead his fortune in the war against France.

All over the vast range of Mount Carena the search was made under the leadership of Malabuferso, king of Fizano. In vain he searched, both on the side of the sea and the side of the desert, and at last he returned to Agramant in Biserta. "By your command," he said, "I have searched all over the ranges of Carena, and after long fatigue and much labour I have seen on the last day as much as I saw on the first—barren rocks and not a trace of Rogero or Atlante's garden. And in my belief the real Rogero died at Risa, and no son was born to him as was alleged by the king of Garamanta. Let him find Rogero by his divination if he can—this old snake-charmer. Long ago we ought to have passed

the straits, but he has set us to seek what does not exist, to delay our expedition." And as he was speaking, King Rodomont with difficulty restrained himself until he had made an end, and then he laughed loudly and cried out: "Well I knew all the time that this old man was deluding our king in order to delay the war; and ill fares the man who puts faith in things told but not seen. Men in our days have invented a new fashion of lying, and to give colour to their lies they pretend to measure the sky, and they tell dreams, and profess to announce by the aid of Mercury and Jupiter and Mars the oncoming of war and of peace. But if there be indeed any God at all in the heavens, and I at any rate know of none for certain, there he stays on high and cares not what befalls us here below. No man has seen him at any time, but the common sort believe in him by fear. But this is my faith, and this I declare: My good sword, and my armour, and my mace, and my war-horse, and my own courage, these and no other are my God. But this old king of Garamanta sits still and draws circles in the ashes with a rod of olive, and he tells us that when the sun is joined to Venus the world will be free from evil; and when the tender grass is bedecked with spring flowers, then the king ought not to make his voyage, but sit still and grow fat. My king, I marvel how you can be made to remain here with such nonsense; and I could take this old man by the hair and hurl him over to France, and I know not what prevents me showing you this sport."

But the hoary king of Garamanta smiled and said: "Neither the words nor the fierce looks of this youth will make me afraid to tell to you the truth. As you can plainly see, he has lost the last grains of the little sense he had; he cares not for God and God cares not for him; let him alone and let us talk of other things. I said to you, and again I say, that on Mount Carena dwells that fateful youth who has not in the world his equal for might; and I said before, and again I say, that to find him will cost much trouble, because his guardian is a great magician, and guards him well. And on the mountain he has laid out a garden, and round about it he has put a wall of glass, and it stands upon a very high rock, and the rock has been so well cut by the spirits from hell that none can climb it without the will of the guardian, and never yet has mortal man seen this garden, not even from afar. Rodomont, I well know, does not believe me—see how he laughs like a madman. But there is one way by which the garden may be seen. There is a ring which has the power, and many times has it been proved, of overcoming every kind of enchantment. This ring is now held by Angelica, the daughter of King Galaphrone, and they are even now besieged in Cathay, beyond India, by Marfisa and Agrican, and a host of enemies. If you have not this ring in your possession, in vain do you search for the garden, and you will never find it. And if you attempt the voyage without Rogero, you shall suffer extreme woes, and shall never return from beyond the sea, and all Africa

shall be put to mourning." And here the old king bowed his head and wept; and then again he spoke: "More than others am I unfortunate, for I know before my time what is to be my fate. And in proof of what I have said I declare that even now my death is near at hand. As soon as ever the sun enters into the sign of the Crab, then shall my life be ended, and that shall be within the space of an hour. And if ye have other commands for Mahomet I will be your ambassador. But hold fast in your minds the words I have spoken, and once more I will speak them: If ye go to France without that youthful baron in whom, as I have shown, lies your safety, all your race shall perish miserably." And not long after, at the very moment that he had foretold, the old king fell dead. And King Agramant was dismayed, and all that were with him, even those who had at first been most bold, for when they saw the old king dead they believed all that he had spoken. Rodomont alone believed not, and feared not, and said: "I, too, could easily, O king, have made this prophecy—that this old man, ill at ease and full of wrath, could not long escape death. Weak with years and ailments, he felt his life ebbing away. Do you think that he has given you a great proof when he said he would soon die? Is it then a thing so strange and new for an old man to finish his life? Stay ye here and feast in your own lands, but beyond the seas I will go—I alone—and I will see if heaven has such power that it can keep me from being crowned king of France."

And he said no more, but departed to his own kingdom of Sarza, and there he gathered his people, and led his forces to Algiers, whence he purposed to sail straight for France, despite the wisdom of old Sobrino.

The others sat on in council and discussed many things. And King Agramant regained his courage and at all costs determined to cross the seas. And every other chief promised to go with him—joyfully if Rogero could be found, and if not, then they would still go even with foreboding.

And King Agramant himself was also of this mind; and in the council he made proclamation that if any one should be so bold as to find Angelica, the daughter of King Galaphrone, and to take the ring from her finger, he would make him king of a wide country and rich with boundless treasure. Right well the counsellors understood the king's intent, but not one ventured to undertake the task.

Now the king of Fez was an old man, white with age, and he said to King Agramant: "Let me go away for a little time, and I hope Mahomet will give me his aid, for I wish to bring to you a servant of mine." Not long was he absent, and he brought back with him an ugly dwarf. More than any mortal was he quick of his hands, and Brunello was his name, and he was a master thief. Small he was in body, but marvellously full of guile, and he spoke always in the jargon of thieves. In height he was about five spans, or a little less. His voice was the voice of a horn, and he was for ever chattering and

for ever robbing. He always robbed by night, and was not seen by day. His hair was the hair of a negro, short, black, and curly. And as he looked round the hall and saw the quantities of gold and jewels, he wished in his heart that he was for once a giant to carry away all he could steal. And he came up to the throne and said: "I will never rest, O king, until I have gained for myself the promised kingdom by my art and my snares and my skill in theft. The ring shall I get without fail, and bring it to your palace. But I beg of you after this to give me some greater task. I would steal for you the moon out of the sky, and I would take his pitchfork from the devil, and to spite the Christians I would steal the sound from the bell of the Pope." The king marvelled to see so small a thing make so large boasts, and the little man went away to sleep in the daytime, for he loved to journey by night. And before he left the king's hall he stole from the walls (unknown to any) the best of the jewels, and mourned in his heart because his strength was too feeble for him to take away more.

And after a long sitting the council broke up, and every one returned to his own land to make ready for the expedition. And to every king Agramant gave gifts: jewels and vessels of gold, armour and war-horses, and hounds and falcons. And every king went away rejoicing in his gifts.

And Brunello proved himself to be the king of thieves, of all countries and of all times. He stole the ring from Angelica as she watched the fighting

from the battlements of Albracca, and other things also he stole at Albracca, and on the journey back. And, for stealing her sword, he was chased in vain by Marfisa; and all who delight in tales of robbery and guile will find his doings faithfully recorded in the verses of Boiardo, and all who are pleased to hear that a thief meets his due reward may read of the hanging of Brunello in the stories of the divine Ariosto. And here it can only be mentioned that when Agramant got the ring he found Rogero on Mount Carena, and Rogero went with him to France, and proved himself to be the best of the Saracens.

But long before all these things were fulfilled, and before Brunello had returned from Albracca with the ring, Rodomont had reached Algiers with his forces. And in despite of the shrewd advice of old Sobrino he scorned to go by way of Spain and a friendly alliance, and his mind was fixed to sail straight to the southern shore of France.

All the host of Rodomont was encamped by the sea at Algiers, waiting for a favourable wind. And to Rodomont, as he waited, it seemed that he would never reach that land, where he was to begin laying waste the whole world with fire and sword. And he cursed the maker of the sea and of the wind because he could not voyage as he pleased. Already he had lost a month on the journey from Sarza to Algiers, and at last he lost all patience, and said to the master mariner and the sailors that, favourable wind or unfavourable, that night they should set out for France. "Blow as you will," he roared to the winds, "blow

your fiercest, but this night I set sail for France. I am not your vassal nor the vassal of the waves. Agramant alone can command me, and him alone am I content to obey ; to obey him and him only is always my pleasure—but for the rest I am a warrior, and I love not peace nor the ways of peace."

And he called to him his chief pilot, a man from Morocco, white with years, well versed in navigation and skilled in seamanship, and Rodomont said to him: "On what ground have you kept me here so long a time? Already have I wasted six whole days: to you it may seem little, but in six days over there I would have put in flames six cities. Look you to it that these ships are ready to sail this night, and do not dare to be more prudent than am I myself. And if I drown that will be my loss, and if all my people perish with me that concerns me not at all, for when I go to the bottom of the sea I would I could draw after me the whole world." And the pilot answered (Scombrano was his name): "Mighty king, the wind is contrary and the sea runs high and is getting worse every moment. And I notice other signs of bad weather; the sun is sickly, and sets behind banks of clouds, and the moon is sometimes red and sometimes white—sure signs of storm and evil fortune. The sea-birds are flocking to the sands, the gulls fly round our heads and the heron high out of sight—sure signs these of tempest. And the dolphins are leaping up on every side—and the sea must be moved to its lowest depths. But—say you—we are to set sail in the darkness if

it so please you. I see plainly that we are dead men, and if Mahomet himself were to assure me that there is no death in this venture I would say to him, Go thou, and let me remain in port." And Rodomont answered fiercely: "Dead or living, it is my will to pass over, and if I reach France alive, in three days I will subdue it altogether. And if I am carried there dead, dead though I be, I will make that people so fearful that they will flee away, and I shall be the victor."

And that night, as he had commanded, the ships set out from Algiers, and the storm winds blew, now from this quarter and now from that, and hurled the great waves one against the other. And the sea grew black and the air and the sky put on the colour of death ; and one wind poured down rain and another hail, and the sea was raised in mountains to the sky, and in the valleys between the floor of the ocean was shaken. And the ships were so filled with men and stores and arms and horses that even in calm weather good seamanship was needed ; but now there was no light save the forked lightning, and thunder and the howling of the winds drowned all other sounds, and every man shouted commands and none obeyed, and the ships were tossed hither and thither as they were stricken by the seas. Rodomont alone was undismayed ; Rodomont alone gave help in every need, and himself toiled at the ropes, and with his great voice was heard above the storm ; and if he was not instantly obeyed, without a word he threw overboard the offender. And he stood in the midst

of the storm, and the freezing waters beat on his uncovered head, and his hair matted with ice rattled about his ears; and he cared no more than if he had been in his own chamber in a well-guarded palace. And the ships which had set sail in an ordered fleet were driven apart and scattered over the sea. No stars, no moon broke the blackness of night, and in the black water ship was broken against ship, rain and hail fell in torrents, and the seas broke over the decks and washed away the seamen, and the wretched soldiery were huddled together in fear of instant death. And Rodomont alone knew no fear, and whilst all else were vowing vows and praying prayers he shook his clenched fists against the sky, and cursed the world and nature and God with words that terrified the boldest.

Three days and nights they were battered by the storm, and saw not a gleam of the sky through the driving sleet. And on the fourth day they came upon the height of their peril, for the ships that survived of the great fleet were driven to the bay just below Monaco. And the people of the place knew them to be Saracens, and cried, "To arms, to arms," and rushed to the cliffs, and they hurled down on the ships great stones and showers of arrows and darts and burning pitch. And on the prow of his ship stood Rodomont in full armour, and cared not for the rain of stones and fiery missiles that with their weight alone might have felled a giant; and, proud and cruel and ferocious and fearless, he bade his men drive the ships that remained with full sail

on shore. And a terrible blast from the south, with thick rain and great hail, beat upon the wreckage, and nothing was heard but the shrieks of men and the crash of breaking timber.

And there came down from the castle of Monaco to the assistance of the natives a great company of knights under the leadership of the Count of Cremona; for when it was rumoured that Agramant intended to make a descent on France, this great force had been stationed at Monaco to watch and guard against any landing. But in spite of this aid Rodomont and the survivors of his men struggled through the breakers to the shore. And Rodomont alone wrought more havoc than all his people. Firm as a rock he stood to meet the charge of the Count of Cremona, and never moved as the great lance struck him full in the shield. But as the knight passed him Rodomont raised his sword with both hands, and dealt a blow which cut in two the shield and the mail beneath, and made a great wound in the side. And the Count barely escaped with his life, and his squires led him back to the castle. And the Christians, deprived of their leader, could make no stand against Rodomont and the Saracens; and of six or seven thousand foot-soldiers not more than forty escaped. And had the Saracens not been on foot every Christian cavalier would have perished. And when the Pagans saw that the chase was in vain they returned to the beach. And already the tempest had ceased and the sea was calmer, and wreckage of all kinds was floating in to the shore.

## RODOMONT INVADES FRANCE

There had set sail from Algiers one hundred and ninety ships, great and small, laden with chosen warriors, and with horses and arms and all the munitions of war. And of this great fleet only sixty vessels came to Monaco, and most of these were broken in the landing and made utterly useless for war or peace. And not one of the horses escaped, and all the stores were destroyed. And Rodomont, undaunted, cared not one straw for all the loss, and he called his men together and said: "Take no thought, my companions, for what has been snatched from you by the tempest and the sea. And not long will we make delay in this place, for the people are poor. But I will lead you into the rich plains of France, where every one wears on his neck a collar of gold; and you shall be repaid in plunder a thousand-fold what you have lost by the sea." So he bade them be comforted, and he called this man and that by his name, and for that night he bade them sleep on the shore.

Such was the beginning of the great invasion by the Saracens.

# IV

# FIRST MEETING OF ROGERO AND BRADAMANT

## IV

## FIRST MEETING OF ROGERO AND BRADAMANT

To tell fittingly the mighty deeds of Rodomont would need a tongue of iron and the mouth of a cannon (so sings Boiardo), and to put in proper order all the threads of all the stories which lead up to the central story of Rogero and Bradamant would need the brain of a spider.

As soon as the descent of Rodomont on France had been noised abroad, there was gathered together in haste an army in Lombardy and another in France, and as fast as could be they moved to the attack. And when Rodomont saw the two hosts advancing he called out to his men: "Take my banner and attack one of these armies, and I myself will assault the other—choose which ye will." And his men chose to attack the Lombards, and Rodomont alone and on foot advanced against the French host. And the host was so great that its lances and banners seemed like a pine forest, and the sheen of the armour lighted up all the hill-side. And Rodomont rushed into the midst of his foes, and

hewed them down, horse and foot, as if he had been inspirited by a fiend sent from hell. And Bradamant, the maiden knight, in prowess the equal of her brother Rinaldo, charged down upon him and pierced his shield and almost sent him to earth, but she made no wound through his dragon-skin armour. And when she had turned to charge again, Rodomont with a mighty blow caught her horse on the shoulder, and in spite of the mail cut it asunder, and Bradamant was thrown to the ground. And the Christians fell as fast as the dead leaves in the cold blast of December, and panic seized the living and they turned to flee. But Rodomont was so fleet of foot that no escape was possible, and he covered the plain with dead.

In the meantime the rest of the Saracens who had attacked the Lombards were themselves driven back, and Rodomont hearing the shouts and cries looked round, and he saw a sight that redoubled his fury. His great banner had been thrown to the ground, and was in danger of being carried off by the enemy. Now this banner was the delight of the eyes of Rodomont. For upon it he had caused to be embroidered and painted a lion with a curb in the mouth, and the curb was in the hand of a beautiful lady, Doralis, the Princess of Granada. And the likeness of the lady was so natural that it seemed only to want speech to be alive. And Rodomont, whenever he looked on the picture of his lady, renewed his strength as if he were fighting before her very eyes. And when he saw this image of

Doralis under the feet of the enemy his rage and anguish were unutterable, and he left the French and rushed like a thunderbolt on the Lombards. And whilst he was dealing out destruction in the rescue of his banner there came to the aid of the Christians yet another army, and with this army were Rinaldo and Dudon (called Dudon of the Mace because he used only a mace in battle), and others of the paladins who had been entangled in the siege of Albracca, and in the venturous quests of which it had been the centre.

For at last the siege of Albracca had come to an end. And the end came about through the infatuated love of Angelica for Rinaldo, the chief of her enemies.

Orlando had been the mainstay of the defence on account of his devotion to Angelica, but in return she had treated him simply as a useful ally, to be cast aside when necessary for the sake of Rinaldo. A great combat had taken place between the two cousins representing the opposing forces, and Angelica had been present. At the critical moment she had intervened to save the life of Rinaldo. Thereafter, in fear for his life, if the combat were renewed, she had sent Orlando on a distant adventure, in which she hoped and expected he would meet his death, or at least never return. But in fact Orlando had achieved the impossible. On his way back to Albracca he had been urgently summoned to return to France in aid of Charlemagne and the Christians, who were threatened by the great Saracen invasion, but he had chosen to return to Albracca and Angelica.

But Rinaldo, and with him other of the paladins who had also received the summons for aid to Charles, had gone back to Europe, and on reaching Hungary they found the Christian king of that country had raised an army, and this they joined, and Rinaldo was made the commander.

This army came in touch of the battlefield just as Rodomont had attacked the Lombards to recover his banner. When Rinaldo from a hill-top saw the destruction of the Christians, and saw neither Charles himself nor his chief bodyguard, he feared that they had already fallen or been made prisoners, and that the end of all Christendom was at hand. Hastily he summoned the other leaders and bade them array their forces behind the hill. But he himself, with a huge lance in rest, rode on in front and spurred Baiardo down the hill to attack Rodomont, who towered above the rest, and though unknown to Rinaldo was evidently the leader.

When Rodomont saw a single knight coming to attack he ran to meet him, and Rinaldo struck him with his lance full in the shield with force enough to break down a great wall. The Saracen was cast down, but in a moment was on his feet, and in his anger he aimed a blow at Baiardo. "False Saracen, low-born villain," cried Rinaldo, "are you not ashamed to aim a dastard blow at a noble horse? Perhaps in your country, where only the sun is hot and not the heart, it is your fashion to strike at the horse; but not ours of the chivalry of France." And Rodomont in anger pointed to the heaps of

slain and said, "There is the work of my hands; there is the mark of my noble birth; but I strike my enemy not for fashion but for death, and your horse shall not save you." Rinaldo, fearing for his horse, rode back to the hill and there left him, and then came back on foot against Rodomont. And Rodomont rejoiced that he had been given into his hands, but just as he was coming within reach there appeared over the hill-side the Hungarian army. And Rodomont thought no more of the single knight, but ran to meet this new foe. And being more fleet of foot he outstripped Rinaldo.

In the *mêlée* that ensued Rodomont took prisoner Dudon, and gave him to his men to carry off. Rinaldo came up too late for the rescue, but renewed his combat with Rodomont. Long they fought, but there appeared in sight yet another army of the Christians under Charlemagne. And when Rodomont saw this new army he asked Rinaldo who the leader might be, and when he heard that he was King Charles himself he again left his fight with Rinaldo and ran to attack this fresh army.

Night put an end to this new struggle, and Rodomont repented that he had left Rinaldo, and in spite of the oncoming darkness he determined to find him and renew the fight. And he inquired of all the prisoners, and one of them (a liar) answered that Rinaldo had gone away to the forest of Ardennes. Then Rodomont mounted the horse he had taken from Dudon and rode, as he thought, in hot pursuit. But meanwhile Rinaldo was searching for Rodomont.

and in turn he was told by a Saracen (and this time with truth) that Rodomont had gone to the forest. And Rinaldo rode off to find him.

Now it chanced that Rodomont missed the way to the Ardennes, but Rinaldo came to the forest, and at the dawn of day he fell upon a strange adventure. Unawares, he came upon the fountain of Merlin. And in the meadow that was full of flowers of all colours he saw a most beautiful boy singing and dancing in high festival, and there danced round about him three nymphs garlanded in flowers, and in their hands baskets of flowers. And as soon as they saw the lord of Montalbano they cried out, "Here is the traitor, here is the villain, here is the despiser of love's delight, and he has fallen into our snare." And with their baskets of flowers they ran up to him, and they threw upon him the flowers of the many colours, and with every flower that struck him he felt to the marrow of his bones a sharp pain, and he burned as if the flowers and the leaves were of fire. And the naked boy, after he had emptied his basket of flowers, struck Rinaldo on the helmet with the stalk of a lily, and the great warrior fell to the earth like a child. And the boy dragged him along through the meadow, and the nymphs with their garlands of flowers beat him until they were wearied, and though the knight begged for mercy they paid no heed but beat him to the middle of the day. Of no avail was his armour, and all his body was smarting as if with the burning wounds given to the lost souls in hell. And in the midst of his

torment he saw growing out of the shoulders of the boy and the nymphs feathered wings, white and red and golden, and upon every feather there was an eye, not such an eye as is seen on the feathers of the peacock, but every eye was the eye of a beautiful maiden. And all the eyes looked upon Rinaldo. And after a time the boy and the winged maidens flew away and were lost in the sky.

And so great was the pain of Rinaldo that he lay on the meadow as if he were dead. And there came to him a lady in beauty like a goddess, and she told him the reason of his punishment and at whose hands it was given. The naked boy (she said) was the god of love himself, and against him none could contend, neither in the olden times nor in the present. And the god of love had made this law that whoever is loved and does not love in return shall be made to feel himself the same cruel pain. "And this pain," said she, "is greater than all the pain you have suffered from our smiting with the flowers. Not to be loved, and yet to love another is of all torments the worst, and for your scorn of love, that is the torment you shall be made to suffer. And the god of love has ordered that you must go through this wood until you come to a river, and upon the bank you shall find a tall pine and a green olive. And you shall drink of the water, and the pain of the beating will pass." So spake the lady, and then flew away after her companions.

And Rinaldo did not know if he was dreaming or awake when he thought of all his valour and his

proved armour being of no avail against a naked boy with the stalk of a lily and garlands of flowers. And with great pain and labour he rose to his feet, and dragged his weary body through the forest in search of the river and the pine and the olive. And at last he came to the trees and saw at their roots the water clear as crystal. And the water was the river of love, and it was against the natural power of this river that Merlin had built by his enchantment the fountain of hate. As soon as Rinaldo had come to the bank of the river, urged by pain and thirst, he knelt down and drank, and as he drank the pain of his burning wounds passed away, and the more he drank of the water the more it pleased him. And he rose up and thanked God for his mercy, and little by little, as he looked round, it came into his mind that he had been in this place before. And then he remembered how Angelica had awakened him by throwing flowers on his face and how he had fled away. And bitterly he repented of his cruel folly, and bitterly he thought of the evil he had done to her. And on a sudden there came to him an overpowering desire to see Angelica and to tell her his new love and to ask pardon, and he mounted Baiardo and set off on the instant on the return to India and Albracca. And as he rode, suddenly he saw dimly through the trees a lady with long flowing golden hair riding a white palfrey, and by her side a knight with a burning volcano for device on all his arms.

The lady was Angelica. On the unexpected

return of Orlando to Albracca she had professed to be delighted, and to hope by his aid to save the city, but as soon as she heard that Rinaldo had gone to Europe she persuaded Orlando that the city could hold out no longer, and she urged him to take her with him back to France, with the promise—at least so he was made to understand—that she would be his when the long peril of the journey was over. But her real object was to pursue Rinaldo, and simply to use Orlando as the best of escorts. For since her ring had been stolen by Brunello she had no power of her own ; and, utterly unlike Marfisa or Bradamant, she never wore armour or struck a blow in her own defence. In her love for Rinaldo her courage rose to great heights, but not in battle.

Orlando, as always, assented to the wishes of his divinity, and after many adventures they had reached the forest of the Ardennes. The knight of the burning volcano was Orlando, though disguised by his armour he was unknown to Rinaldo. It chanced that when Angelica and Orlando reached the forest they came on the fountain of Merlin, the fountain which he had designed to change the most ardent love into hatred. And Angelica, being wearied by the long journey, had drunk of the water, and at once her love for Rinaldo had vanished, and loathing had taken its place.

She recalled his pride and disdain with anger, and all the qualities of body and mind she had been wont to adore—his beauty and courage and courtesy to others—were now turned into ugliness : she thought

of him as a churlish traitor. She had just left the fountain, with Orlando riding by her side, when Rinaldo caught sight of her, and as soon as his wondering eyes saw that it was indeed Angelica he was delighted beyond the power of words to tell. He thought that as he now loved her, so she still loved him; and well he knew how much she had loved him before. Orlando he did not know in the changed armour, and riding up to Angelica he saluted her and with a smile said to her: "I must speak with you or I shall die. Although I know how shameless was my bearing to you in the past, and that I do not deserve to be listened to, still I know you are so kindly and good that I may hope for pardon. And all I ask is to be allowed to love you, though I am not worthy to receive from you anything in return."

Orlando, who had listened to him with rising anger and impatience, broke in and upbraided him for his treachery and deceit, for he imagined Rinaldo had feigned his former hatred of Angelica. But when Rinaldo knew by his speech that it was Orlando he was taken aback. They had been the closest of friends and shared in the most perilous adventures, and up to that day, in spite of their combat before Albracca, their friendship had remained firmly rooted in their hearts. But now from words they came to blows and they fought with the fiercest anger. Angelica, though she had no love for Orlando, hoped he would kill the hateful Rinaldo. But to escape from both of her lovers she fled away, and came upon the camp of Charlemagne.

And as soon as the king heard of the duel and was aware of the cause, like a great soldier who put the claims of war before all others he handed over Angelica to Namus, the old Duke of Bavaria, and he rode with his paladins to break up the duel of the cousins. Thereafter he promised to each separately that he would give Angelica to him who should make most havoc in the coming battle with the Saracens.

Of all the great battles between Saracens and Christians this battle proved to be the most tangled in its unfolding, and the most far-reaching in its effects on the men and women with whom these stories are most concerned.

Charles knew that the descent of Rodomont was only the beginning of a general invasion of France by the Saracens of Africa and the Moors of Spain; but the arrival of Orlando and Rinaldo and other paladins made him confident of victory. As the event showed, he underrated the strength of the forces to be brought against him, and the accumulations of the sins of the Christians for which God had designed to impose on them a fitting punishment.

When Rodomont had left his men in his search for Rinaldo they embarked on their battered ships and made their way back to Africa, taking with them Dudon as a prisoner. And Agramant commanded that the paladin should be treated with all courtesy and allowed all freedom except the liberty to return to France. And in the fulness of time (as will be told in another story) Dudon played a great part in the destruction of the ships of Agramant when

his great adventure in France had ended in failure. But for a long time the invasion was successful and threatened the ruin of Christendom.

After Rodomont had failed to find Rinaldo he journeyed towards Spain, and on the way he fell in with a knight-errant who proved to be Ferraù. Ferraù had come back in disguise to France in the hope of meeting with Angelica, for he had heard of the rumour of her return. As it happened, however, although his thoughts were set on Angelica he chanced to tell Rodomont that at one time he had been enamoured of Doralis the Princess of Granada; and before he could tell of the change in his love on the sight of Angelica, Rodomont was so enraged that any other should have dared to look with love on his Doralis that he challenged Ferraù to mortal combat. And on this occasion also the duel was broken up by the advent of a messenger who brought the news of the beginning of the invasion of France by the Moors under Marsilio. And when Ferraù heard that Marsilio, his suzerain, was already besieging Montalbano, which was weakened by the absence of Rinaldo, he prayed Rodomont to give up the single combat which had been entered on in error, so that both might take part in the great attack on Charlemagne. And forthwith they made peace and rode away at speed, and after a singular adventure (recorded elsewhere) they reached the camp of Marsilio. And there Rodomont was able to sun himself in the eyes of Doralis, for she had accompanied her father, Stordilano, king of Granada, to

the Moorish camp, according to the custom in these times of the ladies of Spain of following their lords to battle.

In the meantime Charles with his paladins had advanced to the relief of Montalbano, and at first, owing largely to the contest in valour of Orlando and Rinaldo, the battle had gone in favour of the Christians. But fortune changed sides on the arrival of Rodomont and Ferraù, and whilst Orlando and Rinaldo were rivalling one another in destruction, in another part of the field Charles himself had been unhorsed by Ferraù and, surrounded by the Saracens, was put in peril of capture or death. Two messengers rode off in frantic haste to tell the two paladins of the danger of their king. And each of them, when he heard of the peril of Charles, thought to himself that now was the time to win Angelica, and each was afraid that the other would be the first to come to the rescue. As it happened, the honour fell to Rinaldo, owing to the better speed of his horse Baiardo. He broke through the throng of Saracens who were pressing on the king and, seizing a riderless horse, he helped Charles to mount. The rescue of Charles again turned the battle in favour of the Christians. But at this point there arrived the great army of Agramant.

After Agramant had found Rogero on Mount Carena, by the aid of the ring that Brunello stole from Angelica (as is told in another set of stories), he had gathered together the strength of all Africa for the invasion of France. And at last he had set

sail with a great armada ; and the better part of his forces, under his own leadership and with Rogero by his side, were landed near the mouth of the Ebro. And at the very crisis of the great battle they came over the mountains to the aid of Marsilio. These fresh forces gave to the Saracens overwhelming strength, and in the end the Christians were driven back in disorder in the direction of Paris.

But as was usually the case in the battles of chivalry, here and there combats between notable knights had been left undecided in the ebb of the battle.

Of these combats the most exciting and enduring was that between the maiden knight Bradamant and Rodomont. And the combat had come about in this manner. Before the beginning of the great battle Bradamant had been sent with a large force to lie hidden on the flank of the Saracens and await the order from Charles to charge. Now after the rescue of Charles, Orlando had met with Rodomont, and the paladin had been stunned by the Saracen, though he still kept his seat, and his sword was chained to his arm. Just before this Bradamant had received her order from Charles, and seeing the danger of Orlando she had fought her way to his rescue. Rodomont, who was by nature most chivalrous, had ceased to attack Orlando, and was astonished to be suddenly attacked himself by Bradamant. When Orlando had recovered he left the combat to Bradamant, according to the rules of courtesy, and at this point there came over the hill

the great army of Agramant. Orlando held aloof when his aid was most needed. He rode away into the forest in the hope that in his absence the Christians would be defeated. And the mad love of the paladin for Angelica made him again sacrifice his duty to his king. He knew that Rinaldo, by the rescue of Charles, had gained the advantage in their rivalry, and it seemed to him that by the chances of the battle he had lost Angelica. But when he saw advancing the mighty host of Agramant he hoped that the Christians would be routed, and that, then, he would come to a greater rescue from a greater peril. Once again the love of Angelica was fatal to his honour.

In the meantime his rival Rinaldo had been adding to his glory on the battlefield. In single combat he had brought Ferraù almost to the point of death, when an urgent summons from Charles to meet the new forces under Agramant saved the life of the Saracen ; and, utterly worn out, Ferraù retired from the battle to renew his strength at a river in the forest, whither for very different reasons Orlando had already betaken himself.

Of the doings of Rinaldo against the army of Agramant only one incident must be recorded in this place, a notable example of the courtesies of chivalry and the beginning of a new set of adventures.

Rogero, who was the hope of Agramant and the Saracens, had shown at once that the hope was well-founded. After many deeds of valour he had overthrown the paladin Oliver, and had himself dismounted

to give him aid. Whilst he was protecting the paladin his own horse escaped, and Rogero was left on foot just as Rinaldo came up to the rescue of Oliver. Rinaldo, seeing that Rogero was on foot, also dismounted, in accord with the unwritten courtesies of chivalry, and Baiardo disappeared in the forest whilst they were fighting. The combat between Rogero and Rinaldo was put an end to by the disorderly retreat of the army of Charles. Rinaldo was separated from Rogero by the press of men, and rushed away to the forest in pursuit of Baiardo, for it was hopeless to overtake Charles on foot. And the search for Baiardo is the beginning of another story.

It happened that Rogero, in returning from the pursuit of the shattered Christians, came in sight of the combat between Bradamant and Rodomont. It was in a little valley, and as Rogero descended the hill he watched the conflict with the greatest admiration of the skill and strength of the opponents. He had not before seen Rodomont, who had left Africa before Rogero had been found by Agramant. Bradamant, whom he mistook for a cavalier, was equally unknown. He knew, however, that one must be Christian and the other Saracen, and it seemed to him to be his knightly duty to warn the Christian that Charlemagne was in full retreat, and that the time for single combats had passed.

"If one of you is Christian," he said, "let him listen to the news I bring. The army of Charles is broken; I have seen it with my own eyes, and any one who would follow must make no delay."

When Bradamant heard the evil tidings she dropped the reins from her hand and appealed to Rodomont, "Fair brother, this request of mine do not refuse. Let me follow my sovereign lord and share his fate."

But Rodomont replied, "You came between me and Orlando, and took upon you his battle. Yours is the fault, and if from this place you would speedily depart, then speedily lay me dead on the earth: for sooner shall you not go."

When Rogero heard this harsh reply, contrary to the spirit of chivalry, he broke in, "Grieved am I to find discourtesy in a man of honour; for like a branch without leaves or a stream without water or a dwelling without a road, is honour without courtesy."

Then, turning to Bradamant he said, "Baron, turn your horse whither you will, and if your enemy still wishes for more fighting, more fighting he shall have and that from me."

Bradamant thanked him for his courtesy and rode away, and Rodomont cried out, "Defend yourself and die for another if that is your wish." No threat made Rogero, and no answer but with the sword. So mighty were the blows of the two champions that both must have met their death, but that the hour appointed had not yet come.

Whilst this combat was raging Bradamant had ridden far, but had not overtaken the flying Christians. She knew not where to go to find King Charles, and her thought turned back to the knight who had taken up her quarrel and she reproached

herself. Now it seemed to her that even if her king had been taken and his army beaten her first duty was to her own honour. And as she remembered the prowess of Rodomont she feared for the stranger who had covered her retreat. She turned and spurred back to the little valley between the hills.

It happened that just as she came in sight of the combat, Rogero struck the helmet of Rodomont with such force that though the dragon head-piece was unharmed the warrior himself was stunned. By force of habit he stayed in the saddle, but his sword fell to the ground, and he rode as rides the dead. Rogero made no attempt to make sure of victory by a second blow, but sat motionless on his horse. And Bradamant thought to herself he was the soul of courtesy, and she wondered who he might be. She rode rapidly up to Rogero and said to him: "I pray you, forgive me for leaving you to fight my battle. When you said my king was in full retreat my first thought was to bring him succour, or die with him. Only after long riding in a vain pursuit did I see that my own honour was my first duty. And now if I am not too late let me finish this combat."

As she spoke Rodomont had recovered from the blow. And when he saw that his sword had fallen from his hand, and that he owed his life to the courtesy of his opponent, he cursed heaven and fate with bitter imprecations, as was his wont. But as he came up to Rogero his anger gave way, and he forced himself to speak with courtesy: "I see well

that I can now win no glory at your cost. Even if we renewed our fight, and I gained the advantage, where is the honour? Am I not already conquered by your courtesy? I must look on you as a vassal looks on his lord."

When Rodomont had so constrained himself to speak he snatched up his sword from the ground; and he galloped away like a storm, with his heart full of shame and fury.

Bradamant was now left with Rogero. Much she wished to hear who he was, but she was a maid before she was a knight, and she simply saluted him and turned to ride away. But Rogero said: "You must not go alone. The country is full of Saracens and every path will be beset. Against such numbers your single arm will not avail. I will ride with you. They know me, and if they do not, we two will give them reason."

The reply pleased Bradamant, and together they departed. And as they rode she asked him many questions such as might be asked by errant knights one of the other, and at last she prayed him of his courtesy to tell his name and race.

And thereupon he told her—all the time thinking she was a knight—of his long descent from the royal house of Troy, and of the untimely death of his mother at his birth and of his upbringing by Atlante, and at last he told her his name.

Bradamant had watched his noble bearing and marked his youthful vigour, and as she listened to his tale she hardly breathed, and she thought of

nothing else. And words that meant nothing seemed to her the words of love, and for the first time in her life love seized on her and her heart went out to him. She said to herself, "It would be the opening of Paradise if I might only see his face."

And as she looked and pondered Rogero spoke, "I too, valorous baron, would gladly know your name and race." And the maiden with her heart aflame answered quickly, "I am of the house of Claremont; and if this name is not known to you, at least you have heard of the fame of Rinaldo. Rinaldo is my brother, and I am his sister—Bradamant." And as she spoke, to give proof of her words, she lifted up her helmet. And the golden hair fell in masses and her face changed to the face of a maiden, and her knightly ardour had vanished and out of her eyes looked the morning of love.

When Rogero saw the delicate face, transfigured by the golden hair, he was dismayed as if stricken by fire, and his heart trembled, and Bradamant said to him, "Fair lord, if ever you loved a lady grant me this one favour—to see your face."

Such was the beginning of the love of Bradamant and Rogero. Suddenly they were startled by the clash of arms and the rush of horses. Instantly Rogero lowered his visor, but Bradamant had not time to replace her helmet. They were set on by a band of Saracens. Rogero thought to stop their attack by crying out his name, but they heard or heeded him not, and one of them aimed a fierce

blow at the head of Bradamant. She warded the blow partly by her shield, but did not escape a grievous wound. Rogero rushed to her rescue, though some of the Saracens now knew him and called on him to aid his own friends. Enraged at the cowardly blow he threw himself on her assailants, and gave her time to bind up her wound and replace her helmet. No sooner was Bradamant fully armed than she in turn rode to the aid of Rogero and dealt such blows as he would not have believed possible for a woman. Each admired the prowess of the other, and every blow on the common enemy clenched more tightly their own comradeship.

In the *mêlée* Bradamant ever sought to come hand to hand with Martisano, the chief who had given her the coward's blow at the outset. "Hear me, hear me," she cried, "this time you will not find me without my helmet." At last she fought her way through the press of men and gave him a blow that clove him asunder.

When the Saracens saw that the fight in spite of numbers was turning against them, they took counsel to separate the two by guile. Daniforte, one of their chiefs, who was mounted on a swift horse that answered to every touch or whisper of his master, set himself to draw Bradamant away by the appearance of flight. Whenever she seemed to be within reach and the pagan failing with weariness, the cunning rider would again just escape, and little by little he drew Bradamant far away into the rough country. At last her horse was worn out with the

long fighting and the pursuit, and fell and could not rise. With difficulty Bradamant freed herself from the dying horse, and her enemy attacked her on this side and that with his lance, and cried to her to yield. The maiden knight, faint with loss of blood, began to fear that if the fight were prolonged she must fall through sheer weariness. And speedily she determined to risk all on one chance. She swayed as if she could no more stand; and indeed such was her weakness that when she fell heavily to earth even to herself the fall seemed forced and not feigned. The wary Saracen pricked her with his lance before he ventured to dismount and come near. Bradamant moved not at the thrust, and the pagan fell into the snare; with a last effort Bradamant sprang to her feet, and with one blow severed his head from his body even as he turned to flee.

Night was falling fast, and so far had the wily Saracen drawn Bradamant from Rogero that she knew not how to return. At length she found the cell of a hermit who was skilled in leechcraft. Bradamant told him she was grievously wounded and raised her helmet. When the holy man saw the seeming knight was a woman, at first he thought it was the semblance of a fiend sent to him by the devil for his temptation. But he looked in her eyes and saw his error and set himself to salve the wound. But in order to do this he had first of all to cut away masses of her blood-stained hair, and this made her appear more than ever a knight and not a maiden. Under the hermit's skill the wound quickly healed and Bradamant rode

away in the direction of Montalbano, her father's castle, though she hoped in her heart to find Rogero.

In the meantime Rogero had first of all put to flight the rest of the Saracens who had attacked Bradamant, and as the night fell he tried in vain to find her. He called on her with a loud voice but there was no answer; and with the fearfulness of new-born love he wandered disconsolate through the forest. Before they again met many days were to pass, and both were to pass through many perils and strange adventures in the quest.

## NOTE

The first four stories of the present adaptation have been taken from the *Orlando Innamorato* of Boiardo. Ariosto in the main takes the characters and the stories as they were left by Boiardo. Boiardo's poem breaks off soon after the great battle in which Rogero and Bradamant first met. But the *Furioso* is not simply a continuation of the *Innamorato*, and in some essentials the characters and the atmosphere are different. In the same way the adjustment of the times of the adventures after the great battle is not always above the criticism of the chronological expert. The stories that follow are in the main adapted from Ariosto, though for the sake of completeness sometimes Boiardo has been drawn upon. It should be remembered that Ariosto always supposes that his readers are familiar with the work of Boiardo.

Of the transition between the two sets of stories all that need be said here is that when the *Furioso* opens the Christians have been driven back towards Paris, and the siege of Paris by the Saracens takes the place, in a sense, of the siege of Albracca. On both sides some of the chief heroes and heroines are drawn

away on quests of their own, but in general all these quests are more or less closely related to the great siege and its causes and effects.

The first canto of the *Furioso* begins with the flight of Angelica from the pavilion of Duke Namus and the search of Rinaldo for his horse Baiardo.

# V

# ANGELICA, THE HERMIT, AND THE ORC

## V

## ANGELICA, THE HERMIT, AND THE ORC

WHEN Angelica saw that the tide of battle was turning against Charlemagne and his paladins, and that the old duke Namus was already a prisoner, she lost not a moment in making good her escape. And as she was equally afraid of being captured by either host and becoming the prize of one of her lovers, Christian or Saracen, she fled to the greenwood, preferring the chances of nature to the chances of love and war. She hoped she might in time find some simple peasant or forester who would guide her to the nearest port and set her on the way to her native land. She marvelled how she could have been so senseless as to follow Rinaldo to France, when at the end of her long journey the first sight of him had filled her heart with loathing such as she had never felt for any of the multitude of her lovers. She knew not that the fountain, bewitched by Merlin, had replaced in her heart the excess of love by the excess of disdain. All she knew was that she hated Rinaldo, name and fame, body and soul, with a hatred altogether unmitigated.

Deeper and deeper she rode into the forest, ever

choosing the most shaded and least trodden path, eager above all things to avoid pursuit.

At last, after long riding, she thought she must be far out of reach of her lovers and especially of him she most hated. She was falling into a day-dream of building up again her father's empire and ruling as a virgin queen, when suddenly she heard the steps of a man running in haste, and, lifting her eyes, she saw running towards her on the narrow woodland path she was following the dreaded form of Rinaldo himself. Fully armed with helmet, shield, and sword, he ran more lightly through the forest than the half-naked peasant runs in a foot-race. Never did a shepherdess turn her foot more quickly from a serpent than Angelica turned the head of her horse when she saw the warrior coming towards her on foot. She shook the loosened reins and left the horse to find the way. Through thick and thin, regardless of tangled bushes or clinging branches, she fled headlong, and by her panting sobs made the animal as fearful as herself. Up and down they wandered, and at last they came on a river.

On the bank of the river was Ferraù. Wearied with the long battle and covered with dust and blood he had come to refresh himself at the stream. And in his eagerness to drink of the water he had let fall his helmet, and he was trying in vain to recover it from the deep water when he was suddenly startled by the arrival of Angelica. She came riding towards him crying for aid at the top of her voice. And well the Saracen knew that voice, and well he knew

the face though it was all white and distorted with terror. Moved by courtesy, and moved also by his love, for he had loved Angelica as much as the rival cousins, he came to her aid as bold and fearless as if he had not lost his helmet. He drew his sword and rushed to meet Rinaldo. And forthwith began a fierce battle, and the blows they gave were mighty enough to split an anvil, let alone mailed and plated armour. But as soon as they were well set Angelica again put speed to her palfrey and hurried him at full stretch through the wood. For long the knights fought without result, but at last Rinaldo, being through his enchantment the more desperate lover, spoke to the Spanish knight: "If you are fighting for the love of the Princess Angelica you are fighting against yourself as much as against me. Even if you were to kill me or take me prisoner still the lady will not be yours, for whilst we are fighting she is fleeing away. Were it not better, if indeed you love her, that you should try to cross her path and make her stay her flight before she has gone farther away? When again the lady is in our power we can try who is the better man with the sword." The offer of Rinaldo to stay the fight and pursue Angelica pleased Ferraù. In an instant their hatred and anger were buried in oblivion, and the pagan on parting from the river would not let his foeman go on foot but mounted him behind himself as he might a lady, and they galloped away in pursuit of Angelica. Such was the goodness of heart in the days of chivalry. The two knights were rivals in

love, each hated the other's religion, both were sore with the blows they had just been showering on one another, and yet they rode away together through the dark woods and by the crooked paths without a thought of any suspicion of treachery.

At length they came to a dividing of the path they had followed and they separated, one to the right and the other to the left. And the adventure that befell the Moor is a story of itself, but it befell Rinaldo that he again saw in front his steed Baiardo. And it was this famous horse, from which he had dismounted in the great battle, that Rinaldo had been pursuing when the sight of Angelica had turned him to a nobler chace. And the horse knew more than its master, and, indeed, had been all the time drawing him on the track of the fleeing maiden. In vain Rinaldo called on Baiardo to stay, and in vain tried to overtake his speedy flight. But whilst the knights had been immersed in battle Angelica had traversed many a glade, and in her fearfulness of capture in every sound she heard the breathing of Rinaldo, and in every glance she threw back she caught a gleam of his armour; and she knew not that the breathing was only the rustle of the leaves, and the gleaming nothing but the glint of the sunshine. All that day she fled and all the night, and the sun was high in the heaven before her dread gave place to weariness.[1]

[1] Spenser in this episode has followed Ariosto so nearly that the change of one name (Florimel to Angelica) makes an admirable translation :—

> Like as an hind forth singled from the herd
> That hath escapèd from a ravenous beast,

At length Angelica came to a spot steeped in such beautiful quietude that she loosed the reins and lighted on the ground, overcome with fatigue. The place was at the meeting of two rippling streams. All the banks were green with soft grass, and not far off she spied a natural bower, overgrown with roses and understrown with flowers. And in the forefront the stream made a glassy mirror, and at the back was a thick grove of ancient oaks; and within the shade deepened into blackness, save where through a break in the foliage just enough of the sun had penetrated in the early morning to warm into life a bank of flowering heaths. And here Angelica fell asleep, soothed by the rustling of the oaks and the sweet scent of the heaths, and the cooling shade. Not long had she slept when her slumber was broken by the sound of the trampling of a horse and the clang of arms, and peering through the leaves she saw in

---

Yet flies away of her own feet afeard
And every leaf that shaketh with the least
Murmur of wind, her terror hath encreast;
So fled fair Florimel from her vain fear
Long after she from peril was releast:
Each shade she saw and each noise she did hear
Did seem to be the same which she escaped whyleare.

All that same evening she in flying spent
And all that night her course continuèd;
Ne did she let dull sleep once to relent,
Nor weariness to slack her haste but fled
Ever alike as if her former dread
Were hard behind her ready to arrest:
And her white palfrey having conquerèd
The maistering reins out of her weary wrist,
Perforce her carrièd wherever he thought best.

*Fairy Queen*, Book III. Canto VII.

the mirror of the stream a youthful knight. And the knight dismounted and loosed his steed, and cast himself down beside the stream. He rested his head on his arm, and looked on the water so intently, and fell into a reverie so profound, that he seemed a statue wrought by the hand of a sculptor and no living wight. At last, thinking himself alone in the depth of the forest, he began to make a very pitiful lament to the rocks and the trees, and the myriad ears of the earth and the air, which are always open to the true lover's complaints. And for the most part his lamentation was a variant of a world-wide famous nuptial song, but the youthful lover interspersed his recitings with a rendering of his own particular griefs, and the burden of his dolefulness was Angelica.

Now the name of this lover was Sacripant, and in dignity he was the king of Circassia; and of all her lovers he had been the most gentle and obedient. He had been sent by Angelica from the citadel of Albracca to bring up new allies and fresh military power, and after long labour had returned with his levies to find that Angelica had gone to France with Orlando. Speed as he might he arrived only in time to discover that in the midst of the great battle Angelica had fled to the greenwood, and he had incontinently followed after; then he had lost himself in the forest ways, until good fortune had brought him unknowingly to her feet.

As soon as Angelica had recognised the knight of the lamentations, she stepped fearlessly out of the

shade of the bower and stood in all her beauty before the astonished knight. And though her heart was cold as marble she smiled very pleasantly, for well she knew his bravery and humbleness, and she looked on him as a most faithful champion and trusty guide. And she rewarded him with the counterfeit of love, and she kissed him as she had never done in Albracca, and then she told him the story of her perils and adventures, until the Circassian began to think that at last his day and hour had arrived. But Angelica only thought of the safest means to reach a friendly port to set sail for the East, and to leave for ever the multitude of her suitors.

And scarcely had Angelica given an account of her wanderings under the safe-conduct of Orlando, and had informed King Sacripant that a like honourable duty was now to be assigned to himself, when again through the woodland echoed the clang of armour and the trampling of a horse. Sacripant quickly seized his helmet and lance and swiftly mounted his steed. And forth there came from the woodland another warrior, shining with the resplendency of white armour, and in his casque a snowy plume, and white also was his war-horse, and white all its furniture and trappings.

Enraged with this intrusion, for the gentle Circassian had begun to be emboldened by the solitude of the woodland and the kindness of Angelica, Sacripant placed his lance in rest, and without further parley rushed on the stranger knight, who just as readily accepted the challenge and set spurs to his

horse. For in those days it was the custom of knights-errant to fight first and to give or not give their reasons afterwards. Both riders, thanks to the soundness of their armour, survived the shock, but the steed of Sacripant was hurled to the ground, mortally wounded by the heavy frontlet of the white horse. The unknown knight, deeming that no more honour was to be gained from the stricken foe, and for his own particular reasons having no desire to take captive the lady, turned swiftly aside and rode away through the forest.

The fallen knight, in bitter shame to be so disgraced in the sight of the Princess, was still more ashamed when he found that without her aid he could not disencumber himself from the dying horse. At last with her help he gained his feet, and stood silent and downcast. And Angelica, who for all her disdain of love was in all else as kindly as the sunshine, comforted the woe-begone knight with playful excuses : Not his the fault, but his horse was wearied ; had the steeds been changed so had been the battle ; and well the stranger knew that foot to foot and man to man he would have been overcome ; and, to crown all, she vowed that he is conquered who first leaves the field.

So kindly was Angelica that King Sacripant had almost persuaded himself that she really believed, in spite of his mishap, that he was the better knight, when from the woodland again sounded the footfall of a horse. And forth from the trees there came riding a man garbed like a messenger, with horn and wallet at

his side and looking outworn with weariness. He saluted the pagan knight with due humility and questioned him if he had seen a warrior in white armour, with white buckler and snowy plume, riding a white horse. And to him replied the Circassian, doing prompt penance for his shame, "Surely he it was who but a little while agone stretched me on the plain and just now has he ridden away. And fain would I know his name and heritage that I may seek my revenge." And to him the messenger replied with a fearful pleasure craftily suppressed, "Know, Sir Knight, that the fall you suffered was from a gallant virgin as renowned for her beauty as for her might in arms; and from beyond the bounds of the known world must you have come if you know not the name of Bradamant." Thus he spake, and rode away on the track of his mistress, and the Circassian blushed hotly with this new disgrace, and even the kindly Angelica thought the most fitting solace lay in silence. And in silence the dejected knight on the invitation of the Princess mounted her palfrey, and placing her behind him sought to find a way out of the wilds of the forest.

But they had not ridden far before they heard rushing towards them and crashing through the woods some mighty animal, and soon there came in sight and stopped suddenly and stood looking at them a very stately horse, riderless, with trappings all of burnished gold. And at the first look Angelica cried out, "Surely this is Baiardo come to our assistance, and fled from his hateful master

Rinaldo." And thereupon they both dismounted from the palfrey, and King Sacripant ran up to the riderless horse, and made to seize the reins. But the horse plunged violently and refused the proffered hand and forced the knight to give way. Then, having put aside his presumed enemy, the noble steed with easy pace and friendly eyes advanced to Angelica, and made such demonstrations of affection as might a spaniel after long absence from its mistress. For in the siege of Albracca, when Rinaldo was bewitched with hatred of Angelica, and she was as desperately enamoured of him, being bewitched by the river of love, the horse Baiardo took a notable part in the adventures. And in the chances of love and war he had been taken from Rinaldo and shut up in Albracca, and there had often fed at the hands of Angelica and been much fondled for the love of his master. And indeed in her love-sickness she had secretly sent back the steed to Rinaldo, although he was then her bitter enemy, but in no way had she softened his hatred. And all that the horse remembered was that Angelica was his friend in his captivity. And he was delighted when she once more smoothed his ruffled mane and stroked his arching neck. Still as a lamb stood the fiery steed, and Sacripant quickly leapt into the saddle, and the horse, noting the approval of the Princess, quietly answered to the reins. Angelica had scarcely mounted her palfrey when once again the clang of armour was heard approaching and the well-hated Rinaldo came in view. And Angelica grew pale with affright and

her look was troubled; and her voice faltered, as she begged Sacripant to flee away as fast as possible. But the Circassian, who longed to undo the ill effect of his late defeat by Bradamant, protested that even if unarmed he would fight Rinaldo in her defence, and he recalled the valiant deeds he had wrought for her sake in Albracca. Thus reminded of his former prowess Angelica knew not what to reply, and the king spurred Baiardo to meet Rinaldo. And Rinaldo was bitterly enraged when he saw that another had taken his horse and taken also Angelica. "Base thief," he cried, "base thief, restore my horse and give up the lady." And King Sacripant was enraged that he should be called a horse-thief and asked to give up the Princess.

And he returned words with greater scorn and greater wrath, and straightway, forgetting the courtesies of chivalry, attacked Rinaldo with all the seeming advantage of a mounted knight against a knight unhorsed. But Sacripant had fallen on an unlucky day. Baiardo refused to aid in the attack on his old master, and made every effort to throw his rider. At last the angry king was forced to leap to the ground and attack Rinaldo on equal terms. Long they fought with the utmost fury, until Rinaldo, with a mighty blow, shattered the buckler of his enemy, so that it broke into shivers as if it had been ice instead of bone and steel. So fierce was the blow that the arm of Sacripant was benumbed.

But when Angelica saw that Sacripant's shield was

broken she was stricken with fear; and she quickly turned her palfrey and made for a narrow thorny passage through the thickest of the wood. She had not ridden far when she came to a pleasant valley that lay most quiet and peaceful in the sunshine. And coming towards her, as if to make more certain the peacefulness, she saw a hermit riding on a slow-paced ass. Long and white was the hermit's beard; his face was lean and furrowed as if with prayers and fasting; and to the eyes of the affrighted Princess he seemed the incarnation of piety and goodness. Man and ass alike bespoke the most trustful confidence. But at the sight of the beauty of Angelica the pulse of the old man began to beat more quickly, though he kept back every sign of feeling except such as befitted his sanctimony.

Angelica, deceived, like any simple maid, with the long beard and the slow-paced ass and all the other appearances of a holy life, asked the hermit if he would show her the way to the nearest port. And her hope was to sail away and never again even hear of Rinaldo. Now the hermit was in truth well-versed in magic, and under his robe he carried a book, and by reading the book he could summon fiends and cast very potent spells. Scarce had he opened the book when there appeared from the greenwood, as naturally as a falling leaf, a sprightly page, and without further instructions from the ancient man wandered away as naturally as a leaf is blown by the wind. But the hermit had given him his commands in the secret language of magic. And the innocent-

looking page in a moment had reached the enraged warriors, and having no fear for his own beautiful person, which was indeed only a semblance, he rushed between them and on the instant told them a plausible story, which they very promptly accepted without a moment's doubt.

"Not a mile away," he said, "I met a knight and a lady, and they were laughing and jeering, so I gathered, about your fruitless fighting. And the name of the knight was Orlando, and the lady had golden hair and black eyes." No sooner had he spoken than Rinaldo mounted Baiardo and galloped away in fancied pursuit, leaving in his jealous hate King Sacripant without a word to his own devices. And having performed his task, and having sent Rinaldo far away from Angelica, the sprite vanished.

The long-bearded hermit, for all his magic, was not able to make his ass trot fast enough to overtake Angelica, when, in accord with his directions, she had set out to find the nearest seaport. But although the magician was not able to hurry his own ass, by a fitting set of incantations he was enabled to put a wicked spirit into the palfrey of the Princess. To do this he had to descend into the depths of his cavern, and there read his book by an unholy light, but when done the deed was very well done. Angelica had reached the sea-shore, and was riding close to the water, where the sands were most firm, when suddenly the fiend sent by the hermit took possession of the steed. And the animal, never before having been possessed of a devil, plunged

violently into the water, and urged by the fiend swam seawards as fast as its limbs could move. In vain Angelica pulled at the reins and shouted words of encouragement. The animal could not hear the voice of his mistress above the whisperings of the fiend. Fortunately the water kept very calm, the winds were hushed and the waves fell, charmed (so says the poet) by the beauty of Angelica. But as the shore receded further away, and the great hills faded into clouds and grew smaller and smaller, the Princess lost her courage, which was never of the heroic order, and began to weep and give herself up for dead. And then suddenly the horse made a quick turn and bore her safe to land. The sun was setting, and the shore was wild and desolate, with jagged rocks and gloomy caves. Angelica leaped from the palfrey, which, still possessed of the devil, rushed away into the hills. And Angelica stood on the barren shore and saw the shades of night gathering in the East; and she looked up to the wide pitiless expanse of the sky, and she seemed to herself as insignificant as a speck of sand. Immovable as a statue she stood, and weeping bitterly, bewailed her miserable fate. Her hair was hanging loose, her hands were clasped together, and in her utter loneliness she mingled her voice with the lapping waves: "Ah! why was I saved from the sea? To what worse fate am I destined? Born to be queen and empress, I shall never more even see my native land. Accursed was the beauty which made me a wanderer over the earth, and linked my innocence with evil

rumours. Through this wretched beauty Argalia, my dearest brother, lost his life; my father and his city were destroyed by the same evil fate; lost is all my wealth, gone are all my friends, and even my suitors make my name a by-word of deceitful fickleness. And this is now the end of all my wanderings, and of all the wars and mischiefs wrought for my sake. All alone in a barren wilderness I must die in misery."

And as she stood wrapt in her wretchedness as with a garment, down from a rocky hill from which she had watched her advent, descended the long-bearded hermit who had laid this plot to conquer Angelica for himself. As he came near, he put on the most saintly airs, and so holy did he seem, that Angelica did not know him for the hermit of the forest and the ass; and she began to tell him in rapid words the story which already he knew much better than she, and he began to soothe her with all the guile of a well-exercised hypocrite. But not for long could his seeming holiness keep in check his lustful passion. The hands raised for blessing came down in amorous touchings of cheeks and neck; then the greedy fingers began to press the throbbing breast, and at last he seized the bewildered maiden in his arms. Aroused to his evil meaning Angelica struck with her hand the feeble old dotard and thrust him away. But then the wily magician drew from his scrip a little vial filled with mightily charmed juices of evil plants, and he deftly sprinkled a few drops into the eyes of Angelica, and immediately she fell down in a deep

sleep and was at his mercy. But the limitations on the powers of magic intervened, and whether the old man had by chance fallen under his own spells, or whether he was simply overpowered by the weight of years and wickedness, certain it is that he fell down on the sand, also overcome by deep sleep.

And what happened next can only be understood if the reader will first of all attend to another story.

A little to the west of fabulous Ireland, there is, or used to be, an island called the island of sorrows, though its proper name was Ebuda. And the king of this island had incurred the wrath of Proteus, a king of the sea, for a reason which in these days of hurry it would take too long to explain. But the end of it was that the god of the sea and his attendant monsters ravaged that island. And the people in their despair sent to the nearest diviner, and they were told that the only way to assuage the wrath of the god was to make an offering of the most beautiful maiden they could find. And the hapless victim was to be tied naked to a rock close to the sea and there wait, until forth from the sea came a dreadful orc to devour her bodily. And the diviner further declared that if one offering did not suffice to check the ravages of the sea-monsters the people must offer up another maiden in the same manner, and this dreadful sacrifice was to go on day by day until the sea-god was satisfied with the victim. And for so many years had this horrid custom prevailed that the land was wasted of its people, and the miserable islanders, in armed bands, were wont to search for a

new sacrifice in distant seas, if haply they might find one of beauty sufficient to satisfy the vengeful god.

Now it happened that a crew of these rovers came to this desolate shore on which Angelica and the hermit had fallen down insensible. And when the seamen landed in search of wood and water they found, to their amazement, a maiden so beautiful that at last they imagined they would indeed satisfy the god of the sea and his vengeance.

With bands of rushes they bound Angelica and carried her to their ship; for they had it in their mind to offer up to a ravening orc this glorious beauty which had set aflame the hearts of kings and heroes, and had filled the world with passion. And kings and heroes were still searching for Angelica, when she was captured on this desolate shore by the sea-robbers, and hurried away for a dreadful sacrifice. But as for Angelica, the men of Ebuda were themselves so affected by her beauty that they kept her in safety for many days, until they had completely exhausted their store of beautiful maidens.

At last, however, the day came when Angelica must submit to this shameful and horrible death. Weeping themselves, and yet unflinching, the rough islanders made her ready for the sacrifice. And they stripped off her adornments and bound her to the rock; but in order to fulfil the designs of fate and to bring to the point of madness the griefs of Orlando, as will be told hereafter, the islanders left to Angelica one bracelet.

And at this time an evil dream, which emanated

from the peril of Angelica, came to Orlando as he lay besieged in Paris with Charlemagne. So strong was the influence of the vision that he rose from his bed in the middle of the night, and, regardless of military duties and fealty to his king, passed out of the city gates and began those wide wanderings in search of Angelica which ended finally in his madness (as is narrated in its place). But in the meantime Orlando himself and the other lovers who would have rushed through fire and slaughter to the rescue were distant by many a hundred mile and knew not, save by the feeling of unconquerable sadness, that their lady was put to shame and most cruelly entreated. Tied to the rock Angelica awaited with horror the oncoming of the orc, and every wave seemed a sign of the uprising of the monster. Pitiably she thought of the shameful indignity put upon her, who all her life had been caressed with the worship of love, daughter of an emperor, and in her own right an empress over the hearts of men. And then the anger of shame gave way to the terror of death, and her head drooped to faintness and she half closed her eyes in fear. And sometimes she would strive to break the cruel bonds, and then again would fall into hopeless despair, and the stillness of the expectation of unavoidable horror.

Suddenly through her tears, when in her despair she had looked up to heaven in sheer weariness of watching the sea, far off she saw a bird flying rapidly towards the island of sorrows. And larger and larger grew the seeming bird, and from bird grew

to a winged horse, and on its back a glorious youthful knight in full armour. And even as she heard the flapping of the great wings and saw that the knight was circling down to the fatal rock, to which she was bound, sheer terror again conquered every other feeling ; for at last the waters of the sea were uplifted and the head appeared of the monstrous orc : an enormous bulk looming up like a ship, with eyes and tusks as it were of a boar, and for the rest shapeless in deformity.

And instantly the knight made his flying steed hover above the scaly beast, and with his heavy lance he tried to find a vulnerable spot. But adamantine were the scales of the beast, and the lance slid off as from a flinty rock. The less the blows hurt the monster, so much the more was it enraged. It lashed the waves with its tail and raised such a deluge of spray that the knight feared that the wings of his courser would be drenched so that it would fall into the sea. At last, being hopeless of slaying the monster and rescuing the maiden, the knight bethought him of a device which he disdained to use except in the last extremity of danger. On his left arm he carried a wonderful shield of which a wonderful history has been preserved and is recorded in its place. And this shield was always covered with a thick silken veil, so thick that the hidden splendour could not pierce through. For the brightness of the shield was so terrible, that whoever saw it at once fell into a swoon and remained senseless and immovable as if smitten by a stroke from the sun. The splendour

had been fastened on the shield by enchantment, and only by a stronger enchantment could its force be resisted. It chanced, as is also told in its place, that this same knight had in his possession a ring ; and whoever wore this ring on the finger could withstand the power of any enchantment, however mighty. And the knight swiftly flying to the captive lady, put on her finger the ring, and telling her to be of good courage, again faced the monster, and drawing off the veil from the buckler showered the dazzling splendour full in its eyes. And in an instant the hideous monster lay floating like a dead fish on the surface of the sea. The knight again tried with all his strength to pierce the scales and make a reality of the seeming death. But all unavailing were the blows. And Angelica, fearful lest the orc should again awake, entreated the knight to set her free from her fetters ; and the knight shattered the chains and released the maiden, and set her behind him on the winged horse. Soaring into the air they soon left far away the island of sorrows and the floating monster. Now the name of this knight was Rogero, and, as already told, he was of all the Saracens the most valiant and renowned. He was the lover of Bradamant, the maiden warrior who overthrew Sacripant, and after many extraordinary adventures he was even then on his way from the ends of the earth in search of his love. But as he sped through the air, and felt the tresses of Angelica blowing about him, he forgot his Bradamant, and leaning back kissed Angelica on the eyes and the lips and the

snowy breast, and vowed he would make her his own for ever.

Urged by his new love Rogero turned his course away from Spain, whither he had been hastening to meet Bradamant, and sought the nearest land, which used to be called the lesser Britain. Here was a great forest of oaks, ensconced in which lay a meadow watered by a clear stream and shining with flowers. In this beautiful meadow the knight descended, and his first care was to fasten the winged steed to an oak by the reins. But Angelica, in spite of her gratitude for the rescue, was in no mind to pay her debt with love. And as she cast down her eyes in fear, she saw more narrowly the ring on her finger, and lo! it was her own ring—the enchanted ring which Argalia had brought on their first fatal journey —the ring that had later been stolen from her by the cunning Brunello ; and the story of the ring is a long, long story, and for the time it is the virtue of the ring and not the story that presses. This, then, was the famous ring that, put in the mouth, made the possessor invisible. Quickly Angelica removed the ring from her hand to her mouth, although much she feared some empty dream was deceiving both her sight and touch. It was incredible that her long-lost ring—her dearly loved ring—should be restored as it were from the sky. But as soon as the knight turned round, then she knew for a certainty that it was indeed her own dear ring ; for the knight looked past her on every side, and saw her not. And softly she smiled to her own imaginings, and

quietly vanished into the wood. Rogero, too late, remembered the ring and its enchantment, and thought that the maiden knew or had guessed its secret. And he called to her with promise on promise: winged horse, and blazing shield, as well as the ring, she could have as willing gifts, if only she would again appear. He hoped every moment she would return, and he embraced the empty air trying to find her; but far away from the meadow and the love-lorn Rogero wandered Angelica. At last she found a spacious cavern where dwelt an aged herdsman, and in the neighbouring valleys tended a vast number of beautiful mares. Clad in her invisibility Angelica fearlessly entered into the cavern and took what she needed of food and rest. She found also some humble garments, and in this peasant dress, at the coming on of night, she went out from the cave. Very different was her attire from the richest robes which the East could furnish, such as she had been wont to wear, but through the simple vesture the beauty of Angelica shone out as the moon behind a dark broken cloud. Even in this garb the Indian queen excelled in beauty all the nymphs of all the ancient poets.

When she had left the cave she chose out one of the best of the mares, and utterly wearied by the dangers and pursuits she had undergone since she met the hermit, she resolved to find her way back to Cathay protected only by her ring. She made indeed one attempt to secure an escort, for after many wanderings, unseen of any mortal, she came upon an

enchanted palace. But the story of this palace is a story of stories, and in this place it can only be said that Atlante, the magician who had brought up Rogero and who loved him more than his own son, had again got him into his power. When Rogero found that Angelica had made her escape by the aid of the ring, and that she paid no heed to his cries and vows, he had gone back disconsolate to mount his flying horse. But to his dismay that, too, had escaped, and though he knew it not, had flown back to his old master Atlante.

The flying horse was a cross between a griffin and a mare. The forepart was like a griffin, with beak, talons, and wings ; the hinder part in every way like a horse. Even in those days it was a very uncommon animal, being a product of Nature, and not in any way due to magic. According to the greatest travellers it was only found in a mountainous region far away in the North. When Atlante first got possession of the hippogriffin (for so was the creature named from its parentage), he had taken great trouble with its training. He had not only made it answer to rein and spur, but even to his will when only expressed in thought. If any one, not knowing the secret of its guidance, happened to mount the flying horse, he was carried wherever Atlante wished. Rogero had learned this to his cost when he was carried away against his will into Alcina's island of pleasure ; although after he had escaped he had been taught the way to control the animal. But the delights of Alcina's island and the adventures of

Rogero in those parts must be passed over. For the present it is enough to know that whilst Rogero was lamenting the loss of Angelica the horse broke the reins and returned to Atlante.

Thereafter the magician, who well knew the heart of his dear fosterling, Rogero, had beguiled him by a semblance of Bradamant being carried off by a giant, to follow her into the enchanted palace which he had reared for that very purpose. And by means of various devices Atlante had brought into his enchanted palace many of the chiefest of the lords and ladies of that day. Orlando had been beguiled to follow the likeness of Angelica, and the others had been deluded by other semblances of the persons or the things they most desired. And the peculiarity of the enchantment was that by a magical perversion of the vision no one recognised the others; and all were roaming up and down the vast palace in search of the semblances by which they had been there enticed: Orlando by the false image of Angelica, and Rogero by that of Bradamant, and so on of the rest, each led captive by the fitting semblance, and not one knowing the other.

Through the gate of the enchanted palace passed the Princess Angelica, unseen even by the wizard Atlante, so great was the power of the ring. And when she found there Orlando and Sacripant she stood long in doubt which of the knights she should choose to give her safe guidance back to her native country. And how she chose one of the two, and how when she made herself visible, Ferraù, who

also was amongst the enchanted ones, pressed his own claims, and how in the end she left the three lamenting, all these things are told in another story.

And again Angelica went on her way through the forest towards the sea and freedom; and she determined nevermore to seek the aid of any knight, but to go alone back to her country, aided only by the power of the ring.

But on the way she met with the fate that had been destined from the beginning. And it was so strange that had it been foretold it would have gained credence from none, least of all from Angelica herself. But here again the story of the fate of Angelica is dependent from another, and this other story begins with a mighty battle, the most bloody save one of all the battles between the Christians and the Saracens.

# VI

# THE MARRIAGE OF ANGELICA AND THE MADNESS OF ORLANDO

## VI

## THE MARRIAGE OF ANGELICA AND THE MADNESS OF ORLANDO

Now the battle arose in this manner. Charlemagne had been besieged in Paris by the Saracens and had sent Rinaldo to summon aid from Scotland and England, and after many adventures on the way, Rinaldo had returned with numerous and well-equipped levies. These fresh troops, with special assistance from Silence (as is narrated in another place), Rinaldo had brought unobserved to the rear of the besieging Saracens, and he had attacked them with furious onslaught just as part of their host, under Rodomont, had broken through the outer defences, and Rodomont himself was spreading destruction through the city.

The sudden attack of Rinaldo had thrown the Pagan armies into confusion, and they had been rolled back far from the city walls. Of all the paladins Rinaldo wrought the greatest slaughter, and he was driving the broken Saracens before him when the young king of Zumara, Dardinello, threw himself

in his path. This young king had brought with him an ill-equipped and ill-trained band of followers, but what he lacked in experience he made up in courage, and what his soldiers lacked in arms they made up in devotion to their chief. Rinaldo singled out Dardinello as the one enemy who was staying the rout of the Saracens, and he pressed through the throng of lesser foes, intent on his destruction. It angered Rinaldo to see that Dardinello bore on his shield the red and white quarterings which Orlando claimed for his own; for Orlando, though his rival in love, was his near kinsman and companion in arms. Speedily the challenge was given and answered, and the knights spurred to meet. The Pagan was the first to strike, but the mighty blow glanced from the helmet of Rinaldo and left the young king at the mercy of the Christian; and in a moment Rinaldo had driven his sword through and through the breast of his foe. And as he drew forth the steel, cold and pale sank the brave youth to the ground and breathed his last. And with the death of their chief the Saracens resisted no more, but sought a speedy refuge in the lines fortified by the old king Marsilio against the chances of a disaster. By nightfall the remnants of the Saracen forces broken by Rinaldo had been joined by their comrades, who earlier in the day had made the assault on Paris, but had been driven back by Charlemagne when the rear of the Pagan army had been routed.

The Christians, rejoicing to leave the city walls by which they had so long been confined, pitched

their tents on the field of battle, and, fearless of attack, celebrated their victory with wine and song. But in sorrow and silence the Saracens watched the stars arise, or fell into broken slumbers on the bare earth. And between the two armies of the victors and vanquished, lay the greater army of the dead and dying.

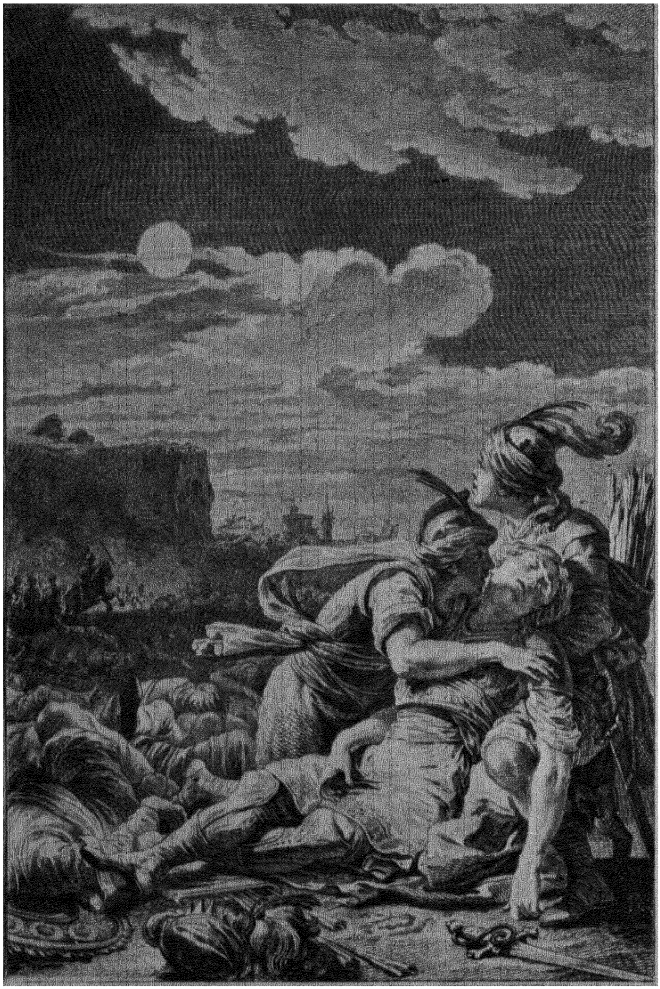
Now there had followed their young king Dardinello to battle, with his ill-armed troop, two Moorish youths of lowly origin. The elder, Cloridan, was a hunter, and through the constant toils of the chase was strong and firm in limb. The younger, Medoro by name, was only on the verge of manhood, and of all the Pagan host was the most beautiful in form and most graceful in bearing; his eyes were black as night, and his hair like the gold the painter dreams of for an angel.

It chanced that these two were of those to whom the watch of the palisades had been assigned, and as they saw the stars mark the middle of the night their cheeks were still wet for their dead lord. For in the press of the battle they had been separated from their chief, and had been carried back to the camp by the flood of the retreating Saracens.

And as Medoro thought of his beloved master lying dead on the naked plain exposed to ravening beast and bird, he spoke to his friend: "Shall my glorious king be left to be devoured by wolves and ravens? Can I ever forget his goodness? What is my little life in return? Here I can stay no longer. I will seek the Christian camp and search amongst

the slain if haply I may find my dear lord, and at least give him the safety of burial. Stay you here, and if I do not return tell the reason why I left my watch." And Cloridan marvelled at the great fidelity and courage of so young a heart, but he tried to dissuade him from the hopeless task. But the more he urged, the more the youth was set on giving his king, Dardinello, a fitting grave. And when Cloridan found that all his pleas were vain, he said to Medoro: "Where you go I will go. What joy would there be to me in living if I let you go alone to your death? And did not I, as much as you, love and honour our dead king? Come, we will together make the attempt!" And they summoned two others to take their watch, and they set out to the tents of the Christians pitched in the middle of the battlefield. Little the Christians recked of any night attack, and heavy with wine and weariness, they slept beside the cold ashes of their watch-fires.

And when Cloridan saw the careless stupor of the enemy he whispered to his companion: "Surely it was decreed by fate that we should take a fitting revenge for the death of our master and make a sacrifice meet for his grave. Watch you with ears and eyes whilst I make a path with my sword to our dead lord." Thus whispered Cloridan, and on the word began his murderous slaughter; and so maddened also was Medoro by the loss of his dear king that he joined him in the butchery; and they chose out for their victims the most notable within



MEDORO AND CLORIDAN FINDING THE BODY OF DARDINELLO ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

*To face page* 119.

reach. Silent as angels of death, and to themselves seeming to wield the swords of justice, they made a huge carnage right up to the tents which guarded the great pavilion of Charlemagne himself. Here they paused, for they feared of so many guards some at least must watch for their Emperor; and their first task was to find out the body of their dead king, and take it away for honoured burial.

They turned from the tents to the field of battle, where in bloody disorder lay lord and vassal, rich and poor, horse and rider; and round about the dead were blood-stained shields and spears, and bows and falchions; and broken fragments of wood and iron were interspersed with the shattered limbs of dead men. So thickly strewn was the plain with the harvest of death that in the darkness of the night their search would have been hopeless, but young Medoro lifted up his pale anguished face and prayed to the moon to give them aid; and at the prayer of the youth (or as it had been so ordained by the fate we now call chance) forth from a parted cloud shone out the moon, as if to embrace her lover, and her pale light showed them the distant city and the neighbouring tents, and the wide expanse of the plain and the little hills that encompassed it; but most clearly of all the silver splendour shone upon the heap of slain that marked the prowess of the dead king whom they so eagerly sought. And he lay stripped of his armour, covered with blood and mire, with eyes wide open staring into their faces.

And bitterly wept Medoro and his friend, as they

drew out with tender hands the dead king from the mangled heap. And they pressed down their sobs and stifled their voices, so that none should hear; not that they feared death for themselves, but they feared lest they should be hindered before they could remove to a place of honour their beloved dead. And with reverence and silent grieving they shared between them their dear burden, and they hastened to put in safety their treasure.

Not long had they left the battlefield when the shadows began to flee before the rising sun, and far off the two companions saw a Christian knight leading a troop of horse. This was the Scottish Prince Zerbino, who all night had been pursuing scattered Saracens. And as soon as the Scottish leader saw the Moors with their burden, he gave orders to his men to cut off their escape into the forest that lay near at hand. And when Cloridan saw that they were discovered he cried to Medoro to flee as best he could to the forest, and to leave the dead body they were powerless to defend. And on the instant he ran himself to the cover, looking only to the front where lay safety, and thinking Medoro was close behind.

But Medoro loved his lord in death as dearly as he had loved him in life, and he could not leave him, but with panting toil he tried alone to bear him to the shelter of the trees. He reached the wood but missed the path of safety along which Cloridan had fled, and was caught up with his burden in tangled thorn.

Far had Cloridan, the fleet hunter, run before he began to miss the following footsteps of his friend, and quickly looking back he saw that he was alone. Bitterly he reproached himself for his careless haste, and not knowing where he had lost his friend, hurried back on the way he had come, and peered on every side into the maze of the woodland. At last he heard the tramp of horse and the cries of foemen in hot chase, and then, as he ran nearer, the voice of Medoro came out from the clamour, and soon he saw that he was surrounded by the troop of horsemen at the border of the wood. The youth still carried his cherished burden, and tried to hide behind some friendly trunk, hopeless but persistent. At length no longer could he support the heavy weight, and laying the body gently on the ground, he stood on guard, one against a hundred.

When Cloridan saw his danger he most willingly decided to share his fate, but first he thought to take a last revenge. Hidden by the wood, he fitted a sharp arrow to his bow, and with a hunter's skill he sped the feathered shaft into the brain of the nearest Scot and laid him dead on the field. The startled foemen looked hither and thither, and straightway another was pierced through the throat. Zerbino, enraged by this hidden assault, sprang upon Medoro and, seizing him by the golden locks, raised his sword and cried, "You at least shall die." But Medoro, with tearful eyes and broken voice, besought the knight: "My own life I do not ask, but by your God, be not so cruel as to slay me before I have laid in the

earth my honoured king. Give me but time to dig a grave and then kill me." And Zerbino was much moved, and his heart burned with pity for the beautiful youth and his dead king; but before the chief could utter a word, a churlish trooper, ill-trained in service, lifted his spear and over the arm of his chief struck the suppliant captive in the breast. Medoro fell as if dead, and Zerbino, deeply angered, turned on the treacherous follower to strike him to the ground, but the caitiff slunk away. And whilst the chief pursued him in his wrath, Cloridan, who had seen Medoro fall, would no longer keep hidden, but casting away his bow, drew his sword and, longing to seek death for himself and to avenge his friend, ran upon the troop, and in an instant, pierced by many blades, fell dead at the side of Medoro. The Scots when they saw, as they thought, only three dead Saracens rode hotly after their chief to do his will.

Now Medoro was not killed outright, but for a long space he lay bleeding from his wound, and he must have perished but for timely succour. But as it chanced, when he was faint with oncoming death, there came riding through the forest a young maiden meanly clad in rustic garb, but in beauty and manner of queenly presence. This was Angelica who, hidden whenever she pleased by her ring, was seeking all alone the way back to Cathay. And as she rode, her heart swelled with indignant memories of her lovers, and most of all of Rinaldo. Deeply she grieved that ever she could have fallen so low as to try to gain the love of so hateful a personage. And in her

high disdain she flouted every one of her suitors, even the unconquerable Orlando and the gentle Sacripant. And as she rode through the shades of the forest she dreamed of the burning suns of India, and as she looked on her peasant dress she dreamed of the splendour of Eastern robes and jewels. Untouched by love and glorying in her freedom, she breathed with joyousness the fresh odour of the pines.

Suddenly there came into her sight, almost under the feet of her mare, the two dead men and the dying youth. At the sound the youth half opened his eyes and looked into the eyes of Angelica. And the Princess who, for all her disdain of love, was easily moved to pity, sprang to his side and sought out his wound. With kindly words she asked him how he had met this evil chance. But she waited not for a reply, for it came into her thought that a little way back in the forest she had noted a plant of sovereign virtue to salve a bleeding wound. And very gently she told him she would bring help, and quickly she found the herb.

As it chanced there came riding up a herdsman in search of a missing heifer, and him she bound to her service by a look and a word. Then she took up two stones and crushed out the juice of the healing plant and anointed with it Medoro's bleeding hurt. And such was the virtue of the sap that it stayed at once the flow of blood and brought back some feeling of strength. Then Angelica entreated Medoro to mount the horse of the herdsman. But

the youth would not leave his king until he had seen him buried by the side of his faithful Cloridan. When they had made an end of the burial, the peasant led them to the simple cottage he had built for his wife and children in the middle of a beautiful meadow well watered by a still, clear stream.

Here in the solitudes of wood and hill, and tended only by the peasant woman and her children, Angelica nursed back to life and strength the wounded youth. And in the blackness of his eyes and in the gold of his hair she found the likeness of her own, and she knew in her heart that here was the man designed to be her mate from the beginning of the world. She, who in vain had been sought in love by the mightiest of the age, now made a willing surrender to Medoro, a Saracen of lowly birth and unknown to fame. And in the sight of God and of the simple peasants they pledged themselves for ever, and they were wedded with rites as solemn as if they had stood in a great temple. No doubt and no hesitation had Angelica. For a month and a day they lived and loved in the forest, and, like two children, cut their names on the trees and made garlands of the woodland flowers. And when the month was ended they set out on the long journey to Cathay, there to seat Medoro on the throne of Galaphrone. Now Angelica, in her peasant dress, had nothing to give to the kindly herdsman but the one bracelet that had been left to her from the island of sorrows. And this was the bracelet that after a long history had fallen into the hands of Orlando, who in his turn had given it to Angelica.

And little she thought of the giver as she lightly bestowed it on the herdsman.

And as it chanced, or had been decreed from the beginning, Orlando in his wanderings in search of Angelica, after the dream in which he had been warned of her unknown peril, came to the cottage in the forest soon after the lovers had left. And he noted on the walls, writ in Arabic, the intertwining of the names of Angelica and Medoro, and at first he thought only that it was the work of some fugitive Saracen who had linked his own with a world-known name. But when he had questioned the herdsman and his wife, and they had extolled the beauty of Angelica, he began to be afraid. And the fear was turned into certainty when the peasant showed him with pride the beautiful bracelet. And when Orlando knew the bracelet, then indeed he knew that his love was lost. And most of all he grieved, or so he said to his heart, that the glory of Angelica should have been given up to a stripling of no name or fame.

The night fell before the herdsman had finished telling to Orlando the wonderful story of the loves of Angelica and Medoro, and over and over again he kept repeating in his peasant tongue every detail, from the finding of the wounded youth down to the departure and the gift of the bracelet. And Orlando suffered him to wander on, though every word added a new pang to his grief. At length he retired to an inner room to sleep till daybreak. But in the stillness and blackness of the night he saw more plainly than

when he had listened to the peasant every scene in the story. No longer could he doubt that Angelica had given herself for ever, body and soul, to this nameless Pagan. Then the thought came into his mind, and grew stronger and fuller until every other thought was banished, that in this very room and on this very couch the lovers had begun their wedded life.

Suddenly overpowered by jealous hatred and anger and despair and offended pride and a turmoil of passions, Orlando sprang from the couch, and in the middle of the night sought out his arms and his steed, Brigliadoro, and rode into the depths of the forest. All night he wandered aimlessly amongst the great silent trees, but from every one he seemed to hear mocking voices. And at break of day, as was ordained for his punishment, he came to a grotto where, most of all, the happy lovers had been wont to hide themselves from the heat of the sun, far removed from any thought of espial. And on the trees he saw interlaced the names of the lovers; and on a slab of marble, smooth as a tablet, Medoro had written, with the charcoal from a wasted fire, verses in Arabic, telling the glory of his love and triumph.

And the burden of the verses was that Angelica, who had been sought in love by all the great ones of the earth, had rejected all, and had given herself wholly and for ever to her nameless Medoro. Now when Orlando read the verses, and when he saw beneath them the name of Angelica, as if a witness to the truth (and well Orlando knew the character of

her writing by old experience), his last restraint gave way and sheer madness shattered his senses. And with his mighty sword, Durindana, he smote the tablet of stone and broke it into fragments, and the fragments he hacked into splinters. And beside the grotto was a lovely fountain of clear, sweet water, and on the margin were noble trees, and most of all on these trees had the lovers cut tokens for remembrance, like children in their sportive happiness. And with his famous unbreakable sword Orlando hewed out the names and tokens, and he slaughtered the saplings round about as if he would make a desert of the place. And he hurled into the fountain rocks and mud, and broke up the grotto, and cast upon it great branches and earthy roots and weighty stones.

And as he wrought this havoc the madness seized him with greater fury; and he cast off his armour and tore from his limbs the plate and mail. And he flung far from him into the greenwood helmet and shield and sword. And then, as the frenzy waxed stronger and more outrageous, he rent his garments and tore them into shreds, until stark naked he rushed wildly through the forest. And with hideous shouts of rage he tore up the great forest trees and broke off the giant branches.

Of all the stories of madness the madness of Orlando is the most horrible: steeped in blood and mire, unmeaning in ferocity, ruthlessly destructive of innocent lives, indiscriminate as a plague, and withal grotesque in every part from beginning to end. For

in the beginning Almighty God had sent Orlando as the scourge of the heathen and the champion of Christendom, and he had gifted him with superhuman strength and courage, and had made his body invulnerable. No weapon could pierce his skin, and no fatigue weary his limbs. Yet for all his strength he was made most gentle in courtesy, and least boastful of his prowess. Of his own deeds he spake not at all. And he went about righting wrongs, and shedding all about the glory of chivalry, until he fell into his deadly sin. And his sin was to give himself up to the love of a Pagan, and at her behest to use his might. And therefore God took vengeance on him, and of all his greatness left him only his brute strength and his invulnerability. In all else Orlando was made into a grotesque counterfeit of his former self, in mind and body.

Not content with raging through the forest he attacked with fury man and animal, and with his naked hands wasted every habitation he came near. He fought with wild beasts and tore them asunder and ate of their raw flesh. Every living thing, human, plant, or animal he fell upon like a destroying fiend. And in vain the peasants came in their hundreds armed with staves and scythes to crush him to death; them he crushed in their hundreds, hurling one against another.

And as he wandered over the earth his skin was blackened with sun and storm, his eyes were buried far down in the sockets, his face grew lean and dry as bone, long and tangled was his beard, and in wild

elf-locks his hair hung down to his shoulders. At last the path of his destruction took the madman to the shore near to Barcelona, and it came into his crazy mind that he would build him a shelter from sun and storm. And in the sand he scooped a pit and burrowed in it and lay covered except his head.

Now after Angelica and Medoro had left the herdsman's cottage they wandered many days over the mountains between France and Spain, and came at last to the sea. And as they rode carelessly along the shore, suddenly Angelica saw rising out of the sand the horrible head of Orlando. And as soon as the madman saw her he rose up, with the sand running down his naked body and dripping from his tangled hair. And he rushed at Angelica, and trembling and shrieking she called to Medoro and sped away on her steed. And when Medoro saw her danger he smote at the madman with his sword, but wounded him not at all, and Orlando turned and with his fist struck dead the horse of Medoro with a crushing blow between the eyes, and again pursued Angelica. And in her terror she fell from her horse within three feet of the madman. But even as she fell, quick as thought she put in her mouth the ring, and the savage madman, seeing her not, chased her steed. And when he sprang from his den in the sand Orlando knew not that it was Angelica on whom he rushed ; and when he was within an arm's length and glaring into her face, still he knew her not ; he knew her not from a tree or a rock or a wild beast that had aroused his unreasoning anger. And had he caught her he would have torn

her limb from limb, never knowing it was the woman he had worshipped.

But in his madness he pursued the affrighted mare along the sandy shore and speedily seized it, and with a bound leaped on its back ; and mile after mile he galloped in fury, never giving to the wretched beast a moment's rest. At last he rode headlong at a cleft in the rocks and the mare fell and broke her shoulder. Thereupon the madman carried her on his back until he was wearied ; then again he set her on the ground and dragged her by the bridle and forced her to stumble along. And he thought to get better speed by noosing the reins round the leg, and in this fashion he hauled the beast after him till it was dead. And long after, in the strength of his madness, he dragged the mangled body over rough rocks and through tangled brushwood.

At last Orlando came to a deep river and he swam across, but was forced to leave the dead mare behind. Just as he reached the other side a shepherd came riding along the bank on a horse which he had brought to drink at the river. And seeing Orlando naked and alone he had no fear. But the madman cried out to him: "I want you to exchange your horse with my mare ; I can show her to you from here if you will ; there she is lying on the other bank ; the only fault with her is that she is dead, but you can easily cure her of that afterwards. For such a bargain you must give me something as well as your horse. Get down, of your courtesy, for your animal pleases me." The shepherd laughed

at the folly of the fool and rode on towards the ford. "Do you not hear?" Orlando roared after him; "I want your horse." The shepherd had a thick knotted staff, and with this he struck the naked madman. And the anger of Orlando passed all bounds, and with his fist he struck the shepherd on the head and smashed his skull, so that he fell to the earth dead.

Orlando leaped on the horse, and he never stopped to give it rest or food and rode it to death and when this horse was dead he seized another. Through a large part of France and Spain the invulnerable madman left behind him a wide track of villages wasted by fire and slaughter. At last he came to Malaga, and there he wrought worse destruction than ever before. He sacked the city so that for years afterwards it never recovered; and over all the country-side he pulled down and burned the houses.

Then he rode along the shore until he came to Gibraltar; and there he saw a boat putting out to sea with a goodly company of men and women taking their pleasure in the calm water and the morning breezes. And the madman cried out to them, "Stop, I want to come with you." And as fast as they could, with oar and sail, the people urged their boat away from the naked madman.

Orlando forced his horse into the sea, and with cruel blows from a heavy staff he made it swim after the boat. At last the horse sank under him, and the madman swam on with no more thought of the boat that had gone far away. And Fortune,

that always looks after the mad, guided the mad Orlando across the straits until he landed in Africa. Then he set his face to the east, and wandered all along the northern coast of Africa, until after many days he came upon a great army of black Nubians, encamped on the shore of the sea before the city of Biserta. And Orlando had been brought to this spot so that the judgment of God upon him for his sins might be ended with a wonderful act of mercy, as the story will show.

And Angelica never knew that the living horror which sprang up out of the sand to clutch her was all that was left on earth of him who had been Orlando.

And without further mishap Angelica and Medoro found a ship and sailed away to the East; and they are heard of no more in the verses of the divine Ariosto.

# VII

# MANDRICARDO AND DORALIS

## VII

## MANDRICARDO AND DORALIS

THE starting-point of the story of Mandricardo and Doralis, as told by the divine poet, is in an adventure which befell Orlando a little time before he fell into his madness.

When he had been aroused by the evil dream to go in search of Angelica he had left Paris without a word to any one—not even to his most faithful friend Brandimarte—and he had taken with him not a single squire or attendant. And partly for disguise and partly to match his sorrowful thoughts he had put on black armour, and in place of his famous shield, with the red and white quarterings, known to all men, he took a black shield with no device, and over his armour he wore a plain surcoat. And many months he had wandered, and he had gone through many adventures whilst the Saracens besieged Charlemagne in Paris. At length Agramant, the Saracen leader, determined to deliver a grand assault on the city, and he summoned from far and near all his allies. But when he came to review his forces, before the grand assault, there were missing the pennons of the king

of Norizia and of the king of Tremizen. And whilst King Agramant was weighing the cause of their absence there was brought to him a squire of the king of Tremizen. And he told Agramant that the two kings had been slain and their forces slaughtered and scattered by a single unknown knight, as easily as a flock of sheep by a wolf. Now the knight was Orlando, but none knew it by reason of his black armour and plain shield.

A few days before these events there had arrived in the camp of the Saracens a warrior of great renown, by name Mandricardo. He was the son of Agrican, the king of Tartary, who had besieged Angelica in Albracca, and had been slain in combat by Orlando. And after Mandricardo had succeeded his father in the kingdom he had wasted his people in war, slaying with his own hand any that showed the least failing in courage. And he had been reproached by a holy man of his race and faith because he wasted his people and forgot to avenge his own father. Therefore Mandricardo, smitten by remorse, had set out to France to kill Orlando. And for another reason also he desired to meet Orlando in battle, namely, to win from him Durindana, the great sword of Hector of Troy. For the Tartar king in the most famous of all his adventures had gained possession of all the arms of Hector, save only the sword. And when he had won the armour he had been made to take an oath to use no weapon but his lance until he had gained this sword in battle from Orlando. And Mandricardo was chafing with restless

anger in the camp of Agramant, because he could get no tidings of his enemy Orlando, when the tale was brought of the slaughter wrought by the unknown black knight. And Mandricardo was enraged to think any Christian should have won so great renown, and he resolved to set out and find the black knight. And he told no one of his purpose, fearing that some other might seek to share in the glory of slaying this unknown marvel. And according to his oath he took only his lance, and he set out glorying in his strength and in the shining armour of the mighty Hector.

The arms of Hector were the most glorious ever created : bedecked with gold and rubies, pearls and emeralds. The shield was azure, and set in the midst was a silver eagle ; and most glorious of all was the helmet : on the crest a golden lion and beneath the crest a wreath of gold, and in the centre of it a great carbuncle that glowed with a ruddy light, and gleamed like a burning fire in the darkness. And on his coming King Marsilio had given to the Tartar king a beautiful horse, a bay with black feet and mane, and of a famous race. Mandricardo mounted this horse and, resplendent in the arms of Hector, he spurred towards the scene of the slaughter and vowed never to return to the camp until he had slain the black knight. At length he came to this strange battlefield, and as he looked on the heaps of slain his heart was torn with envy to see such numbers slain by one arm, and he cursed his fate that had brought him too late to the carnage.

That day and half the next he sought eagerly for the black knight but found him not.

And at last he came to a green meadow set in a loop of a deep stream and shaded with noble trees. And at the entrance to the meadow, where the stream had almost made an island of it, he found a numerous band of armed men. And the Tartar, riding up, asked the leader of the band what chief had sent so strong a force and what was the treasure it was sent to guard. And the leader, struck by the jewelled arms and by the fierce bearing of Mandricardo, answered with courtesy: "We have been sent to convoy the daughter of Stordilano, the king of Granada, whom he has promised in marriage to Rodomont, the king of Algiers, and even now we are taking the Princess to the king her father, who is encamped with Agramant. And as soon as the cool of the evening has come and the cicale have ceased their grating we shall set forth; and in the meanwhile the Princess rests in the shade." But the Tartar, who feared nothing in earth or heaven, resolved to try the faith and courage of the guard, and with slow insolence said: "I would fain see the lady; lead me to her or bring her hither to me. My haste in another matter forbids delay." "What madness is this?" replied the Granada captain; and he said no more, for on the instant the Tartar rode upon him and drave his lance through his steel cuirass, and sent him dead to earth. "Who dares dispute with me?" he cried, and pressed on the throng of guards with his lance. And when the lance

was broken, with the truncheon of it he hammered to death all that came within reach, even as Samson hammered the Philistines with the jaw-bone; and when he had killed or maimed two-thirds of the company the rest fled.

When Mandricardo had cleared the passage into the meadow with this great slaughter he advanced on the track of a newly trodden path into the meadow, and as he went forward he heard the cries of maidens in fear, and at last he came to the Princess of Granada, Doralis. She was leaning against the trunk of an old ash, weeping for the slain, fearful for herself, and fainting with anxiety. And when she saw coming near to her the Tartar king with fierce visage and with armour all stained with blood, and with the terrible truncheon of the lance in his hand, she gave way to sheer terror, and her attendants huddled round her shrieking—sage matrons and beautiful damsels and young pages, versed only in the courteous fighting of the tournament.

As soon as the Tartar looked on the face of Doralis, who was the most famous in that age of all the beauties of Spain, he was enraptured, for he was as quick in love as in war. And he thought to himself how lovely she looked through her tears; and how much more lovely she would look in her smiles; and he set himself to make her change from fear to joy. And with gentle courtesy he placed the Princess on her milk-white palfrey; and he said to the weeping train of matrons and damsels and pages, "Farewell; henceforth your lady shall find in me alone her

guardian, her squire, her lord, her attendant and whatsoever she desires." And thereupon he left them, and they lamented to one another that her father or her betrothed had not been there to defend their mistress from this barbarian, and they wondered what vengeance they would take when they heard of the disaster. And forthwith a dwarf, who was much prized by the Princess, and was often her messenger, was sent on a swift horse to tell the news to Rodomont. And at this very time the grand assault on Paris was being delivered, and Rodomont was raging like an unconquerable dragon through the city, as is told in its place by the divine poet.

As soon as Mandricardo had gotten possession of Doralis he began to forget his quest of the black knight, and he turned his youthful thoughts away from war. And he displayed wonderful skill in the art of love, and even his feigning seemed fired with passion. To begin with, he told Doralis that in the middle of Asia he had heard of her beauty, and for her sake alone had he left his kingdom, determined to win for himself the most beautiful woman on the earth. Then he told her of his high descent, his wealth and his power, and ended with the pious boast that in empire he submitted to God only. And little by little the warrior conquered the fears of the maiden and she began to answer him with courtesy. And as they rode along the forest ways all alone she looked sometimes in his face, and showed in her eyes the beginning of young desire, and the heart of the Tartar leaped with joy. And as they journeyed, little by little they fell into

the gaiety of love, and just as the sun was setting they came near a village where the peasants were holding a festival with dances and piping and feasting. And the chief of the herdsmen welcomed the travellers with the courtesy born of good nature, and he was not abashed by the jewels in the armour of the knight, or by the magnificent dress of the lady. And the king of the Tartars forgot his dignities and his ferocity, and the Princess of Granada forgot also her father's dignities and her betrothal, and they danced and feasted with the peasants. And in the morning, sings the divine poet, they rose up as joyous as the sunshine, and they thanked their host as if he had been the lord of a great castle. Then they rode away, but not towards Paris; for Mandricardo had forgotten the grand assault on Paris, and Doralis had forgotten her father and Rodomont, her betrothed.

At length in their pleasant wanderings they came to a river that seemed hardly to flow at all in its quiet stillness; and so pure and bright was the water that the sands in the bed glittered in the sun. Never was a scene more peaceful. And they had not ridden far along the banks when they came upon two noble knights and a lady resting in the cooling shade.

And on the instant the scene was changed from peace to war, for the strongest and most imposing of the warriors was the black knight, whose quest Mandricardo had for the time forgotten in the delights of love.

But the story of the fight of Mandricardo with Orlando, in the guise of the black knight, is told in

another place, and the reader must first return to Paris and Rodomont.

As recorded in the beginning of these stories, Rodomont, from whom, without a moment's thought, the Tartar king had stolen his betrothed, was of all the Saracens the most terrible, and he had shown to all the world his devotion to Doralis. War was his sport and ruthless slaughter his delight, but to Doralis he was always the gentlest of courteous knights, and he loved her with all the passion of his gigantic strength. On his great crimson standard there was richly embroidered a lion; and in the mouth of the lion was a curb, held by the beautiful hand of a lady; and the lion was meant for Rodomont, and the hand for the hand of Doralis; a device which showed to all men the might of the lover and the humility of his love.[1]

The armour of Rodomont was suited to the ferocity of his nature. Instead of plate and mail he wore the scaly skin of a huge dragon, that had been slain by his ancestor Nimrod when he was building the tower of Babel, and threatening to take heaven itself by storm. And this dragon skin was a palm in thickness, and no weapon could pierce it. And the sword which had been Nimrod's was so huge and weighty that since his day no man had wielded it save Rodomont himself.

The grand assault delivered by all the forces under Agramant led to one of the greatest battles in the

[1] The device on this banner of Rodomont differs in detail from the banner described by Boiardo. See above, p. 62.

history of the world. The movements of the thousands engaged were highly involved, and the valour of the kings and chiefs on both sides gave rise to many notable feats of arms; and the divine poet tells of the single combats of the heroes as if the battle-field were only a scene in the background.

The great issue of the battle was the last defence of Christendom against Mahomet. If Paris fell all Europe would fall with it. On both sides aid had been summoned from every race and every country. And yet, on either side, there were absent from this decisive battle the mightiest leaders, who had been driven this way and that by their own passions; and in these days the personal strength and courage of the leaders was of overpowering weight compared with thousands of the common sort.

Charlemagne grieved most of all for the absence of Orlando, who had left Paris secretly in pursuit of Angelica. Rinaldo had been sent to Scotland and England for new levies and had not yet returned, though by the will of God he did return at the most critical point. Dudon had been captured by Rodomont soon after his first coming to France, and sent prisoner to Africa; and others of the paladins were absent, but most of all the loss of Orlando boded evil to the Christians.

On the side of the Saracens Agramant looked in vain for Mandricardo, who had gone away no one knew whither, and little Agramant thought that he had left the dance of death for the dance of love; and Rogero was missing from the ranks of the

Saracens, and it had been prophesied that the fortune of the Saracens was bound up with Rogero.

The main action in the assault fell in this wise. The Saracens under Rodomont forced an entrance through the outer defences of the city, with a loss of thousands killed by all manner of missiles hurled from the great military engines, and by burning pitch and lime and great stones thrown from the walls. And masses of the Saracens were caught in the great fosse as in a trap, and were burned alive when the hidden mines were fired. But Rodomont himself, who was not only the strongest of the Saracens but the fleetest and the lightest of foot in the whole host, by a mighty leap had reached the other side, and outstripping all his men and hurling the defenders from the inner wall, unaided and alone he had forced an entry into Paris itself. And he raged through the city like an unconquerable dragon. Drunk with blood, he spared not little children or old men or young maidens. In his rage he pulled down the pillars of great churches. He set fire to the palaces of the nobles and to the houses of the poor. And in those days the buildings were all of wood, and a great column of smoke rose up from the burning city. In vain armed men tried to stay his onset, and in vain the fugitives hurled down upon him great beams from the roofs, and the bowmen shot at him sheafs of bolts and arrows. Nothing could pierce the thick skin of the dragon and nothing could crush the man within.

At last a squire came breathless to Charlemagne,

who in another part defended the city walls against Agramant, and he cried to him: "All is lost; in vain you defend the walls; Christendom is no more; Satan himself, the old dragon from hell, has fallen upon the city in the west and he is slaughtering and burning worse than all the Saracens." And when Charlemagne saw the flames and the smoke fast growing in height and volume he knew the tale of the squire was not all born of fear, and that indeed the city was lost unless the burning was stayed. And he called to him all the paladins within his reach, and seven of them, all notable names, answered and rushed with Charlemagne to the rescue. And they found Rodomont slaying and burning, and one after another they rode at him with their lances and smote at him with their swords, but even then the dragon-man was not wounded. But more and more of the Christians came to the attack, and by weight of numbers Rodomont was borne back, fighting step by step. And at last he came on the river, and leaped in, and in all his armour swam across and beyond the walls. And when he had reached the other bank he brandished his sword against the foes he had left, and lamented to himself that too soon he had made his retreat.

But, as it chanced, in the middle of his mad fury he caught sight of the dwarf of Doralis, who had been sent by her attendants to tell to him the story of her capture by Mandricardo. And as soon as Rodomont saw the dwarf, he smiled upon him and he asked how fared his dear mistress.

And to him the dwarf: "No longer is she my mistress, or your mistress"—and then he told him how Mandricardo had slaughtered the company of guards and had taken off the Princess without a single attendant, maid or squire.

And the amazement and the wrath of Rodomont were beyond the expression of words. At last he cried to the dwarf, "Lead me to the spot"; and the dwarf spurred his horse and Rodomont ran; and as he ran he raged that the horse could gallop no faster.

But much was to happen before Rodomont, in spite of all his haste, could fight with Mandricardo; and, as is his custom, the divine poet takes up another thread in his story and leaves Rodomont running and the dwarf galloping, and sets out in order what happened to Orlando after he had killed the two pagan kings.

# VIII

# ZERBINO AND ISABELLA

## VIII

## ZERBINO AND ISABELLA

Now it chanced after Orlando in his black armour had routed the forces of the two pagan kings with great slaughter he came at nightfall to a hill, and from a cleft in the side there streamed out a gleam of light, and following the beam Orlando came on a great cavern, the mouth of which had been concealed with branches and bushes. When he had tied up his horse, Brigliadoro, Orlando quickly cleared the mouth of the cave, and by a steep descent he came into a spacious rocky chamber. Here he saw seated near a blazing fire a young maiden of about sixteen years, most beautiful to look upon in spite of the grief in her countenance and the tears in her eyes. Near the maiden was an old woman, wrinkled, sallow, and surly in aspect, who was plainly scourging the young maiden with her tongue. On the sight of Orlando the beldame stopped her rating and gave him a churlish salutation. Orlando, much astonished, asked the beautiful young maiden how she came to be weeping in such a place and in such company, and thereupon she told him her story.

Her name (she said) was Isabella, and long, long ago, so it seemed in her distress, her father, the Saracen king of Galicia, had held a great tournament, and as was usual in the days of courtesy he had invited knights both Pagan and Christian. Amongst the foreign guests was Zerbino, the son of the king of Scotland. Of all the knights in the tournament he was the most courteous and generous, and none surpassed him in bravery.

Between Isabella and Zerbino a great love sprang up, but their union was hindered by the difference in religion. So great, however, was their love that when Zerbino was summoned by his old father to lead the Scottish levies to the aid of Charlemagne, he devised a plan with Isabella whereby she might join him and become a Christian and his wife. The carrying out of the plan was entrusted to Orderico, a Biscayan, and thought by Zerbino to be his most faithful and devoted friend. According to this plan Isabella was to be made a willing captive and carried off to a ship as if by a band of sea-rovers.

The scene was duly acted, and Orderico with some of his trusty followers conveyed Isabella to the vessel, and they escaped. Soon after, however, a sudden storm arose, and with great danger the lady with Orderico and two of Zerbino's followers escaped to the shore in a boat. The place was wild and desolate, and distant about two leagues, as they guessed, from Rochelle, the nearest city. Of the two followers of Zerbino, one of Scottish blood, by name Almonio, was urged by Orderico to go for

succour for the lady, and he gladly undertook the task. But scarcely had he gone when Orderico approached the other, by name Corebo, a native of Bilbao, who had been his companion and friend from boyhood. And he made him know that he had himself become madly in love with Isabella, and was determined to make her his own. Confident in his old friendship he laid bare his heart to Corebo. But he, being a man of noble birth and great soul, no sooner heard than he assailed Orderico for his breach of faith and friendship, and tried to turn him from his evil passion, but in vain. Then Orderico, relying on his skill in arms, attacked Corebo, and Isabella fled to the woods. Not long did the fight endure, and the traitor, leaving the true man for dead, pursued Isabella, and in a little time had overtaken her. At first he tried every blandishment, and all manner of flatteries and inventions, but when he found his wooing was of no avail, and that her horror only increased, he let the brute in his nature break through altogether. Like a satyr of the woods, in the woods he seized her ; and loudly she cried out for help, and with the frenzy of outraged nature fought with the beast-like man. Suddenly, when her strength was failing, there came in sight going down the hill to the shore a band of wreckers attracted by the broken ship. As soon as Orderico noticed that they had heard her cries and were turning towards them, his fear became the greater passion and he fled. The wreckers, deeming Isabella a great prize by her beauty and rich attire, conveyed her to the cave

and left her in charge of the old woman. And here, so the king's daughter told Orlando, had she remained a prisoner for over eight months, saved and kept unharmed for her selling value. As he came in the old woman was telling her that a bargain had been struck, and that she was to be handed over to the Soldan to be his hundredth wife.

Scarcely had Isabella finished her story when there came down into the cave the rabble of wreckers, armed with clubs and swords and spears. The leader, by nature of a horrid aspect, had been more deformed by the loss of an eye and a great cut across cheek and nose. As soon as he saw Orlando he turned with brutal jesting to his followers and said, "Here is a fine bird caught without any net." And to Orlando he said, "Surely no guest was ever so welcome. Long have I sought for such fine arms, and it is indeed kind of you to bring them to me unasked." Not long did the ruffian survive his jest, for Orlando, scorning to use his sword, seized from the fire a burning log and hurled it straight into the face of the robber and sent him blinded to his death. Then taking in his mighty hands a huge table, at which the wreckers had been wont to sit at meat, a square mass of rough unpolished timber resting on rude shapeless legs, Orlando raised it up and threw it upon the crowd of bandits. And it fell upon them as falls a big stone cast by a shepherd on a brood of serpents; and some were crushed outright, and some, maimed and mangled, crept away to die. The remnant, seven in number, who had escaped this peril, crowded

ORLANDO HURLING THE HEAVY TABLE ON THE ROBBERS.

*To face page* 152.

to the narrow entrance, and Orlando caught them and bound them with their own cords and dragged them out to the open. There he hanged them by the neck and left them a prey to the fowls of the air. But he allowed the old woman to go free.

Now the name of this old woman was Gabrina. And she was one of the worst of the wicked, and before she came to live in the cave of the wreckers she had been wife to a noble lord and lived in a great castle. But before old age came upon her, through lust for his friend she had caused him to be murdered by that friend in a very cunning manner, and thereafter she had forced the friend to make her his wife, and him also she had caused to be murdered in a very cunning manner; and if Orlando had known her true story he would have hanged her also with the wreckers, or in some way have put an end to her wickedness.

And well she knew her own deserts, and she fled by devious paths and hid away from the approach of honest men, as a murderess is wont to do. But at last in her flight she came to a rough river which she could not cross. There she lay in wait till she saw riding up a knight, whose armour showed that he came from a distant country, and Gabrina put on a piteous look of innocence and distress, and asked the knight of his charity to put her across the river. And the knight looked twice at this ill-disguised piece of sinfulness, but his courtesy prevailed and he put Gabrina behind him, and after they had crossed the river he carried her on his horse through a broad

marsh. And just as they came to the firm land of the forest they saw riding towards them a knight and a gaily dressed lady. Now this knight was Pinabello, and he also was of the order of the crafty wicked ones, and his story is also full of treachery. And his lady was well suited to her mate, and save in her finery and her palfrey was a thing of nought; and even her name has been forgotten by the story-tellers. As soon as this well-dressed young wanton saw the ancient, ill-clad sinner riding behind a very fine, youthful knight, she could not stop her laughter and jests.

But the knight who had played the ferryman out of courtesy was little used to ill-mannered jests, and turning fiercely on Pinabello challenged him to fight, and in case of defeat to give up the horse and the gaudy dress of his lady. And out of very shame Pinabello could not refuse the challenge, and wheeling round rode back and prepared to charge. Likewise the unknown knight disencumbered himself of his unlovely burden and made ready for the meeting. Pinabello aimed full at the centre of the shield, but as well might he have smitten a rock. The unknown, with finer skill and firmer strength, aimed at the helmet of Pinabello, and hitting the mark hurled him senseless to the ground. Thereupon he bade Gabrina deck herself in the lady's fine dress, and leaving the frightened wanton to look after her stunned companion, he set the old woman on the palfrey and they rode away into the forest.

For three days they journeyed together, so great

was the courtesy of the foreign knight, and so cunning in her tale of woe was Gabrina. And on the fourth day they met a knight riding in haste and in wrath, who was no other than Zerbino, the prince of Scotland. He had lost himself in the forest in the vain pursuit of the caitiff who had struck down Medoro.

Now when Zerbino saw so young a knight escorting so withered a lady, dressed up in all the latest finery of wantonness, despite his wrath and weariness and despite his courtesy (for of all the peers of Charlemagne he was the most courteous) he looked into the eyes of the foreign knight and smiled, and seeing therein only a feigning of wrath, he complimented him on his great prudence in the choice of his lady for whom he need fear no rival.

The unknown, being always desirous to test the skill and courage of another, defended his lady with fitting extravagance, and challenged Zerbino to fight for her overpowering beauty. And after an exchange of knightly courtesies, it was agreed between the two knights that the loser in the joust should take the lady and should be bound by his honour to conduct her with the utmost courtesy wheresoever she listed. Bitterly angry was Gabrina to be made the sport of such a wager. The knights rode apart, and then turned and met in full career. Again the unknown aimed at the helm and again his antagonist was hurled to the ground, the stranger being unharmed. Then, with a laughing farewell, the unknown rode away, and Zerbino was left to do his knightly devoir by the garish old lady. And when the unknown had

disappeared in the forest Zerbino asked the unpleasing companion who had been forced upon him what was the name and lineage of the foreign knight.

And the ill-favoured lady with malicious eagerness replied, "Know, Sir Knight, that you have been unhorsed by a virgin warrior who has come from the East to try the valour of the paladins of France." And Zerbino blushed with shame, and so great was the shame it seemed to the knight that his very armour tingled and blushed red, and he mounted his steed and in silence escorted the evil old woman. Now the maiden knight who had overthrown Zerbino was a warrior who had already achieved great renown in deeds of arms, by name Marfisa. And as told in another story she was the only sister of Rogero, and had been stolen away in infancy and had become a queen in a far country beyond India.

Many are the stories related of her before she comes into the pages of the divine Ariosto. Her entry on the scene at the great siege of Albracca revealed at once her fearless prowess. The old king Galaphrone had brought to the relief of Angelica his daughter three armies, and the third was led by Marfisa. And when they had come within touch of the hostile forces of Agrican the Tartar, and were on the eve of battle, Marfisa retired to her tent; and to her maid she said, "If the first army is put to flight it matters not; and if the second under Galaphrone is broken let it break; but if my army begins to give ground then you may awaken me"—and thereupon she fell into a quiet sleep. But most of all she loved

to ride alone in search of adventures. "Deer and doves go in bands," she said, "for they are of the timorous kind, but the falcon and the eagle and the lion and the tiger, and birds and beasts that know no fear, go alone—and of such courage is mine." But as with all good knights her courtesy was equal to her courage; and her thought was as quick as lightning, and in a moment she gave free rein to anger or kindness; and only by her deeds can her character be known.

Now Gabrina was much angered with Zerbino because he had made a jest of her with Marfisa, and because he refused to converse as they rode along; and taking note of his arms and mien and bearing, and hearing words he spoke to himself in his distress, she knew that he was the lover of Isabella; for often had Isabella spoken of him when she first came to the cave of the wreckers, and when she thought in her simplicity that any woman would aid in her escape.

When Gabrina discovered that the knight was indeed Zerbino, the lover of Isabella, she glowered upon him and cried out: "Little you think that if I liked I could tell you much of your lost love; and had you been kindly you should have heard; it is but a little time ago I parted from your dear Isabella." And then the knight began to soothe Gabrina and entreat her to tell him what she knew and where his lady was; and how she had escaped the shipwreck. And when Gabrina saw that he was quite at her mercy she said to him: "Isabella indeed

lives, but better had she been dead, for, look you, she was taken by outlaws, and a score of them have shared her beauty." And Zerbino in anger forgot his promise and gave her the lie; and drew his dagger and threatened to kill her on the spot if she did not instantly reveal where the lady was; but Gabrina kept a sullen silence, and the knight remembered that she had been put in his charge; and again they rode on without a word.

And at this point in the story the divine poet displays in two noble stanzas the binding force of knightly honour in the days of courtesy; and tells how the word once given, if only with the trees of the forest for witnesses, is as binding as if supported by an oath in a full assembly; and the Scottish prince was of unstainable honour. Of Zerbino it was said that Nature, after she had fashioned him, broke the mould.

As the sun was sending lengthening shadows from the west there came in view a knight with two squires, and as soon as Gabrina saw him she knew him for Hermonides, the brother of her second murdered husband; and she let fall her sullenness and fawned on Zerbino with a lying tale, and told how this knight had murdered her father and brother, and had vowed to slay her and all her kin, and she begged of Zerbino to remember his pledge to be her knight. And Zerbino answered, "Woman, I am your champion, fear not." But as soon as Hermonides had recognised Gabrina he cried out, "Give me that murderess to die at my hand, or refuse at

the peril of your life." And Zerbino replied that if need be he would fight, and that no true knight would stain his hand with the blood of a woman. And after a useless parley they met in full charge, and the lance of Zerbino pierced through the other's buckler and wounded him in the shoulder, grievously but not to the death. And Zerbino quickly dismounted and gave him help and stanched the wound, and when he had recovered from his fall he said mournfully to Zerbino: "It grieves me but little to be worsted by a better knight, but much it grieves me that you should be a prey to this woman. If you only knew you would give her up to a just death. Listen to me and look on this woman's face and read her guilt."

And thereupon he told Zerbino the story that is told in another place of the wicked murders done by Gabrina. But even this tale of guilt could not absolve Zerbino from his knightly pledge, and, leaving the wounded Hermonides in charge of his two squires, he rode away with Gabrina still under his protection.

And as they rode they heard through the trees the sounds of fighting, followed by a sudden silence, and pricking forward they found a knight newly slain with so many wounds that it seemed as if he had been assailed by a hundred foes. Much grieved was the Scottish knight, for he thought that the dead man had been murdered in foul play, and he rode in pursuit of the supposed assassins. But the dead man was in truth only Pinabello, who was fated to

be as deceitful in death as in life. For he had been slain in single combat by Bradamant, the maiden knight, the lover of Rogero, in just revenge. But the reason and the manner of it must be put aside. Suffice it to say that Pinabello had been chased by Bradamant from the gates of his own castle and forced to fight to the death; and the horse that he rode had in truth been stolen from Bradamant after (as he hoped) he had led her into a fatal snare.

But of these things Zerbino knew nothing, and he sought for the supposed murderers, but sought in vain. In the meantime Gabrina was left with the dead body. And being filled with greedy avarice, she stripped from the body a belt bedecked with gold and jewels, and hid it under her gaudy dress; and gladly would she have stolen all the costly armour, but knew not how to conceal the theft from the honourable Zerbino, whom she heard returning from his fruitless pursuit.

The evening was now coming on, and he bade the old woman follow him in search of a resting-place for the night. And after long wandering they came in sight of a stately castle, which proved to be the castle of Anselmo, the father of Pinabello; and at the gates there was a great turmoil of people crying out in mourning and lamentations, with old Anselmo in the midst. And when Zerbino asked the cause, he was told that a messenger had just arrived with the report that Pinabello, the son of the castellan, had been found murdered. And it came

into the thought of the Scottish knight that surely this was the man he had found dead ; and soon after the body was brought on a bier of branches to the feet of the old father, and it was the same. And bitterly the old man wept for his only son ; for, wicked himself, he had loved also the wickedness of his son ; and he began to offer great treasure to any who would discover the slayer. And here Gabrina saw a chance to satisfy both greed and revenge. And she drew from its hiding-place the golden belt, and in rapid words accused Zerbino of the murder, and confirmed her tale by showing the belt which (said she) he had stripped from the dead and given to her. And forthwith the unhappy Zerbino was seized before he knew the wicked guile of the old woman, and he was put into a loathsome cell until the morning. And at break of day he was taken out and pinioned and placed on a lowly steed. Under a strong guard of men-at-arms, and surrounded by a large concourse of people, he was being led away to the place where they had found the dead Pinabello, in order that he might be tortured and hanged on the very spot of the crime. But here the example of the divine poet must be followed, and Zerbino left to his fate, whilst the thread of the story of Isabella is again captured and pursued.

After Orlando had rescued Isabella from the cave and had hanged the remnant of the outlaws, he took her in his charge with the most honourable courtesy, and for a time they journeyed in the forest seeking food and shelter from the country folk. And early

one morning they came in sight of the castle of Anselmo, and looking down from a little hill they saw in an open space a vast concourse of people, and in the midst a young man fast bound on a horse, with head cast down as if in prayer. As soon as Orlando saw the crowd with the prisoner, he bade Isabella stay, and he rode at speed to discover the cause of the tumultuous gathering. And when he came near to the prisoner, by the first glance he knew at once that he was a noble knight, and, pressing through the populace and the guards, he asked the young man why he was so evilly handled.

Now none knew Orlando. But though they knew him not, so imposing was the black knight, that the crowd and the guards held back as the prisoner told his tale: how he had been falsely accused by the wicked Gabrina of the death of Pinabello, and was even then being led to torture and death.

And Orlando read the truth in his eyes, and well he knew also that Pinabello had merited long since death by violence, though he knew not the doom of justice had been given by his kinswoman, Bradamant. And needless to say the tale was told in few words, but soon Orlando had heard enough, and in a loud voice he demanded the instant release of the captive. But the soldiers of the guard, seeing only one man, jeered at Orlando, and one of them who had clad himself in the armour stripped from Zerbino and trusted in his strength, struck at Orlando with his sword. Then was the wrath of the paladin

kindled, and he drew Durindana and rode upon the guards and the crowd, and those he did not slay he drove headlong in flight, and suffered not one of them to escape to the castle. And then Orlando released the pinioned captive from his bonds, and he helped him to put on again his armour which they stripped from the slain guard.

And when Isabella saw that the fray was ended she rode down from the hill. And when she was far off Zerbino knew her, though long he had mourned her as lost in the shipwreck. And at first sight his heart became as cold as if he had seen a ghost, and then a joyful rush of blood dyed his cheek, and he longed to rush to meet her and clasp her to his breast. But in a moment his heart again grew cold as ice, for he thought that surely the maiden had given her love to the knight who had just saved him from death. And now it seemed to him more bitter to think she should lie living in the arms of another than dead in the depths of the sea. Had any other knight taken his love he would have fought him to the death, but for the man who had just saved his life the heart of Zerbino had no room for anything but gratitude and knightly worship.

And quickly was ended the conflict of his feelings, and he let fall his visor before Isabella could see his face. And the two knights and the lady rode away through the forest. At length they came to a stream of clear water in pleasant shade, and Orlando laid aside his helmet and entreated Zerbino to do likewise.

And Zerbino, hoping against hope, assented. And as soon as Isabella saw his face she saw nothing else, and she fell on his neck and kissed him on the lips, with tears and laughter and the wordless murmurs of love. And when the lovers had got back their senses, and saw the trees and the stream and Orlando, in hurried words Isabella began to tell Zerbino how she had been rescued by Orlando from the outlaws. And Zerbino knelt before him and with knightly reverence showed him the utmost gratitude. But Orlando, as was his custom, made light of his own part and rejoiced in the meeting of the lovers.

And suddenly there broke into the midst of all this happiness a new discord; for there came riding by the river side a knight in jewelled armour and a lady richly dressed. And the knight was Mandricardo and the lady Doralis.

As soon as Mandricardo saw the black armour of Orlando and marked his noble strength he cried to him: "At last—the knight I have sought for days. Your black armour shows it, and your bold bearing. You are the knight and your arm alone destroyed the company of Norizia and the company of Tremizen,—and now with me you must fight to the death." But when Orlando looked to the arms of his opponent he saw that he had neither sword nor battle-axe but only a lance. And he said to him, "How can we fight to the death if at the first charge you break your lance?" "Look to yourself," said the Tartar, "with this lance alone will I fight; for when I gained these arms, which were first worn by Hector of Troy,

the sword only was wanting, and I vowed to wear no sword until I had taken Hector's by force from Orlando. With this sword, and with treachery, Orlando slew my father Agrican——" Then Orlando broke in: "Know that I am Orlando, and in fair fight I killed your father, and this is my sword, Durindana, justly mine; and it shall be yours if you can take it in fight; but no vantage will I take." And instantly he took the sword and hung it on a tree.

Then the two knights rode apart about half a bow-shot and, turning, charged. And each of them aimed at the helmet, and the lance of each was shivered, but neither knight gave way to the shock. Again they rode apart, though nothing remained for battle but the truncheons of their shattered lances. And again they met, and four times they struck with the truncheons of the lances until they were broken close to the wrist. Then with nothing left but gauntlets each tried to drag the other from his horse. The Tartar with both hands seized Orlando, but firm he stayed in the saddle. And Orlando, gripping the bridle of his enemy, tried to force back his horse, and the bridle was torn away. And at last, though Orlando kept his seat, the girth broke and he was suddenly thrown; and at the same time the Tartar's horse, freed from its bridle and maddened with the struggle, rushed away on a forest path. And when Doralis saw her champion carried away, fearful to be left alone, she followed on her palfrey. In vain Mandricardo tried to check his steed with soft words and

heavy blows; nothing could stop its mad career until man and horse were brought down by chance; and both being unhurt the Tartar seized the mane but knew not how to ride back to the fight without a bridle. Then Doralis came up, and urged him to take her bridle, and said her palfrey needed only voice or touch. But though Mandricardo was eager for battle and raging with anger he thought it unworthy to take his lady's bridle.

And suddenly their perplexity was ended and their trouble turned to laughter. For there appeared riding up the forest path Gabrina, sallow and wrinkled, but dressed in all the finery of Pinabello's wanton lady. And on the instant the Tartar seized the palfrey of the old woman, took off the bridle, and with a cry such as the beast had never heard, sent it terrified through the wilds of the forest, with Gabrina clinging to the mane.

In the meantime Orlando had made shift to repair the broken harness, and awaited the return of his enemy. But at length he thought it better to pursue than to wait longer, and he took a friendly farewell of the lovers. And he besought Zerbino, if the Tartar should return, to say to him that he would wait near at hand for three days, and thereafter return to the camp of Charlemagne. But as it chanced in the windings of the forest paths Orlando missed the Tartar chief, and lost his way in trying to return. And after long wandering he came to the scene where, as already told, it had been destined that he should fall into his madness for the loss of Angelica.

After Orlando had left the lovers they rode slowly away, and they had not gone far before they saw coming to meet them a prisoner with hands tied behind him, mounted on a lowly steed, and on either side a knight fully armed. And as they looked, they knew the prisoner for the false Orderico, who had betrayed his trust with sin added to sin. And in the guarding knights they recognised the good Almonio and Corebo. And after most kindly greetings Almonio told his story : how, after he had returned with help from Rochelle, he had found Corebo lying wounded, and from him he had heard of the treachery of Orderico and his pursuit of Isabella. Far and wide he had searched, hoping to come to her aid, but in vain ; and at last he had come back to the helpless Corebo, and had him conveyed back to the city, where in time he had been healed of his wounds. And after his wounds were well healed, the two had sought for the traitor Orderico, and at last he had been found in the court of King Alphonso. And Almonio had told all the story of the treachery to the king, and the truth was put to the ordeal of battle ; and when, by the justice of God, Almonio had conquered, the king had given him Orderico as a prisoner to be taken for judgment to Zerbino. Such was the story.

And Zerbino looked steadfastly at Orderico. Little he felt of hatred or of anger ; but much he grieved that one he had taken for a friend should have proved so false. And sadly he questioned the prisoner how he could have broken his loyalty to prince and

friend. And Orderico in reply showed still more clearly the baseness of his spirit, and he whined of fate and temptation, and God and the devil, and old friendship and new repentance. And the mind of the ever-generous Zerbino was tossed this way and that: to let him go free, or to end the traitor's life by the traitor's death. And whilst the judge was still unresolved, judgment came riding out of the forest in the guise of Gabrina, whose palfrey, tired with its wild rush, had heard the other horses, and came to join them with the helpless old woman on its back. And Zerbino caught the horse, and he was so angered with Gabrina that almost he had persuaded himself to give her to a cruel death, but again his generosity prevailed. And turning to Orderico, he said: "I will set you free, but on one condition. You must swear by your strongest oath that for one year you will guard this woman with your life, and do everything that she orders or wishes." Then he made him take the most solemn oath, and vowed that if in one tittle he failed he should die the death. And before the end of the first day the traitor Orderico had broken his oath, and had hanged Gabrina on an elm tree; and in spite of his cunning, before the year had passed, he had himself suffered the same fate at the hands of Almonio.

When Zerbino had passed his judgment on the pair of traitors, he sent his two trusty followers back to the camp of Charlemagne with a message to his company, but he himself remained on the watch for the return of Orlando, who had promised not to go

back to the camp for three days, in the hope of renewing his fight with the Tartar. And Isabella refused to leave her newly found love, and stayed with him awaiting Orlando. As time passed and he did not return, they followed the path on which he had ridden away and made inquiries of all they met, but heard nothing; and at last they came to the grotto which had seen the loves of Angelica and Medoro, and the oncoming of the madness of Orlando. And they wondered when they found the beautiful fountain filled with stones and mud, and all around the trees broken and torn as if by raging beasts. And looking about, Zerbino saw in the brushwood a gleam of metal, and lo! it was the black cuirass of Orlando; then at a distance he found the helmet; then he heard the neighing of a courser near by, and it was Brigliadoro, Orlando's horse, with empty saddle and loosened reins. And searching further they found the mighty sword, Durindana, which had passed from hero to hero, cast aside in the tangle like a thing worn out. And next, scattered about like leaves driven by the wind, they saw the shreds of the surcoat that Orlando had torn to pieces. And as they wondered and questioned, and never found an answer, there came running up a countryman with pale face and frightened look; and he told them how from the safety of a lofty rock he had seen the madness of the knight, first turned on himself, and then on the trees and rocks, and then on men and cattle. And Zerbino even then could hardly believe that the glorious Orlando should have

so fallen into sheer madness; and with care he got together all the arms and the famous sword, and Isabella helped him in the sorrowful gathering. And Zerbino took the arms and the sword and hung them in open view on the branch of a tree; and lest any stranger should think he had come on a treasure trove, he cut into the bark beneath the words: "These are the arms of Orlando." And he thought this name was of itself a sufficient protection.

And he hoped that in time Orlando would lose his madness and come in search of his great sword. But hardly had Zerbino finished his task and mounted his horse when there came on the scene fierce Mandricardo with Doralis riding by his side. And as soon as the Tartar chief saw the arms so curiously suspended he asked the meaning; and Zerbino told him all he knew. And when Mandricardo heard that this was indeed the famous Durindana left by Orlando he was overjoyed, and quickly riding up to the tree he seized the sword and said: "This sword is mine, and long ago was it gifted to me, when I won the rest of Hector's armour; but it was stolen away by Orlando. And now it is mine." And he brandished it, and glorying in his strength and good fortune, he cried out: "In fear of me has Orlando left this sword, and in fear of me has feigned this madness." And Zerbino was deeply angered, and drawing his sword smote at the Tartar, and in a moment they were engaged in a fierce battle. In courage and in knightly skill they were well matched, but Mandricardo was of greater strength, and he was clad in

the impenetrable arms of Hector, and on his head wore the helm which no sword could cleave; and in his hand he now held Durindana which no armour could withstand. And well Zerbino knew that if the Tartar could give one full blow with this matchless sword he was a dead man, and therefore he tried in every way to elude the strength of his enemy, and by more speedy movements to take him undefended in some joint of the armour. But in spite of all his care and quickness, seven times Zerbino failed to get beyond the reach of the terrible blade, and seven times he was wounded. Still strong in spirit, though weakened by loss of blood, Zerbino darted in and out, and struck with futile skill and force at the impenetrable armour of Mandricardo. And when Isabella saw the blood staining his cuirass and ever spreading, she could no longer restrain her tears, and she conquered her pride and entreated Doralis to aid her to stop the fight.

And Doralis gladly yielded to the request, and her Tartar lord yielded to her, and Zerbino listened to the pleading of Isabella and gave up the unequal fight. And peace having been made, Zerbino and Isabella rode away from the fatal grove, and much Zerbino grieved that the great sword must be left with the Tartar chief.

But not far had the wounded knight ridden when he could ride no more for weakness, and in his veins he felt the creeping in of death. And on the bank of a friendly stream he dropped down from his horse and lay panting beside the clear peaceful water.

And Isabella gently raised his head, and with love he turned his dying eyes to hers. And tenderly she held the dear head, and helplessly she looked round for succour; but not a voice was heard but the voices of the forest; and numbed by despair she took away the blood-stained helmet, and smoothed the fair locks and wiped away the drops of agony. And her dying lover roused himself and spoke in feeble voice, and closely she bent her ear lest one sound should be lost. And he whispered to her:

"My only treasure, my heart's love, I care not for death; but to leave you here alone with no one to aid you, that is heavy. If only I could live so long as to see you in safety, then I could die in peace, die content on your breast. But now worse than death, or anything that death can bring, is leaving you."

And Isabella wept without restraint and kissed his paling lips, and she murmured to him:

"Think not, love of my heart, that you shall go away alone on the long journey; my spirit shall go with yours, and once your eyes are closed I too will take my leave of life, and together we will seek the other world. With your sword will I open the way of death. And I hope some one may pass by and take pity on our bodies and bury them together."

She ended and felt with her hands his life ebbing away, and she caught with her lips the dying breath. And with a last effort her lover spoke:

"Oh, my love, loved in death as in life; for my sake you left home and country, for my love you have given all. And with all my love I charge you,

I command you, do not die. But never forget that my love was the greatest love a man may have."

And with a prayer for her safety, the life of the young warrior flickered away. And upon Isabella there came the madness of grief, and she gave herself to sorrow in utter abandonment. She threw herself on her dead hero, and gathered him to her breast and bathed his face with her tears. And then she rose up and cried out in wild words, and in her anguish beat her breast and tore her hair. And unmindful of her lover's last command, she thought to fall upon his sword.

But there came to her succour a holy man who had grown old in the solitudes of the forest. And he comforted her with the comfort of true religion and showed her the way of eternal life. And after long communing he made her put away the thought of refuge in death; and she vowed she would give herself to the service of God and be a Christian as Zerbino had been. But even in her surrender she would not leave the memory of her love nor would she part from his dead body. And with the aid of the hermit she placed the body on the war-horse. Then the holy man led her to a friendly castle; and they embalmed the body and placed it in a black coffin. After many days of watching and grieving Isabella got back her shattered strength, and she set out with the hermit to find a resting-place for herself and her dead. And he told her that hard by Marseilles was a holy house, very spacious and richly endowed, where lived a company of noble women

who had given themselves to God and his charity. And thither they journeyed with the coffin under a black pall on the saddened war-horse of the dead knight. And they passed through a country smitten by war and devastation, and they kept as well as they might to forest paths and byways, for they feared the lawlessness of misery.

And they had almost reached the house of their refuge when they were met by the lord of war and destruction, the cruel Rodomont.

# IX

# RODOMONT AND ISABELLA

## IX

## RODOMONT AND ISABELLA

THE grand assault on Paris, as already narrated, had been repulsed, and the Saracens forced to retreat with great loss ; and the Christians were in hopes that they would soon gain a final victory, and drive them altogether out of France.

But the balance of power was speedily changed in favour of King Agramant and against Charlemagne. Rinaldo, after the great battle in which he took the lead with his new levies, had been told that Orlando had gone away with Angelica during his forced absence in Scotland on his mission for Charles. And as soon as he had done his duty to his king he started in pursuit of Orlando to take from him Angelica by force. He did not know that already madness had fallen on Orlando, and that Angelica had given herself to Medoro.

In the meantime, whilst Charles was deprived of his two greatest supports, Orlando and Rinaldo, the forces of Agramant had been strengthened by the arrival of the strongest warriors on the side of the Saracens : Rogero, Marfisa, Gradasso, Sacripant ;

and, wonderful to tell, Mandricardo and Rodomont had returned together to aid King Agramant.

It would be too long a story to tell in this place how all this good fortune came at one time to Agramant, but something must be said of the coming in peace of Rodomont and Mandricardo.

When Rodomont ran beside the galloping dwarf in pursuit of Mandricardo he had vowed to himself that he would seize the first horse that he met, to whomsoever it might belong.

And there came in his path a maiden riding a palfrey and leading a beautiful war-horse equipped ready for battle. And Rodomont said to the maiden, "I would that the horse had his master on his back, and with an easy mind I would take possession; but in spite of my need I cannot rob a woman." And the maiden replied, "And I, too, wish that the master of the horse were here and he would soon make you repent of your boasting." And Rodomont said, "Who is this great champion?" "Rogero," said she. "Then," replied Rodomont, "I will take the horse; and you can say to Rogero that I will pay him the hire when and where he will. And say to him that I am Rodomont; and he will easily find me, if he wishes to fight, for wherever I go I light up the way with my deeds."

Now this was the famous horse, Frontino, that in the siege of Albracca had been stolen from Sacripant by Brunello, the master thief. And by him it had been given to Rogero when he was discovered on Mount Carena by the aid of the ring that Brunello

had stolen from Angelica. But the story of Frontino is too long to be told in this place. In fleetness and in battle he was a great horse, worthy to be named with Baiardo, and Rabican, and Brigliadoro, and the other most famous horses of those days.

And when Rodomont seized him he was being sent by Bradamant to Rogero, and she had told her maiden that the very name of Rogero would be a sufficient safeguard. But she had not foreseen the needs or the pride of Rodomont.

Riding this horse, Rodomont had found Mandricardo soon after the fight in which he had killed Zerbino and gained possession of Orlando's sword. And the two had fought for long without result under the eyes of Doralis. And in the midst of the fight a messenger had come who told them the news of the great defeat of Agramant, and urgently prayed them to come to the aid of the Saracens. By the mediation of Doralis, the fight was stayed. The terrible Rodomont was devoted to his suzerain Agramant, and he vowed that he would fight with no one until he had rescued his king from peril. Under the sway of their love for Doralis, at last the rival kings reached the camp of Agramant. And they were followed by the other Saracen leaders, each impelled by loyalty to Agramant.

With this accession of strength to the Pagans, and loss to the Christians, the Saracens threatened to drive back Charles again behind the walls of Paris. But God in his mercy sent discord into the Saracen camp, and in a moment all the great chiefs

who had newly come to succour Agramant were engaged in the hottest quarrels with one another. In vain the Saracen leader tried to make peace between them. The utmost he could achieve was to arrange by lot a series of combats.[1]

But the strife that had again broken out between Rodomont and Mandricardo he stayed by an appeal to Doralis herself. He induced the rivals to agree to accept her choice as final, and when her decision had been given to make no appeal to arms. Both gave their assent in full confidence of success. Long before the arrival of the Tartar king, Rodomont had loved Doralis, and in her honour he had carried her favour into every battle. His love for her was known to all men, and she had been promised to him by her father in marriage. Rodomont had not the least doubt that the choice of

[1] Rogero wished to fight with Rodomont to make him restore his horse, Frontino, and Sacripant put forward a prior claim. Rogero and Mandricardo quarrelled over the right to wear Hector's escutcheon of the silver eagle, Mandricardo having Hector's shield and Rogero claiming direct descent from Hector. Gradasso claimed Durindana, Orlando's sword, from Mandricardo, and Marfisa had a woman's cause of combat with Mandricardo.

In arranging the combats Agramant had the names of each pair of disputants written on tablets and thrown into an urn, whence they were drawn by a little boy. It was agreed also that the combat between Mandricardo and Rogero should decide the quarrel of the Tartar with Gradasso, and in the same way if Gradasso was drawn first his fight with Mandricardo should decide the quarrel of Rogero over the silver eagle. In the end Rogero killed Mandricardo, and according to the agreement he gave the sword Durindana to Gradasso, and of his own good-will he gave Brigliadoro, which had also fallen into the hands of Mandricardo after Orlando's madness, to his suzerain Agramant. The discord amongst the Saracen chiefs is presented by Ariosto with great detail, and the climax is developed with the highest skill. For the present purpose, however, the main results are only referred to in so far as they bear on the stories following.

Doralis would be in his favour, and so thought the whole army of the Saracens. But Mandricardo knew in his heart how much he had gained of her love in their wanderings through the forest. The two chiefs made a solemn oath before King Agramant to accept the decision of Doralis, and then they presented themselves before the Spanish Princess. She lowered her eyes as if ashamed, and said in a soft voice that she loved most the Tartar.

Rodomont was at first so astounded that he could not speak, and his face burned with shame at the affront. But as soon as his wonted wrath had driven away every other thought he drew his sword and cried out that the decision was unjust and unfair, and he swore that he would accept the judgment of no fickle woman, but only the judgment of his own true sword. But Agramant put Rodomont in the wrong for breaking his oath, and he appealed, and not in vain, to his loyalty, and made him sheathe his sword. And this double scorn from his lady and his king was more than Rodomont could bear, and he left the camp and took with him only two squires. Though he had forced himself to obey Agramant, he was filled with ungovernable rage. He rode away in fury on Frontino, the horse he had taken from Rogero; and Rogero was unable to pursue him because he was bound by lot to fight first of all with Mandricardo.

And as Rodomont hasted to leave far behind the scene of his shame he roused the echoes of the rocks with curses on the fickleness of woman.

"Ah, woman, woman," he cried, "how easily you change your mind and show us the very opposite of good faith. Unlucky is the wretch who believes in you. Not the longest service, nor the best proved love, can hold your heart from changing in a moment. I have not lost you, Doralis, because in any way Mandricardo was the better man. No reason is there for my loss of you, except this: you are a woman. O accursed sex, I believe that God or Nature has sent you into the world only to be a heavy burden to man, and to spoil his happiness, just as God or Nature has created snakes and bears and wolves, and has filled the air with flies and wasps and hornets, and has sown tares and weeds in the corn. Why did not Nature so contrive that man should not be born of woman? Apples and pears are got by grafting on diverse trees, and why not man himself? And be not puffed up, O women, because man is the son of woman. From a thorn springs the rose, and from a fetid root the lily. Greedy are ye, O women, and proud and disdainful; and you know not the meaning of love or good faith or wisdom; but brazen and cruel and unjust and ungrateful you are born into the world like an everlasting pestilence."

So Rodomont passed on his way reviling women with an infinite variety of curses, and sometimes he awakened the echoes of the rocks with the roaring of his curses, and sometimes he muttered them low and deep to himself.

And the anger of Rodomont against Agramant

his king was not less than against Doralis. And he longed to see so great a storm of evil fall on his kingdom in Africa that not one stone should be left upon another; and that Agramant himself should be driven from his kingdom in grief and pain, and should become a miserable beggar. And then—and then—he, Rodomont, would restore to him everything, and set him again in his ancient seat; and he would make him know that a true friend, whether he is in the right or in the wrong, should always be upheld against all the world.

At last, after long and furious riding, Rodomont took pity on the good horse Frontino, and he boarded a vessel and sailed down the Rhone on his way to the sea. Then, weary of the river, again he took to the land, but neither on land nor on water could he find peace for his soul; and he thought to go back to his own kingdom in Africa. It chanced, however, that he came to a little church that in the perils of the Saracen invasion had been deserted by the priests and left a ruin. It lay beside a river, not far from the mouth. And the ruin pleased Rodomont in its desolation, and he made of it a dwelling-place. And there he stayed, brooding over his loss of Doralis and the injustice of Agramant in giving her to his rival. The violence of his rage had passed; but in silent anger he cursed woman and God and fate. And one day, as he stood gazing sullenly over the fields, there came in his sight a lady clad in black, and beside her a long-bearded monk and a great war-horse laden with a burden all in black.

Such was the beginning of the meeting of Isabella and Rodomont.

Isabella was worn out with fatigue, for she had come on foot all the long journey over rough forest-ways, pacing slowly beside the coffin of Zerbino with its sable pall. And at her side walked the hermit, her guide and comforter, making ready her soul for the life of consolation. And already she seemed as meek and lowly as a nun, and a glimmer of heavenly faith shone through her tears and her wan cheeks. Her beauty had changed from the beauty of the joy in life to the beauty of the hope in death. Out of her pale face her great dark eyes looked on things unseen, and her foot fell with light uncertain steps, as if the solid earth were a cloud. And suddenly in the path of this vision of sorrow appeared Rodomont. And as he looked upon her grief, and marked her tears and all the signs of misery, the heart of the Saracen was troubled. Her beauty shone like a light into the darkness of his soul, and his sullen anger fled as darkness flees from light. He looked, and in a moment his hatred of woman had gone, and his love of Isabella had come.

And the light grew as she came nearer, and cranny after cranny of his soul gave up its darkness; and with the light in his soul there came gentleness in his voice and bearing. And he asked Isabella why she was so distressed. Meekly she told him her story, and gave words to the stream of her thoughts. And she spoke as one in a dream, but to Rodomont her voice was the music of love. And quick as fire

his new passion burned in his heart, and gave him words and reasons to try to change her purpose of passing life with her dead in a house of religion. And when the hermit heard the Pagan speaking with the voice of the tempter, so little did he know the heart of Isabella, that he feared she might yield. And uplifted with the love of the glory of God, he thought, in his goodness of heart, that God had sent him this Pagan to be converted to the true faith. And as Rodomont spoke to Isabella with growing passion, the hermit broke in with the teachings of the elements of the true religion. But the light of love had not reached every dark nook in the soul of Rodomont, and deep down in his soul was the black hatred of God. And when the hermit entreated him to love the God he hated, the blackness rose up in his soul like a black storm. And he bade the hermit be gone to his cell, but in vain; and the words of religion flowed on in a stream, and the eyes of the old man beamed with the love of God. And the black storm of the Pagan's wrath broke into fury, and he took the hermit by the beard and bent his neck, and then he seized him by the head and with his giant strength hurled him far over a cliff into the sea.

And the black storm passed away as quickly as it had arisen, and Rodomont thought no more of the hermit than of a broken branch thrown out of his way. And he spoke again to Isabella with courtesy. And as his passion grew so grew his gentleness.

And though he might with force have plucked the fruit,
Yet for that time he doth but kiss the bark.[1]

And always he hoped that of her own good-will in time Isabella must yield; and with the courtesy of a Christian knight the fierce Pagan conducted Isabella and her dead to his own abode. And he left her untouched save by words of love; but the words were to Isabella worse than blows, and in her heart she feared always that the passion of the Saracen would break all bounds. And she prayed for guidance, and into her thought there came a way to freedom.

And as she saw the way she said to Rodomont: "Look you, there are on this earth thousands as lovely as I, ready to do your will. What the others can give you, I cannot give; I shall love no more. But what the others cannot give, I can give; not love, but the certain way to honour and glory above all men. I have a secret, and the secret is this. There are certain herbs that grow in the woods, and they must be gathered by a pure virgin at fitting times of the moon; and the herbs I know, and the times. And when the herbs have been gathered they must be boiled with rue and ivy over a fierce fire of cypress wood; and the juice of the herbs, if it is thrice spread over the skin, will make the body free from the power of fire or the wounding of any weapon, and the virtue of the anointing will endure for a month, and then the herbs must again be gathered."

[1] Harrington's version.

And the promise of the anointing pleased Rodomont. In the depth of his mind he always thought that in some way he would get also the love of Isabella. And he thought to be the king above all men in bodily power and in love. And they set forth, and Isabella searched on rough cliffs and in tangled forests for the plants she desired. And ever at her side stalked Rodomont. And when she had gathered what she wished he cut for her with his sword branches of cypress wood to make the fire she had commanded. And long into the night Rodomont watched Isabella tending the boiling herbs and saying, as he supposed, the mystic spells. And as it chanced his men the day before had taken from certain merchants two great vases of Greek wine. And as Rodomont sat with his squires in the heated room, it came into his mind to drink of the wine. And never before had he tasted wine, at first being so taught by the law of his religion, and later being held back by pride. And now, out of hatred to his God, he drank of the Greek wine. And the wine seemed to him like nectar, and he cursed his God and his religion, that he had so long eschewed this delight. And he drank goblet on goblet, and through the mists of the wine he saw himself crowned with glory and love. And at last Isabella said to him: "See now, the juice is ready for the anointing. But lest you fear I may give you a baneful poison, I will first anoint myself." And therewith she anointed her neck, and she uncovered her beautiful bosom and anointed it. And the Saracen, hot with wine, gazed on her beauty.

Then said Isabella: "There is no poison in the juice; but now try you its virtue. Strike at my neck with your sword and see if the blow can pierce the skin." And Rodomont, drunken with wine and desire, took up his great sword and struck Isabella on the neck. And even as he struck she smiled, and whispered "Zerbino," and her head rolled on the floor.

And Rodomont came to his senses when he saw the deed, and he grieved with bitter grief.

And it came into his mind to build for Isabella and her dead a great tomb. And it seemed fit to him to turn the little church where she had lived and been slain into a sepulchre that should make her memory immortal. And by fear or favour he gathered from all sides the masters of their crafts and about six thousand workers; and they quarried out of the mountains heavy stones. All round the little church they raised up a great wall, and in the midst of the church the two lovers were buried side by side, even as Isabella had prayed. And the height of the tomb was one hundred and fifty feet, and in structure it was like the superb tomb of Adrian on the banks of the Tiber.

And to do honour to her memory Rodomont threw over the river that flowed by the tomb a wooden bridge. And on the sides of the bridge was no parapet, and the bridge was only just wide enough for one horse to pass another.

Close to the tomb Rodomont built for himself a watch-tower. And he made a law that when any knight approached to cross the river he must meet

him in full career on the narrow bridge. And if the knight were unhorsed or thrown into the stream his arms were taken from him and were hung upon the great tomb in honour of Isabella. And if the knights who were overthrown were Christians they were taken prisoners and shut up in the tower, and as occasion offered were afterwards transported to Algiers. But if the knights overthrown were Saracens Rodomont kept only their arms to bedeck the tomb, but the men he allowed to go free to their own country.

Now the bridge was built on the road between Italy and Spain, and formerly there was a ferry at the place. And many came to the bridge on their way from Italy or Spain as the case might be, and all were forced to pay the toll with their arms; and some were made prisoners and some lost their lives. And as the fame of the bridge was bruited far and wide, many knights came in the hope of winning honour by forcing the passage. But only twice was Rodomont overthrown, once by a naked madman, and once by the lance of a virgin warrior. Now the naked madman was Orlando, who, in his aimless wanderings, came to the river just as the bridge had been made and before the tomb and the watch-tower were finished. Lightly Orlando leaped over the barrier at the end of the bridge and began to run across. But Rodomont, who was standing at the foot of the unfinished tower, cried out to him: "Stop, crazy, mannerless villain; this bridge is only for lords and cavaliers, not for you, foolish beast." No heed paid Orlando, and Rodomont, disdaining to

use his sword, ran to meet him and throw him into the river. Much he marvelled that a naked fool could resist him. In vain he put forth all his strength and all his skill in wrestling. Orlando used no skill, for all his skill had vanished. But his unequalled strength had been multiplied by madness, and at last he seized the gigantic Saracen, and crushing him in his arms fell backward with him into the deep river. There he loosed his hold, and as easily as a fish swam to the bank, and without any thought of praise or blame he passed on in his madness and never looked back. Rodomont, breathless and crushed in the struggle, and weighted down by his armour, gained the shore long after Orlando had departed. And Rodomont never dreamed that the madman was Orlando, and for his defeat by a madman he cared nothing, but it was otherwise when he was cast down by Bradamant. Now the combat of Rodomont with the maiden knight Bradamant arose in this manner.

It happened that the struggle between Orlando and Rodomont was witnessed by Flordelis, who was the devoted wife of Brandimarte, the dearest companion of Orlando. Many are the stories told by Boiardo and by Ariosto of the friendship of these two knights, and often one had risked his life for the other. Brandimarte had been brought up as a Pagan, but he was converted to Christianity by Orlando himself, and he became one of the most famous of the peers of Charlemagne. It will be remembered that when Orlando left Paris, disguised in black armour, in the hope of finding Angelica, he

had told no one, not even the faithful Brandimarte. And Charlemagne had spoken bitterly of the desertion of Orlando, when Paris was in danger, and Brandimarte had set out to find his friend and bring him back. And on his part he had not told Flordelis lest she should try to dissuade him from the search. And after a time Flordelis had herself set out to find her lover, and in the course of her wanderings she came to the bridge just as Rodomont was struggling with the mad Orlando. And in spite of the paladin's madness and his savage looks he had been recognised by Flordelis. Now more than ever she prayed that she might find Brandimarte to ask him to go to the succour of Orlando. At last she found him, and together they came to the bridge, hoping to cross and to follow on the track of Orlando.

But when Rodomont and Brandimarte met in mid career on the narrow wooden bridge, that quivered beneath them, the shock was so great that both with their horses were hurled into the river. Brandimarte was almost drowned, and, on the prayer of Flordelis, Rodomont, who got to shore easily, went to the rescue. But he took Brandimarte's armour to hang on the tomb of Isabella, and the knight himself he made prisoner. Thereupon Flordelis, in the deepest grief, set out to return to Paris in the hope that she might find a champion to deliver her lover from Rodomont.

And on the way she met the maiden knight, Bradamant, riding in full armour. And to her Flordelis told the story of Rodomont's bridge and the capture of her faithful Brandimarte. Eagerly

the maiden knight agreed to fight with Rodomont at the bridge. And by the mercy of God, in order that the great issues of the war of the Christians against the Pagans might be fulfilled, there had come into her hand the enchanted golden lance which at first had been brought to France by Argalia the brother of Angelica. But Bradamant did not know that the lance by its enchantment with the least touch sent to ground the strongest opponent; and she thought it was in no way different from any common lance with which she had unhorsed many a knight. And when she challenged Rodomont, she first of all upbraided him for the death of Isabella and said it would be a most fitting revenge if he died at the hand of a woman.[1]

And thereupon she made with Rodomont certain stipulations, and the terrible Saracen accepted all with the utmost gentleness as if Isabella had spoken by the mouth of Bradamant. And the agreement was in this wise: If Bradamant were to conquer Rodomont, his arms were to be taken and hung on

[1] Cf. Harrington's version.

Ah damnèd wretch, why should the innocent
Indure the penance of thy grievous guilt?
Thyself shouldst die or suffer punishment
That killedst her, if please her ghost thou wilt:
Her soul (upon my soul) would be content
If by my hand thy guilty blood were spilt,
More than with all the armors men and horses
That thou dost win by thine unlawful forces.

And so much more it will accepted be
To her, if thou by my right hand mayst die,
Because I am a woman as was she,
And only come on thee my force to try.

the tomb; and all the Christian prisoners were to be set free. To this Rodomont assented, and firmly passed his word that he would send to set them all at liberty if he were foiled by her. But if he were to be the victor, and nothing (he said) could be more certain, then he promised that for the sake of her fair face she should escape free with arms and armour. At this boastful offer the maiden smiled, not with mirth but anger, and in pure courage or in sheer despair she spurred to meet him on the narrow bridge. And Rodomont, as he charged, had no doubt that easily he would unseat his fair foe; but to his amazement no sooner was his shield touched by the golden lance than he fell from his saddle, and lay prone on the bridge as if deprived of all strength. Only by the wonderful skill of her horse Rabican was Bradamant able to pass him by.

When Rodomont recovered his senses he went back to the shore in gloomy silence, and after walking three or four paces threw on the ground his shield and helmet, and then he drew off the rest of his dragon armour and cast it down on the stones. And alone and on foot he departed, though he did not forget to charge his squire to send to Africa to liberate the prisoners, according to his word.

Rodomont departed, and for a long time no more was heard of him except that he had shut himself up like a hermit in a cell, and had vowed to abide there for a year and a month and a day.

And Bradamant took his dragon skin armour, and his great sword, and hung them on the tomb

of Isabella. And the arms of the Christian knights that Rodomont had hung up she took down to restore to the knights, but the arms of the Saracens she left there in honour of Isabella and Zerbino.

And she gave Frontino in charge to Flordelis to deliver to Rogero with a message which he could not understand, as is told in another story.

# X

# ASTOLPHO RESTORES HIS SENSES TO ORLANDO

# X

## ASTOLPHO RESTORES HIS SENSES TO ORLANDO

WHILST Rogero was searching for Angelica after the flight from Ebuda, and could not find her owing to the power of the ring, his winged steed broke loose and returned straight to his old master, the magician Atlante, who soon afterwards got Rogero again in his power as already narrated.

It befell, in the meantime, that Astolpho, the English duke, had been gifted with a wonderful horn, the virtue of which was such that when he blew a blast from it every living thing, including the boldest warriors, were terrified and fled from the sound with the utmost dismay. And with this horn Astolpho had saved himself and his companions from many perils, and amongst others from the cruel ferocity of the Amazons.

It chanced in his wanderings that Astolpho came to the enchanted palace of Atlante in which he had entrapped many knights and ladies to serve as companions to his fosterling Rogero. And at the blast of the horn every one fled in terror, and the magician

himself was not the last to shun the fearful noise by flight. In the stable Astolpho found the flying horse, securely fastened by a strong chain of beaten gold. The English duke, "as one that was to travel greatly bent," was delighted with his capture, for he was resolved to go about the wide world and visit many a sea and many a land by ways none had ever travelled before. For he knew by trial, as is told in another story, the wonderful powers of the flying horse. And he had been taught the way to guide and control its flight.

Firm set in the saddle he loosened the reins and with incredible speed flew over Spain and the northern parts of Africa, and at the last, following the course of the Nile, he came to Ethiopia. Now the people of that country were Christians, though in place of water they used fire for baptism, and their Emperor was Senàpo, and his rule extended as far as the mouth of the Red Sea on the east and as far as the mountains of the Moon on the west. When Astolpho came to the capital city, by name Nubia, he made the winged horse descend in great circles so that he might see the place and visit the king. And he noted many strange sights, and he found that where in other lands the people use iron, as for bolts, bars, and hinges, here for the same kinds of work they made use of pure gold. And he found the columns of the palaces were cut out of the purest crystal, and on every side was an abundance of precious stones,—the ruby, emerald, sapphire, and topaz. And in the walls and roofs and even in the floors were set the richest pearls. Now

though this king was called by his own people, and by the Egyptians, Senàpo, by the Christians of Europe who had heard of his wealth and power he was commonly called Prester John.

At the time of the coming of Astolpho this mighty Emperor, in spite of all his wealth, was greatly afflicted. He had lost his sight, and this was the least of his misfortunes; for he was furthermore punished by continual hunger. As soon as, driven by fasting and thirst, he tried to eat or drink there suddenly flew down on his tables monstrous and filthy harpies, half-birds and half-women, and with talon and claw they spilt the wines and seized the food. And what they could not eat they defiled with their filth.

Now the reason for the punishment of Senàpo was this. He had become so puffed up with pride, that like Lucifer he thought he could even make war on his Maker. And with a great army he journeyed to the high mountain whence issues the great river of Egypt. And he had heard that on the top of that mountain, above the clouds and near to the sky, was that Paradise where Adam and Eve were created which is called the Earthly Paradise. And with camels and elephants and a mighty host of foot he began the ascent of the mountain to find if the summit was still inhabited, and, if it were so, to make the people his subjects. And God took vengeance on his rash daring and sent His angel, and he slew a hundred thousand of the people, and the king himself he condemned to perpetual night. And God sent from their infernal cavern the horrid brood of harpies to

destroy his meat and drink, and load his tables with filth. And it had been foretold to Senàpo that his tables should never be freed from this evil pest until there should come flying through the air a knight on a winged horse. And since such an event seemed impossible the king was living without hope in endless gloom.

Now when the people of the place saw the horseman flying above the walls and the most lofty towers, instantly the old prophecy came into their minds, and one ran to tell the king. And the king in his great joy, forgetting to take his staff, groped along with hands outstretched to come at the flying knight, where he had descended in the great court of the palace. And when the king was guided to him he fell on his knees and joined his hands in prayer. "Angel of God," he said, "O new Messiah, though I do not deserve pardon for my so great offences, still let it be remembered that it is our nature to sin and yours to forgive when there is true repentance. My conscience is so stricken that I do not ask, and would not dare to ask, for the light of my eyes, though well I know even that boon you could grant, being yourself so dear to God. Let it be punishment enough that I remain blinded, and make me free from this everlasting hunger, or at the least drive away the filthy harpies. And I vow to build for you a great temple all of marble with golden doors and golden roof, within and without adorned with precious gems. And it shall be named by your name, and there shall be sculptures in it to declare for all time this your

miracle." Thus spoke the blind king and tried in vain to kiss the feet of the English duke.

And quickly Astolpho answered, "No angel of God, no new Messiah, am I; nor do I come from heaven. I too am mortal and full of sin, and not worthy of the grace accorded me. Yet will I do what I may to rid your kingdom of the monstrous pest by death or flight. And if I succeed, not to me give the praise, but to God who for your aid directed my flight hither; and make your vows to God, and to God build churches and altars." And the words ended, the two went into the palace, accompanied by a crowd of nobles. And the king gave orders that at once a banquet should be prepared, in the hope that this time at least the food would not be snatched from his hands.

In a gorgeous hall the solemn feast was set out. With King Senàpo there sat down only Duke Astolpho, when the viands were carried in.

But, behold, through the air was heard the flapping of the horrible wings, and lo, the filthy, accursed harpies were drawn from the sky by the smell of the foods. Seven of them there were, and each one had the face of a woman, but pale and deathly, and with long hunger thin and dry, more horrible to see than death itself. Huge wings they had, and on their greedy hands were talons curved and twisted; and the belly was swollen and fetid, and merged into the tail of a serpent that ever coiled and uncoiled its knots.

Their coming through the air was heard far off,

and then in an instant all of them were seen on the tables overturning the drinking-vessels and seizing the viands. And the filth they shed was so noisome that none could bear the stench. Astolpho, urged by rage and anger, drew his sword on the greedy birds. One he smote on the neck, another on the flank; this on the breast, that in the wing; but as well might he have struck on a bag of tow, so dulled and empty were his blows. And the harpies left not a cup or plate untouched; nor did they leave the hall before they had wasted and defiled all the banquet.

The king had centred all his hope in the duke, and firmly believed that he would drive away the harpies; and now that no hope was left he sighed and groaned and fell into despair.

And then there came into Astolpho's mind remembrance of his horn which was wont to be his only resource in time of peril. And he thought to himself that by this horn it would be best to chase away the woman-birds.

But first of all he made the king and all his barons close up their ears with melted wax, lest when he blew the horn they should all be made to flee in terror from the castle. Then he took the reins in his hand and leapt to the saddle of the flying horse, and by signs made the seneschal understand he was again to put fresh viands on the tables of another hall. So was it done, and, behold! the harpies at their old mischief. Then on a sudden Astolpho blew a great blast. The woman-birds with their ears open could

not stand the trial, but, filled with fear, they rushed away with no care for the food or anything but speedy flight. And after them flew the paladin blowing his horn and chasing the monsters through the air. And they took their flight to the lofty mountain where the Nile has its source. And at the foot of the hill there was a deep opening, and it seemed to be one of the entrances by which sometimes a mortal man may find his way into the realm of Satan. Here the birds sought safety, and down they flew till, on the banks of Cocytus, the great stream of hell, they heard no more the dreadful sound. And at the smoky mouth of the pit the duke ceased to blow his horn and allowed his steed to fold his wings.

When the paladin had driven the harpies into the gloomy cleft he dismounted and stood and listened, and within the pit the air throbbed and trembled with wailings and shrieks and the noises of eternal lamentation ; and it was manifest that here was indeed an entrance to the infernal regions. And Astolpho thought to himself he would go within and visit the people who had lost the light of day, and would penetrate to the centre of the earth and search round all the great circles and chasms of hell.

"What am I to fear," he said, "if I enter? I can always find safety in my horn. With that I can put to flight Pluto and Satan, and drive from the way Cerberus, the three-mouthed dog." He tied the winged horse to a tree, and then groped his way down into the cavern, not forgetting to take his horn

in which lay all his hope of safety. He had not gone far when nose and eyes were assailed by dense and noisome smoke, worse than from the burning of pitch and sulphur, but for all that the paladin pressed on. But the further he went the more dense grew the smoke and the soot, and it seemed to him that he could go no further and that it would be hard to find his way back.

As Astolpho was on the point of turning, he was aware of what seemed to be the likeness of a corpse left hanging to sway with the wind and rot in the sun. But the light was so feeble—scarce, indeed, was there light at all in that smoky and black pass—that the duke could not make out for certain what the thing swinging in the smoke might be, and to make a trial he struck at it once or twice with his sword, and when he found it was like cutting a mist he adjudged the thing to be a spirit, and forthwith he heard the voice of one complaining that he should add by his blows to the torment of the thick smoke, and bidding him begone on his journey below. And the duke stood still in amazement and said, "May God clip the wings of this smoke so that it no more reaches you, and if it please you tell me of your plight, and if you will that I should bear news of you to the world above, I am here to do your bidding." And the shade made reply, "So good it seems to me to return to the large and glorious light of day, if only in the breath of fame, that although it is very grievous to me, needs must the words be forced from me to tell you my name, and what I was, so

that I may win so great a boon." And thereupon Lydia, who had been the daughter of the king of the country called by that name, told to Astolpho her story. And it was a story of selfish ingratitude and deceit, and of the driving to death of a devoted lover; "And therefore," said the shade, "the black smoke draws tears from my eyes and stains my face, and so shall it be through all eternity, for in hell there is no redemption." When the voice of Lydia had sunk into silence the duke tried to find out if there were others in that place, but the sooty smoke that is the punishment given to the ungrateful was so dense in front of him that he could not go a span, and to save his life from the smoke he turned, and with rapid steps as quickly as he might he clambered up the steep towards the opening of the cavern, and at last the air became a little less thick and he began to see the broken light. And after much toil and trouble he escaped from the pit and left behind him the smoke.

And so that the way of return might be for ever denied to the greedy woman-birds he rolled to the mouth of the pit great stones, and he cut down many trees, and he filled with a thick hedge the mouth of the cavern, and so well did he do the work that never again did the harpies come up on the earth.

The smoke of the black pitch had so defiled Astolpho whilst he was in this hell's mouth, that beneath his armour and through all his garments it had stained his skin so that his first care was to

search for water, and he found in the forest at the foot of the lofty mountain a stream flowing from a rock, and he washed himself from head to foot.

Then he mounted his flying horse and rose up in the air to reach the summit of the mountain, and he judged the highest peak to be not far from the circle of the moon. And by this time so great was his desire of new sights that he was no more content with the earth, but aspired to journey in the sky. Higher and higher he rose, and at last he reached the topmost ridge. And the slopes were clad by flowers, sown by the wind, more beautiful than the richest gems, and so green was the grass that here below it would outshine the emerald. Nor less lovely were the leaves of the trees and the fruits and flowers with which they were bedecked. In the branches sang birds of varied colour: blue, white, green, red, and yellow. Murmuring streams and limpid pools were clear as crystal. A gentle breeze that ever blew from the same quarter, and with even strength, tempered the heat of the day, and robbing flower and fruit and verdure of their varied odours mingled them in one sweetness that fed the soul with delight. In the midst of the table-land rose a very great palace that seemed to burn with living fire, such was the splendour shining from it beyond all mortal custom. With slow pacings Astolpho rode towards this palace, and here and there he looked with wonder on the lovely landscape; and it seemed to him that, in comparison, this noisome world wherein we dwell had been made

SAINT JOHN AND ASTOLPHO ON THE JOURNEY TO THE MOON.

*To face page* 207.

by Nature in an angry mood, so pleasant and bright and joyous was this other land.

When he came near to the shining mansion he stopped still with astonishment, for all the walls were cut from one pure gem glowing brighter than the carbuncle in redness. In the vestibule of this blessed abode there came to meet the duke an ancient man clad in a mantle, reddest of the red, and in a gown, whitest of the white, and he was so venerable in aspect, with long white hair and beard, that he seemed to be one of the elect in Paradise. With joyous mien he spoke to the paladin, who in reverence had sprung from the saddle, and said, "Sir Knight, by the will of God you have ascended to this earthly paradise; and although you did not know the cause of your journey, nor the purpose of your desire, yet believe that not without deep mystery are you come hither far from your Northern hemisphere. This long way you have come without counsel of any, so that you may take counsel with me how you may succour King Charles and save the holy faith from peril; nor must you think, my son, that you have reached this height by your own virtue; for neither winged horse nor mighty horn were of any avail but for the will of God. And presently we will converse more at ease, and I will show you the way you shall go. But first of all you must come with me to refresh the body, for the long fast has made you weary." And then the venerable man said words that struck Astolpho with amazement; for he told him his name, and how that he was that John whom the

Redeemer loved, and the writer of the gospel called by his name. Of him the saying went out amongst the brethren that he should not die; yet Jesus said not unto Peter, "He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" And the disciples interpreted this saying to mean that John would not die. And without tasting death he was, indeed, brought up hither, and he found others before him, Enoch the patriarch, and the great prophet Elijah, who had never seen the last evening of life. Here, far from the pestilent and sinful air of our world, they shall enjoy eternal spring until the trumpets of the angels tell that Christ comes back on a cloud of glory.[1]

The paladin was welcomed by the saints and lodged in a well-garnished chamber, and likewise provision was made for the winged horse. And they gave to Astolpho of the fruits of Paradise; and they were of such sweet savour that in his mind he made excuses for our first parents when they were tempted to eat.

[1] "As others of good credit have delivered, S. John lived till he was an hundred years old, and then made himself a tombe, and entered thereinto alive in the presence of many, and on a sodaine, a light shone all about the place and tooke the tombe for the time quite from their sights; but the light being gone the coffin was found empty and the body of that saint was no more seen on the earth. Whereupon it was certainly thought that he was taken up into heaven as Enoch and Elias were. Though this assumption of S. John is not recorded in the Scriptures (nor no more is the assumption of the blessed Virgin), and consequently no man is bound to believe it as an article of our creed: Yet for mine owne opinion I think it may be very true; and I would in such cases believe a greate deal more than I need, rather than any thing lesse than I ought; for the one if it be a sinne is surely pardonable, but the other doubtlesse is very damnable."—Sir JOHN HARRINGTON.

And after the paladin had satisfied his wants with food and repose he rose up and found the disciple beloved of Christ awaiting him. And he took Astolpho by the hand and told him many things worthy of silence, and then went on : " My son, you do not know what is happening in France, although from thence you come. Learn, then, that your Orlando, because he turned from the right way the standards entrusted to him, has been punished by God, whose anger is most kindled against him whom most he loves, if he should sin. And your Orlando, to whom at his birth God gave the greatest might and the greatest courage and the superhuman power that no iron could wound him ; because he designed to make him the defender of the holy faith, as of old he had made Samson the defender of the Hebrews against the Philistines ; this your Orlando has rendered to his Lord for so great benefits an evil recompense. For when their need was sorest he deserted the faithful, and the idolatrous love of a Pagan woman had so blinded him that more than once he had tried with impious cruelty to kill his kinsman who had kept the faith. And it is for this that God has made him go in the ways of madness, and to show his nakedness, breast and flank and belly ; and his senses are so blunted that he knows not others, and he knows not himself. In such a manner we are told that God in old times punished Nebuchadnezzar, who for seven years was made to eat grass like an ox. But inasmuch as the offence of the paladin was less than that of Nebuchadnezzar, his

purgation of his sin is to endure but three months. Nor for any other purpose has it been granted you by our Redeemer to make so long a journey and to ascend to this place except that you may learn from me how his senses may be restored to Orlando. And it is true that with me you must make yet another journey, and leave the earth altogether. I am to lead you up to the circle of the moon, which of all the planets wanders nearest to us ; because the remedy that is to make Orlando wise again is there locked up. And as soon as the moon appears to us this night thither we will go."

Of these and other things the apostle talked to Astolpho all the day, but when the sun had sunk in the sea, and above them the moon raised her horn, the chariot was got ready which was wont to be used to go through the paths of the sky. This was the chariot that once on a time had taken up Elijah from the eyes of the beholders. Four horses, many times redder than flames, the apostle joined to the yoke, and then with Astolpho beside him he took the reins and they rushed upwards. And soon they were in the midst of the sphere of eternal fire, but as they passed through, the venerable one by a miracle caused it to burn them not. And they passed through the sphere of fire and came to the realm of the moon. And for the most part they found the surface shining like polished steel without any blot, and in extent it was little less than this globe of ours with all its lands and seas.

And here Astolpho had double cause for wonder.

First, that this moon, which to us seems in its girth a little thing, should be a vast country; and next, that he must strain both eyes to see our earth, with all its seas, for having no light of its own it throws off but feeble images. Up in this moon different from ours are the rivers and lakes and fields; other than ours are the plains and valleys and mountains; but they have their cities and castles and dwellings far larger than ever the paladin saw before or since; and there too are great forests where nymphs hunt wild beasts.

But the paladin did not stay to search through all the place, because he had not been brought there except for a special purpose. And to this end he was guided by the holy apostle into a narrow valley between two mountains. And in this valley there is collected whatsoever is lost here below either by our own fault or by reason of time or fortune. Whatsoever is lost here, is there found. Lost kingdoms are there, and lost riches, for which the unstable wheel of fortune may be blamed, but other things there are which fortune can neither give nor take away. Much fame is there that time like a worm eats into and devours, and infinite are the prayers and vows which men have made to God and broken; and there are the tears and sighs of lovers, and the useless hours lost in play, and the long idlenesses of ignorant men and the vain projects that were never put to proof. And so many are the vain desires of mortals that they almost fill the place; and, in brief, everything lost here below is found there above in this valley.

And as they passed by the heaps of lost vanities the paladin asked his guide of this and of that; and he was answered by the apostle; and numberless were our lost vanities. And the only thing not to be found there was the thing we think we never keep, but which never leaves us, and that is our own foolishness. And the paladin found some of his own lost days and deeds, and but for his interpreter he would not have known they were his. And they came at last to the heap of the things that we think we never lose, but rather think that we always have in abundance, namely, what we call our senses; and of all the heaps the heap of our lost senses is the greatest.

Now our senses are made of a very soft and subtle liquor which, unless it be closely shut up from the air, quickly wastes away in vapour. And therefore all the lost senses that ascend to the moon are gathered up and stored in vials, some large and some small, according to the amount of the senses lost. And the largest of all these vessels Astolpho found to have written on the outside: *Senses of Orlando.* And in the same way all the other vials had the names written on them of the earthly losers of the senses. And the duke found that a large part of his own senses, unknown to himself, had come into this limbo, and of others also he found a mass of their senses, though he supposed they had never lost a grain. And the causes and the occasions of people losing their senses he found to be manifold,—love, honour, the search for wealth, putting trust in princes,

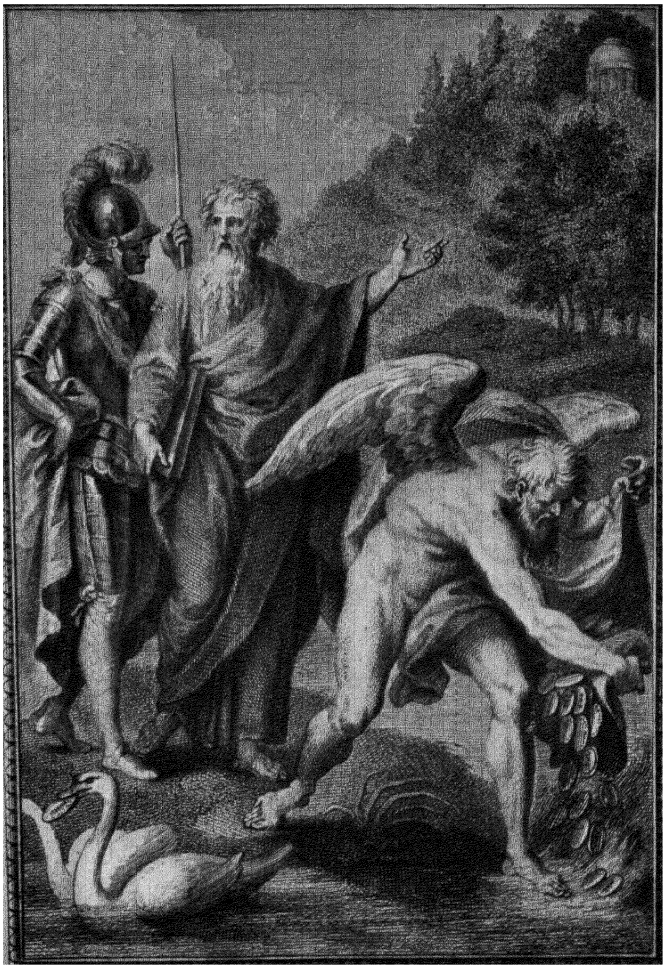
and trust in magic, and collecting with over-zeal gems and paintings,—and great was the mass of the senses lost by philosophers and astrologers and by poets. The writer of the mysterious apocalypse permitted Astolpho to take the vessel that held his own lost wits ; and he was told to open it and put it to his nostrils, and through the nostrils he breathed the lost senses again into his mind.

But, as already narrated, the largest of all the vials was that named after Orlando, and this Astolpho took away with him, and he found it to be much heavier than he had thought.

And after this Saint John showed to Astolpho many wonders, and greatest of all was the manner in which the records of the fame of mortals here below are for the most part drowned in the river of oblivion, though some few attain to immortality. "You must know," said the man of God to Astolpho, "that not a leaf can stir there below but it makes something here above move in sympathy, though the appearances, on the earth and in the moon, to the eyes of man would seem quite different. In the moon the things that on earth are subtle influences and are not seen, but only darkly imagined, are here fashioned into moving shapes and figures and all their doings are plain to the eye."

And to Astolpho were shown the fates, ancient withered women spinning and weaving and severing the threads of the lives of mortals. And he saw Father Time himself, there in the moon, an old old man, for ever running, and so quick and so nimble

that he seemed by nature made only to run ; and the names of mortals, written on little tablets of varied metals, he gets from the Fates, and with the tablets he fills the lap of his mantle and rushes to the river, that is the river of oblivion, and throws them in. And some of the tablets sink at once and are for ever lost, and some are picked from the water by mean and ugly birds that fly about with them for a little in their beaks, and then drop them for weariness ; and a very few are taken up by two sacred swans, and the swans glide through the water, or it may be fly through the air, till they bring the names they have chosen to a hill on the bank of the great river. And on the hill is a temple, and a nymph comes down to the bank of the river of oblivion and takes the names from the mouths of the swans and affixes them to an image raised on a lofty column, and she consecrates them in such wise that there they may be seen to all eternity. And the crows and the vultures and the cormorants and the other mean and greedy birds that hover about the river and pick out some of the names, are the shapes in the moon that answer to flatterers and informers and the whole tribe of gentle courtiers (who by nature are as gentle as the ass and the hog), and for a little while they keep the names of their patrons out of the river. But as the swans carry the names of the worthy to the temple of fame, so in the world below are the names of heroes made immortal by the poets. And as Saint John called to mind the hard lot of the poets on the earth, how they must wait at the doors



SAINT JOHN, ASTOLPHO, AND MATHEL TIME AT THE RIVER OF OBLIVION.

*To face page* 214.

of the mighty with pale faces and hungry looks and knock in vain for help, the eyes of the old man burned with the fire of indignation; "for," said he to Astolpho, "on your earth I, too, was a writer, but to me Christ has given a meet reward; and I grieve when I see the miserable lives of my fellow-writers." And thereupon with a wise laugh he let fall his indignation and turned a serene countenance on the duke.

And again the two mounted the fiery chariot and descended from the shining moon to the highest part of the mountain where is the Earthly Paradise. And Astolpho bore with him the vial with its remedy for the madness of the great master of war. And, moreover, Saint John gave to the English duke an herb of excellent virtue, whereby he should anoint the eyes of King Senàpo and restore to him his sight. And he said to him that the king would give him a great army by way of reward, so that he might bring aid to the Christians for the destruction of Biserta, the capital city of King Agramant. And he told Astolpho exactly how his senses were to be restored to Orlando.

With these instructions and encouragements Saint John dismissed Astolpho, and he flew as fast as possible on his winged horse back to Nubia.

Great was the joy of King Senàpo when he heard of the return of Astolpho, for well he remembered how he had chased away the harpies; and when Astolpho with the precious herb scaled away the thickness from his eyes and gave him back his former

vision, the monarch would fain worship him as a God, and all that he asked and more than he asked he gave him, of men and camels and elephants, for in his country there were no horses.

Furthermore, the Apostle had instructed Astolpho, whilst he was with him in the Earthly Paradise, by what means he might transport this great army across the desert without being overwhelmed by the sands; and he had shown him how to provide his footmen with horses when they had passed the desert; and how to create a great navy which should destroy the remnants of the forces of Agramant as they fled back to Africa. And in order that Astolpho might carry out these his orders he had endowed him for the time being with some of his own miraculous power, and had instilled into his heart a faith that would remove mountains. And filled with this faith, and praying in this faith to God, Astolpho, as soon as he had crossed the desert, made horses out of stones rolling down a mountain side, and afterwards, when he had come near to Biserta, out of leaves cast into the sea he made ships.

When the better part of his Nubians had been provided in this manner with war-horses, Astolpho easily overran the country between the great deserts and Biserta, the capital of Agramant, and he defeated the kings to whom Agramant had entrusted the defence of his kingdom. And in exchange for one of them he freed from captivity Dudon, the son of Ogier the Dane, who had been captured by Rodomont below Monaco on his first arrival in France.

And Rodomont had sent him captive to Africa, and he had remained there ever since. Now it chanced that just as Astolpho had come to the port nearest Biserta, into which he had driven the defeated Saracens,—and just after, by faith and prayer, he had made his ships,—there came sailing to Biserta, as it might be to a friendly port, the vessel which had been sent by Rodomont to carry to Africa another band of his prisoners. These were the paladins he had overthrown at the bridge which he had built for the glory of Isabella. And as recorded in another place, he hung up their arms and armour on her tomb, and sent the prisoners captive to Africa. On this vessel that now came to Biserta there was Brandimarte, the closest friend of Orlando, and the lover of Flordelis, and there was Oliver, Orlando's brother-in-law and very dear companion-in-arms, and Sansonetto, and many others. And Astolpho was greatly rejoiced when he took from the Saracen vessel these renowned paladins to aid him in the attack on Biserta. And Dudon the Dane, whom he had put in command of his new navy, was equally delighted, because he could obtain from them the latest news from France, and learn best how he might help to drive the rest of the Saracens from Europe.

And whilst the newcomers were eagerly conversing with Astolpho and Dudon, suddenly there was heard along the shore the clashing of weapons and loud outcries. In a moment Astolpho and the rest had rushed to arms, and they hurried towards the place where the uproar was loudest, asking stray

fugitives what was the cause and meaning of their flight.

And when they reached the place where the confusion was greatest, there they found a man stark naked, who all alone had thrown the whole camp into disorder. In his hand he wielded a great staff, and already he had killed more than a hundred and wounded many more, and none would venture to come near him ; and from the distance they shot at him with arrows, but the arrows hurt him no more than if they had been pointless.

The paladins marvelled greatly at the strength and powers of the savage man, when suddenly there came riding up to them on a palfrey a beautiful lady clad all in black. And straightway she rushed up to Brandimarte, and threw both her arms round his neck and kissed him. This was Flordelis, at whose request Bradamant had overthrown Rodomont at the bridge, and had obtained thereby the freedom of those who had been sent captive to Africa. And when Flordelis had reached the African shore in a swift ship she heard that Astolpho was besieging Biserta, and she heard also an uncertain rumour that her lover Brandimarte was with him. And great was their joy when they met after so long a separation, and regardless of all else, they embraced again and again.

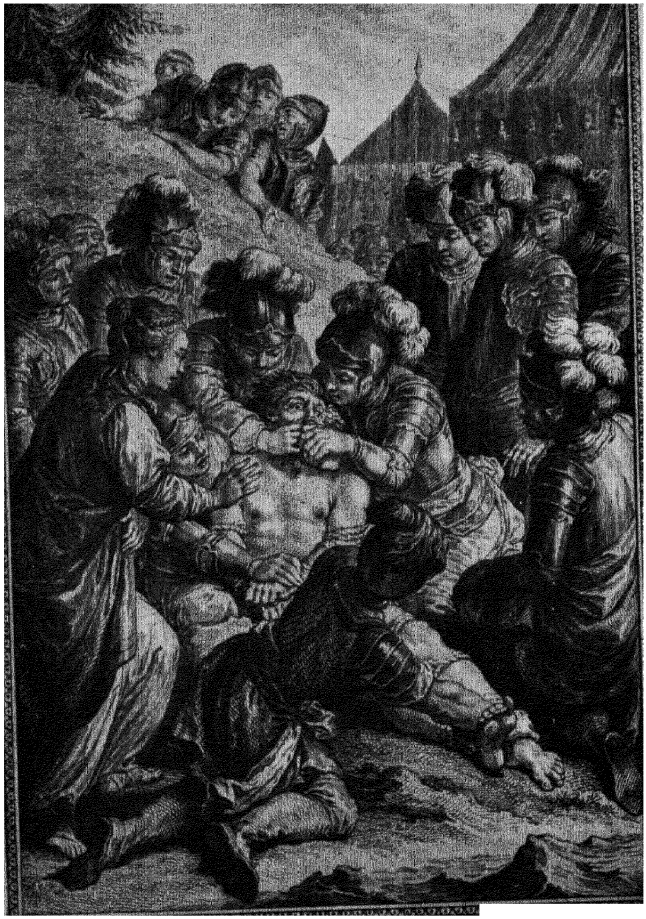
But meanwhile the naked savage with his huge staff was coming nearer and driving the soldiery before him, and as soon as Flordelis set eyes on him she cried out, "That is Orlando." For

she had seen him in his madness struggling with Rodomont on the bridge, and seen them both together hurled into the water; and she knew the paladin again, in spite of his blackened skin and tangled hair. And at the same time Astolpho recalled what had been said to him by Saint John of the manner in which he should find Orlando: but the others would never have dreamed this was the knightly Orlando, who seemed more like a wild beast than a man in form and face. And when they knew indeed that it was Orlando, afflicted by so dreadful a calamity, they were moved to tears. But Astolpho said to them, "This is no time for lamentations but a time for deeds: we must find a way to bring him back to reason."

And one and all fixed their eyes upon him and advanced to take him. But when Orlando saw the circle round him drawing closer he shook his staff with greater fury. First he aimed a blow at Dudon, who tried to reach him under the cover of his shield; and if Oliver had not partly broken the blow by his sword it would certainly have crashed through the shield of Dudon, and broken alike helmet, head, and breast. As it was, the blow shattered the shield, and fell so heavily on the helmet that Dudon was stunned and felled to the ground. Then Sansonetto with his sword cut away more than two ells' length of the huge staff, and Brandimarte rushing in seized the madman round the middle with both arms, and Astolpho at the same time seized his legs. But Orlando shook himself, and threw Astolpho to the

ground ten paces off, though Brandimarte did not lose his hold. Next Orlando struck Oliver so hard a blow that he also fell stunned to earth, with blood flowing from nose and eyes, and but for his good helmet he would have been slain outright. In a little Astolpho and Dudon and Sansonetto, though sorely bruised, came again to seize Orlando. And Dudon tried to give him a wrestler's fall with his foot, whilst Astolpho and the rest took him by the arms, but they could not hold him ; and like a bull which feels the fangs of the dogs in his ears and rushes along with the dogs upon him, so Orlando carried with him the clinging paladins. Meanwhile Oliver had risen from the ground though weak and bleeding, and he bethought him of a better way to get command over Orlando. And he caused ropes to be brought, more than one, and of great strength. And on the ropes he made running knots, and he threw the ropes so that some caught the madman round the arms and others round the legs, and the ends of the ropes he gave to this one and that, and at last they pulled him to the ground like an ox in the slaughter-house. And when he was on the ground they bound him more firmly, feet and hands. And in vain Orlando shook himself and tried to break his bonds.

Then Astolpho commanded that he should be taken thence to be cured of his madness. And Dudon, who was a giant in strength, took him up on his back, and he carried him by Astolpho's guidance to the edge of the sand. And seven times they plunged him in the sea, and held him under the



ASTOLPHO RESTORES TO ORLANDO HIS SENSES.

*To face page* 221.

waves so that the grime of his madness might be washed from his face and body. Next Astolpho gathered certain herbs, as he had been told by Saint John, and these he stuffed into Orlando's mouth, so that only through the nostrils could he breathe. Astolpho then made ready the vial in which were enclosed the senses of Orlando, and he put it beneath his nostrils so that perforce when it was opened the madman breathed up all the subtle vapour. And wonderful to tell, on the instant his mind returned to its former habit, and he got back discourse of reason.

And as a man who is awakened from a troubled dream in which he has seen the shapes that are not, and never can be, or something horrible and strange, is filled with wonder when sleep leaves him, and he gets back his senses, so was it with Orlando when he had been drawn out of his madness: he remained stupefied with wonder. And he looked from one to another of the paladins, and without speaking tried to think how and when he had come to such a pass. And he rolled his eyes hither and thither, and could not imagine where he was. And he marvelled to see himself naked and bound from shoulders to feet with tough ropes.

Then he said to those about him, Loose me; and his look was so calm and his countenance so serene that at once they unbound him. And they brought to him garments, and they comforted him in the grief that oppressed him for his past sinfulness. And when Orlando had been thus restored to his right mind, more than ever before he became wise and

manly, and he found himself perfectly freed from the bonds of his love for Angelica; so that she whom before he had thought so beautiful and gentle, and whom he had so passionately loved, now seemed to him a thing of nought, and he set himself to win back the honour which he had lost through his passion.

And the next day Dudon set sail with the fleet in search of Agramant, and Orlando remained with Astolpho to besiege Biserta. And though with his old wisdom and valour Orlando was again first in counsel and in battle, yet he gave all the honour of the command to Astolpho.

And in the end Biserta was sacked and set on fire.

# XI

# THE COMBAT IN LIPADUSA: THREE AGAINST THREE

## XI

## THE COMBAT IN LIPADUSA: THREE AGAINST THREE

TWICE had Gradasso, the king of Sericane, invaded Europe in order to win Baiardo, the famous horse of Rinaldo, and Durindana, the mighty sword of Orlando. And in the end he had gotten both, though not by his own valour in fight. So keen was his desire to have Baiardo that he broke his plighted word with Rinaldo, and on the chance offering rode away on the horse. And the sword Durindana had come into his hands partly also by chance, and partly by the prowess of another, namely, Rogero. As already told in another story, Orlando in his madness had thrown the sword away; and Zerbino had lost his life in its defence; and Mandricardo had ridden away with it. And another story tells how Mandricardo lost his life and the sword to Rogero; and how Rogero, according to their compact, gave the sword to Gradasso.

Now when Gradasso had got his heart's desire in horse and sword, though by no means in the way he had hoped—for he was of dauntless courage and had

wished to win both in fair fight—he took ship and set his face towards his own country. And he was driven by a tempest to take refuge in Lipadusa, a little island that lies between Sicily and Africa, and here, where he least expected, he was after all to fight with Orlando for his sword.

And a little after Gradasso, a vessel was driven by the same tempest to the same refuge, and on board were Agramant and Sobrino. And the story of their coming is briefly this :

Agramant had fought his last battle and suffered his last defeat in Europe. His forces were driven into the sea, and with a remnant of followers he escaped on the ships that survived of his proud fleet. And in the hour of his need his companions in arms reviled him in secret whispers, all save old Sobrino, who had tried at the first to dissuade him from the great emprise.

And as soon as night fell Agramant and his ships sailed into a new peril. For the God of the Christians brought against the Saracens, by means of the miracle of the leaves, a great fleet manned with Nubians under the command of Dudon. And it was not until most of his ships were ablaze with flames that Agramant knew the strength of the enemy ; for at first he had supposed it was an affair of no moment. And when he saw the fight was hopeless he fled away in a swift vessel with old Sobrino. They steered for Biserta, the capital city of Agramant's kingdom, for they did not know it had been besieged by the Christian forces, and even then was being put to fire and sword. And

when they came near to the shore, where they had looked for a city of refuge, lo, there was the city in flames. And Agramant in his despair would have fallen on his sword, but Sobrino held him back, saying that his death would indeed be the ruin of Africa, but that so long as he lived he might hope to make new allies and bring new forces against the Christians. And Agramant took courage, and they set sail towards Egypt and the East. But a storm arose, and they were forced to take shelter in Lipadusa, and there they found Gradasso. And the king of Sericane, when he heard the evil tidings from his old ally in arms, embraced him and comforted him and made offer of all his power.

Far into the night they took counsel together—Agramant, Gradasso, and Sobrino—and in the end they determined to challenge Orlando and the Christians to put the fate of Europe and Africa to the arbitrament of combat, three against three. For Gradasso had heard how Orlando had recovered from his madness, and was the leader in the attack on Biserta. With dawn of day the storm abated, and they sent their messenger to Orlando.

Right glad was Orlando to receive this challenge from Agramant and his comrades, and especially because he had heard that Gradasso had possession of Durindana, which he had cast away in his madness. And to recover this sword the paladin had already decided, so soon as the siege of Biserta was finished, to follow Gradasso into his own kingdom. And Orlando knew also that Agramant had in his hand

Brigliadoro, the horse which he had also set loose in the time of his madness; and it had been taken by Mandricardo; and after Rogero had killed him in the duel he had given the horse to Agramant. And Orlando loved the horse as he loved the sword. Orlando chose as his companions in the fight Oliver his brother-in-law, and Brandimarte his dearest and most devoted of friends.

It chanced by a succession of misfortunes that none of the three had his own proper arms. Orlando had landed on the African shore clad only in the grime of his madness, and from the other two Rodomont had stripped off the armour at the passage of his bridge, and their armour had been hung on the tomb of Isabella. The paladins chose the best that the spoils of Biserta could offer, but poor were the arms compared with those they had so often proved in battle. But by a strange turn of fortune their need was met, at least in part. They were walking on the sands after they had received the challenge, and in the eagerness of their talk on the coming battle they had wandered along the shore about three miles from Biserta. And lifting up their eyes seawards they suddenly saw a ship in full sail driving straight on the barren shore. And as it came nearer they saw on the deck no man, and even at the helm no steersman. The ship was driven by its fate on the sand-banks that guarded the shore, and there lay desolate. And the paladins were astonished by this sudden advent of the ship, and in haste they found a small light boat and put off to the wreck.

And on board they found indeed no man. For the same tempest that had driven the others to Lipadusa had threatened to drive this vessel on another rocky island. And it was carrying back to Africa a remnant of the Saracen forces whom Rogero had redeemed from Dudon, who had taken them prisoners when he destroyed the fleet of Agramant. And when the seamen thought they could not avoid the rocky island in the storm, they took to the boats, and perished one and all except Rogero, who escaped by swimming to the lonely rock. And by the will of God, so soon as the people had left the ship and perished, the storm abated, and the ship righted itself and sailed on past the rocks and over the sea to the sands of Biserta.

And when the paladins had searched the vessel they found unhurt Frontino, the war-horse of Rogero. And beneath the deck they found also the glorious arms that first were made for Hector of Troy, and had been won by Mandricardo in his greatest adventure, and had been lost by him to Rogero, when he lost to him also his life. But none of them knew—not Orlando nor Brandimarte nor Oliver—that these were the arms of Hector, though much they marvelled at their richness. And with the jewelled arms they found a sword, and well Orlando knew the sword and its name and its virtue. For he had himself won it from the enchantress Falerina, when he made her captive and destroyed her garden.[1] And the

[1] This adventure of Orlando and release of the prisoners of Morgana are described in the *Orlando Innamorato* of Boiardo, and show his poetical imagination at its best. The story is taken by Ariosto as already familiar to his readers. Cf. *Orl. Inn.*, Bk. ii. cantos iv., v., viii., ix.

sword had been wrought under the strongest spells, as she had hoped for the destruction of Orlando himself. And the name of the sword was Balisarda. And this, too, had been stolen by Brunello, and also given by him to Rogero. And Orlando knew not what had become of the sword after it was stolen, and much he rejoiced to have it back in his hand for the coming fight. And to Brandimarte was given the horse Frontino, and to Oliver the shining armour that had once been Hector's, and had been won of Mandricardo by Rogero.

The three paladins made fitting preparations for the day of the great battle which was to decide the fate of Africa, and perchance even of Christendom, and each chose for himself a new device for shield and surcoat. Orlando, confident of victory over the Pagans, had devised a tower of Babel struck by a thunderbolt. Oliver had chosen a dog couchant with its leash on its back, waiting for its quarry, and the motto: *Till he come*; and the dog was of silver, and the surcoat was of cloth of gold.[1]

Now it chanced that just before the great assault on Biserta, when Flordelis found Brandimarte, he had been also found by a faithful old retainer, Bardino by name, who had been searching for him to bring to him the sad news of the death of his father, and to summon him to take up his father's kingdom.

[1] Sir John Harrington had engraved on the title of his translation of the *Furioso* a dog after the manner of that of Oliver. "Myself have chosen this of Oliuero for mine owne partly liking the modestie thereof, partly (for I am not ashamed to confess it) because I fancy the spaniel so much whose picture is in the device."

But Brandimarte would not assent to return before he had helped Orlando to capture Biserta. And now again he would not take up his new kingship before he had fought this great fight in Lipadusa by the side of Orlando. But in token of his mourning he chose for himself a black shield with no device and a surcoat of plain black, with no ornament save a fringe, in which were to be embroidered many rich gems and jewels. And Flordelis herself worked the black surcoat with its richly embroidered border, and she made a black covering with a like border that should fall over the mane and shoulders and back of the horse. And as she worked at the black cloth, blackness entered into her own heart, and all the time she never once smiled, and never gave one sign of cheerfulness. Always her heart was tormented by fear that her Brandimarte would return to her no more. A hundred times she had seen him in danger of his life in great battles and in venturous quests, but never before had her blood run cold and her cheek grown pale with dread.

And this very newness of fear made the fear doubly great. And when at last the warriors set sail she stood on the shore and watched till the ship faded from sight, and she filled the air with vows and lamentations; and with great trouble Astolpho and his brother in arms, Sansonetto, prevailed on her to leave the shore, and no sooner had she arrived in the palace than she threw herself on her couch, worn out and trembling.

In the meantime, a favouring wind took the three

champions quickly to Lipadusa. And they pitched their tent on the eastern shore of the island, perchance because they thought the rising sun would be in their backs when the first charge was made, for in the greatness of the issue it seemed their duty to leave as little as might be to chance. And on the other side of the island was encamped Agramant, and on both sides sentinels were posted all night, for the battle was to be at break of day. But when the night had fallen Brandimarte spoke with Orlando, and with his consent went unarmed to the tent of Agramant, for they had been at one time friends and allies. And after the Pagan king and the faithful cavalier had joined hands, Brandimarte made offer of terms of peace to Agramant. He should retain in his power every city and dominion from the Nile to the Pillars of Hercules—if only he would believe on the Son of Mary. And he told how he himself had accepted the true faith and renounced Mahomet, and how he wished for all his friends the like consolation. Then he spoke of the chances of the battle and the little gain that would accrue to Agramant even if he killed Orlando, and more would he have said of things heavenly and of things earthly, but the Saracen broke in: "It is the part of a fool or a madman to offer counsel where it is not asked. And if indeed you wish me well I know not, and it is hard to believe when I see you come in the train of Orlando. Verily, I think the great Dragon of Hell has your soul in his grip, and will drag you down to the eternal punishment of the unfaithful.

And whether I gain or lose this fight, and whether or no I return to my ancient kingdom, lies in the breast of God, and neither I nor you nor Orlando can see what is there hidden. Come what may, no dastard fear shall make me do a deed unworthy of a king; if die I must, I will die before I wrong my race and blood. Get you gone; and if to-morrow your fighting is not better than your embassy this night, Orlando will regret his choice of companion in battle." And with burning anger these last words rushed from the fiery heart of the Saracen, and they parted to meet at sunrise.

With the pale light of the new dawn the warriors armed and mounted. Few words were said, and there was no delay in ceremony, but on the instant lances were in rest, and the shore resounded with the clang of iron and the rush of horses. At the first onset every lance was splintered to the truncheon. Orlando met Gradasso, and the Pagan had the advantage of Baiardo, the famous horse which he had won of Rinaldo (not by force of arms). And the horse of Orlando, though the best Biserta could give, could not withstand the shock of the mighty Baiardo, and when Orlando found he could not raise it by hand or spur he freed himself of the stirrups, and with his right hand grasped Balisarda the enchanted sword, and with his left his shield.

Brandimarte unhorsed Sobrino, and seeing his foe on the earth he left him and charged against Gradasso, who had unhorsed Orlando.

Between Agramant and Oliver the fight remained

even, though with lance and shield broken they had come to the naked sword.

When Orlando saw that Gradasso was hard pressed by Brandimarte, and noted that Sobrino, on foot like himself, was without an opponent, he advanced to attack him. And the old king awaited the storm as fearless as a bold mariner meets a great wave, and he raised his shield to guard against the crash of Balisarda. But so keen was the blade, and so mighty the arm that gave the blow, that it cut through the shield and its encircling steel, and falling on the shoulder, clove through the double steel and secret mail, and made a grievous wound. With his right arm still uninjured, Sobrino struck with all his strength at Orlando, but as well might he have smitten hard rock, for by the will of God it had been given to Orlando for the defence of Christendom that his body should be invulnerable. And in turn Orlando thought to give the Saracen such a blow as would strike the head from the shoulders, but in part the goodness of his armour turned the blow, and Balisarda smote him with the flat and not with the edge. But even so Sobrino fell to the ground, stunned and unable to stir. And Orlando, thinking Sobrino was dead, turned to the aid of Brandimarte, who was overmatched by Gradasso in arms and sword and horse (for Gradasso had Baiardo), and perhaps in strength.

As far as the horse was concerned the disadvantage of Brandimarte was not so great, for he was mounted on Frontino, and though not so strong as Baiardo,

never did a horse answer better the wish of the rider, and it seemed to know which way the terrible Durindana was aimed and to avoid the blow of itself. And if Brandimarte had been armed as well as his foe, the fight would have gone in his favour, but his hauberk availed nothing against Durindana, the fateful sword now in the hands of Gradasso.

As Orlando advanced on foot to the aid of Brandimarte, he chanced to notice the good horse from which Sobrino had been thrown, and in a moment he had leaped into the saddle, and with one hand he held the jewelled reins and with the other Balisarda. As soon as Gradasso saw Orlando he turned from Brandimarte and made a fierce thrust which cut through Orlando's armour, but could not penetrate the invulnerable flesh. And in return Orlando raised Balisarda, the sword that Falerina had inspirited with spells which no enchanted armour could withstand ; and driven with all his strength the blow fell, and cut through helm and shield and mail, and wounded Gradasso in face and breast and thigh. And the king was dazed with a double wonder, for since he had borne that armour he had never been wounded ; and since he had wielded Durindana he had never known it fail. No longer had he confidence in sword or arms, and, contrary to his wont, he fell back on skill in defence.

In the meantime Brandimarte had taken up a position between the two sets of combatants, ready to advance to the aid of Oliver, if need be, against Agramant (and up to then they had waged an even

battle), or, if need be, to Orlando should Gradasso prove the stronger.

This being the state of the fight, Sobrino, who had lain for a long time stunned on the ground and weak from loss of blood, came to his senses, and in spite of the grievous pain of the wounds in shoulder and face, raised himself and looked round. And it came into his mind to give aid to his suzerain Agramant against Oliver ; and with silent, careful steps he came up behind the paladin, whose eyes were fixed on his open foe, and struck the horse in the hind knees, and perforce it fell to the ground ; and in the sudden fall Oliver was unable to draw his left foot from the stirrup, and it was caught beneath the fallen horse. Sobrino aimed blow on blow at the prostrate knight, but the arms of Hector (gifted him by Orlando from the treasure-trove of Rogero's ship) turned all aside. When Brandimarte saw Oliver's plight he rode to his aid, and giving as he passed a blow to Sobrino, he took on himself the fight against Agramant. Oliver, having free his right arm and sword, not only made good his defence, but seeing Sobrino almost falling with his wounds, he hoped in time to free his foot and kill his man.

With Brandimarte, his new foe, Agramant had the advantage of arms (for Brandimarte's were only the chance spoils of Biserta), but in horses Brigliadoro (ridden by Agramant), though the stronger war-horse, was inferior in speed and dexterity to Frontino. The first onset was in favour of the African monarch, who wounded his enemy in the right shoulder—and

already Brandimarte had suffered from Gradasso a wound in the side—but in return he drove his sword through the shield of Agramant, and at the same time struck the left arm and touched his right hand.

But this combat was as child's play to the fight between Orlando and Gradasso. The Sericane king had cut in pieces the shield and armour of Orlando, though he could not pierce the God-protected skin, but Orlando, with the fateful Balisarda, had wounded his foeman in face and breast and throat, beyond the wounds given in the first attack. Then Gradasso, made desperate by his own loss of blood and failing strength, and the sight of Orlando with armour shattered but unwounded, raised his sword in both hands, and with all his might let fall on the head of Orlando a blow which he hoped and believed would cut him asunder from head to heart. And even as he had wished the blow struck the Count full on the forehead, and any other warrior it must have cloven to the saddle, but from Orlando, just as if it had struck him with the flat, the sword slipped away bloodless. But though, by the gift of God, Orlando remained unwounded, the stunning blow bereft him of all sense and feeling ; the reins fell from his hand, and the sword would have fallen had it not been fastened by a chain to the arm. So frightened was the horse ridden by Orlando by this mighty blow and the slackened rein, that it rushed at full speed along the sandy shore.

Gradasso followed, and soon would have overtaken the fleeing horse on the matchless Baiardo,

but casting his eyes round the field of battle, he saw that Agramant was in the utmost peril of his life. For Brandimarte had disarmed him, and gripping his helmet and tearing the lacing with the left hand, with his right he was on the point of giving the *coup de grâce* with his dagger. Gradasso at the sight stayed his pursuit of Orlando, and hasted to the aid of Agramant. And Brandimarte, wholly intent on his dagger, and never dreaming that Gradasso would escape free from Orlando, saw no danger and made no defence. And Gradasso gave a blow like to that he had given to Orlando, but not with the same effect. Senseless fell Brandimarte from the saddle, and from the deep wound a stream of blood gushed over the sand.

At this moment Orlando, who by instinct had kept his seat on the frightened horse, recovered his senses, and even in the instant saw his dear Brandimarte fall to the ground, and he knew that the Sericane king had given him his death-blow. There was no time for grief or sorrow—grief and sorrow for his loss were to come later; but anger such as he had never felt seized on the mind of Orlando. The first to meet his wild onset was Agramant, covered with blood. With half a shield and no sword, with helm unlaced, and pierced with the wounds given by Brandimarte, he was helpless. With one blow Orlando struck the throat that Brandimarte had bared for his dagger thrust, and the great ruler of all Africa fell headless on the sand. Not an instant did Orlando delay but turned his blade on

Gradasso. And when Gradasso saw the death-blow of Agramant, for the first time in his life fear entered his heart and pallor his cheek : as if mastered by foreknowledge of his fate, he made no defence. And Orlando struck him in the right side under the last rib. And the sword cut through the belly a span deep, and came out on the left side bloody to the hilt. Thus perished at the hands of the best warrior in the universe, the mightiest king of Pagania.

Little cheered by his quick revenge, Orlando threw himself from the saddle, and with tears in his eyes and troubled face he ran to Brandimarte. And all around the sand was covered with blood. And the helmet hung about his head like the bark of a tree shattered by an axe. And gently Orlando took away the broken helm from the face and saw a gaping wound between the eyes. But still enough of life remained to the dying knight to recommend his soul to God and ask pardon for his sins, and to speak words of comfort to his friend when he saw the tears running down his cheeks. And at last he whispered, " Orlando, remember me in your prayers to God, and care for my Flor . . ." But the name of his dear lady was cut in two by death. And voices of angels and heavenly harmonies filled the air as the soul, casting off the veil of the body, ascended into heaven.

And Orlando, though he heard the voices and knew that the gates of Paradise had been opened to Brandimarte, yet through the frailty of human will could not keep back his tears when he thought that

he who was more to him than a brother had been taken away. And all his anger died away in the heart of Orlando ; and it was ever so, that after the battle he was filled with merciful pity. And he ran to the aid of old Sobrino, who from loss of blood had only a flicker of life like a little gleam in the darkness. And the Count spoke to him words of comfort as if he had been his nearest of kin, and he ordered the attendants to carry him to his tent and look to his wounds. And Oliver he released from the fallen horse, and his foot was so crushed that without aid he could not stand. And little elated was Orlando with the victory as he looked on the field of battle : Brandimarte dead, and Oliver grievously hurt and not sure of life.

As soon as Orlando had seen Oliver and Sobrino removed with gentle care from the battlefield to the tents, he paid the last honour to his dead foemen, Gradasso and Agramant. He bade their servants voyage back with the bodies to the ruins of Biserta and there bury them ; and he bade them also tell the outcome of the fight to Astolpho and the other paladins. And when the paladins heard from the Saracen servants of the victory of Orlando they were much rejoiced, but in a moment their joy died away when they knew that Brandimarte had lost his life. And if to them the loss was grievous, who should bear the news to his devoted Flordelis ?

The night before Flordelis had dreamed a dream ; and in her dream she saw the surcoat, which she had fashioned and embroidered with her own hand,

marked all over with red spots as it were from a rain of blood. And in her dream it seemed to her that she herself had so devised her embroidery, and she grieved over her mistake and said to herself, "Surely my dear lord told me to make the surcoat all black, and how can I have worked it in so strange a manner against his will?" And when she awaked she thought the dream of evil omen, and in the evening of that day came the fatal news to Biserta. Astolpho took care that she should hear nothing until he himself with Sansonetto should try to lessen the grief in the telling. But as soon as she saw their faces with no sign of the joy of a great victory she knew without a word from them that her Brandimarte was no more. And gently they told her of the manner of his death. And her heart was so afflicted, and so blinded were her eyes, and so benumbed was every sense, that like one dead she fell to the ground. And when her spirit came back to her she buried her hands in her hair, and then calling on his dear name she struck her face again and again; and she cried out as one possessed by an evil spirit, and she tore out her hair and cast it away in the madness of her grief. And she prayed one and the other to give to her a knife that she might plunge it in her heart; and then her passion changing, she would go to the ship that had brought the bodies of his slayers, and on the bodies take a savage vengeance; and again the passion changed and she would pass over the sea and die by the side of her dead lord. To the raging of madness succeeded the moaning of sorrow, and

she spoke to her dead Brandimarte, as if he were beside her, in gentle words : " Ah ! why did I let you go without me on such a quest ? Never before did your Flordelis stay behind. If only I had gone I would have given you help, and my eyes would never have left you. And when Gradasso came to strike you in the back, with a cry I would have given you the alarm. Or perhaps I might have been so quick that, coming between, I could myself have taken the blow ; my head would have been your shield, and small was the loss if I had died. In any case now must I die, and without any gain to you, and had I only died in your defence I could not better have given up my life. And if my hard fate, or the judgment of God, had made my help of no avail, at least I could have given you the last kisses, and bathed your face with my tears. And before the blessed angels had taken your soul to its Maker I could have said, 'Go in peace and wait my coming ; wherever you may be I shall haste to follow.' Alas, alas, my dear ! is this the kingship you were to take ? Is this the way you were to make me your queen ? Ah ! cruel, cruel fate ; how are all our hopes shattered in one day ! And why do I not lose now all my life when I have lost so much ?"

So she moaned in her sorrow, and then again came back the fury of madness and again she tore her hair as if its glory were to blame; and again in madness she struck her face and, quite distraught, bit her lips, and marred with her fingers the beauty of her breast.

In the evening of the day of the combat Orlando set sail for Sicily to find a fitting burial-place for Brandimarte, beneath the mountain that with its fire illumes the night and with its smoke darkens the day. And he took with him Oliver whose crushed foot needed a physician, and Rinaldo who had hastened to Lipadusa on hearing the rumour of the combat, but had arrived too late. And all the night they sailed, guided by the moon under a favouring breeze, and in the morning they reached Agrigentum. And here Orlando prepared for the next evening the funeral rites with the most solemn pomp and ritual. And from all sides the nobles of that land assembled, and the shore gleamed with torches and the air was filled with lamentations. And amongst the mourners was Bardino, the old retainer, who had come to announce to Brandimarte his accession to the kingdom, and standing beside the bier he gave way without restraint to the violence of his grief.

When all was ready for passing with the body from the shore to the church Orlando advanced to the body, and for a time stood in silence gazing on it, pale as the white flower of the acanthus that, gathered in the morning, fades in the twilight; and with a deep sigh he fixed his eyes on the dead and spoke to him in these words, "Dear, brave, faithful friend, here you lie dead, though well I know you are living in heaven, and have gained a life that shall never more suffer by heat or cold; forgive me, if you see me weeping, and believe that I sorrow to be left behind and not to share your joy, and I do

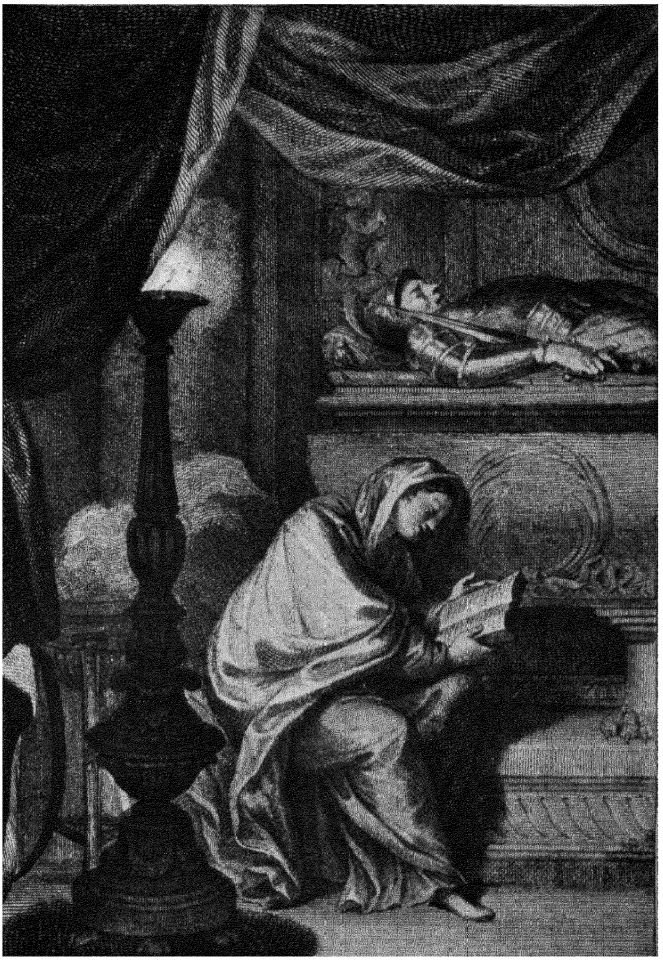
not sorrow for you because you are no longer here on earth. Without you I am all alone; without you nothing on earth can give the old delight. If I have been by your side in storm and war, why should I be absent in ease and happiness? Heavy must be my sin that clogs my feet with this mud and will not let me follow on your steps. If I was with you in troubles, why should I not share your gains? You have gained and I have lost; you alone have gained, but I am not alone in the loss. Sharers in my grief are mighty kingdoms,—Italy, France and Germany; my lord and Emperor and all his paladins are plunged in deepest sorrow; and the Holy Empire and Holy Church lament the loss of their surest defence. Alas, how will your death lighten the fears of the enemy! How will all Pagania feel its strength renewed! Alas, what suffering for your dear wife! I seem to see her weeping and hear her cries across the wide seas. But, Flordelis, let us take this comfort, we who are left without our Brandimarte, that every living warrior is envious of his glorious death, and that none of the men of olden times gave themselves to death with greater honour for themselves or greater gain for others." These and other words spake Orlando. And the bier began its journey, and there followed a long train of friars of every order—grey, white, and black—and priests and other clerics, two by two, praying for the soul of the dead that it might find rest amongst the blessed. And on every side the multitude of lighted torches changed night into day.

And the bearers of the bier were nobles and knights who took up the burden in turn. Of purple silk was the pall with a deep border of gold and pearls, and on pillows rich in gems and gold lay the dead knight clothed in purple splendidly jewelled. And there passed on before the rest three hundred of the poorest of that city all clad in black from head to foot. And there followed them a hundred pages, riding great war-horses, and their long black trains swept the ground. And behind and before floated many banners of varied devices, which long ago dead heroes had won for Peter and Caesar, and there were carried many shields that bore the insignia of the dead from whom they were taken in battle. And there came hundreds after hundreds according to the use and wont of a noble funeral, and one and all carried blazing torches, and one and all were covered up in deepest black. And next the bier came Orlando, his cheek wet with tears, and eyes red with weeping, and beside him was Rinaldo. And as the long procession passed into the cathedral church the people wept with pity for the hero so young, so good, so beautiful ; people of every rank and age, men and women and children wept with pity. The body was brought into the church, and when the priests had finished their chanting they placed the body in its coffin on two pillars, and here Orlando designed that it should rest, covered with a rich cloth of gold, until there could be built for it a sepulchre of the greatest worth. Nor would Orlando leave Sicily before he had got much porphyry and alabaster, and

he gave great rewards to the masters of their crafts to design a noble tomb. And after he had gone there came Flordelis, and she brought from Africa huge stones and pillars. And when she found that her tears and sighs never ceased, and that no peace was to be found in endless masses for the dead, she vowed in her heart never to leave the place until her spirit left her body; and in the sepulchre itself she made a cell, and there she shut herself in and there she lived.

Many a messenger and many a letter Orlando sent to her, and at last he went himself to try to take her from the tomb; he would (he said) put her in charge of the queen of Charlemagne; he would if she wished take her far over the seas to the kingdom of her father; he would build for her a convent wherein she might serve God with holy women.

No heed paid Flordelis to his entreaties. In the sepulchre she stayed on, praying day and night, and not long did her weary life endure.



FLORDELIS AT THE TOMB OF BRANDIMARTE.

*To face page 246.*

# XII

# ROGERO AND LEO AND BRADAMANT

## XII

## ROGERO AND LEO AND BRADAMANT

THE fight in Lipadusa had been preceded by another attempt to put an end to the war between the Christians and Saracens by a single combat of chosen champions. And the combat arose in this manner.

Agramant, after the failure of his attack on Paris, had retreated to the sea at Arles, and was in doubt whether to risk another battle or to set sail for his own country. For news had been brought that Astolpho with an army of Nubians was threatening to march on Biserta, and an urgent summons was sent to Agramant to return to defend his own kingdom instead of trying to conquer the kingdom of another. But his ally, Marsilio king of Spain, was afraid that if Agramant retired to Africa he would be left alone to bear the onslaught of the Christians, and he strongly opposed the retreat. The old king Sobrino, the wisest of the counsellors of Agramant, and who first of all had opposed the invasion of France, now opposed the selfish advice of Marsilio, and showed the urgent need of crossing to Africa, but at the same time he was as jealous as Agramant himself of the honour of

his king. To desert Marsilio was against his honour; to sue to Charles for peace was against his honour; but to fight another general battle was destruction. In these straits he urged the king to challenge Charles to put the war to the arbitrament of a single combat between two champions, one from each side; and if Rogero were chosen as the champion of the Saracens he assured the king that theirs would be the victory.

The choice of Rogero was the more natural because he had killed Mandricardo in single combat; and the other two, namely, Rodomont and Gradasso, on whom the choice might have fallen, had gone away. Rodomont, after his rejection by Doralis in favour of Mandricardo, had left the Saracen camp in a storm of rage, hurling execrations against God and woman. And whilst Agramant was in sore straits Rodomont was keeping his bridge in honour of Isabella, in order to get trophies for her tomb.

And Gradasso, having got his heart's desire in horse and sword, was on his way back to Sericane. In the meantime Marfisa, the sister of Rogero, and unsurpassed in valour and prowess by any knight, had found out that her parents had been Christian, and had been done to death by the kinsmen of Agramant. As soon as she knew she had gone over to Charlemagne and had been received by him with great honour, and had been baptized by Archbishop Turpin in the presence of the whole Court with splendid ceremonial. For the first time in her life Marfisa had bent the knee to mortal man, for to no other king, not even to Agramant, had she owed

allegiance, but had always gloried in her independence. Now she vowed to Charles that she would return to the East and bring all Asia under the Christian faith.

Marfisa made the closest friendship with Bradamant, and was delighted to find that she was betrothed to her own brother Rogero. The two maiden knights exacted a promise from Rogero that he, too, would leave Agramant and become a Christian, as soon as he could find a fitting occasion.

But so keen was his sense of honour that he would not leave Agramant when fortune was against him, and in his king's distress he kept by his side.

When Agramant sent his challenge to Charles it was promptly accepted, and to Rinaldo was entrusted the fortune of the Christians, and with the utmost joy and confidence he made ready for the battle. Rogero, the chosen of the Saracens, was in a very different plight. He had promised Bradamant, Rinaldo's sister, to ask her hand in marriage as soon as he had been baptized a Christian and surmounted, as they thought, the only obstacle. If he should kill Rinaldo in battle then Bradamant was lost to him for ever. He would prefer his own death, but his life was not his own to throw away, when he was fighting for his king as chosen champion. And with a heavy heart he prepared for the duel.

The combat was ushered in by the most solemn ceremonials. Between the two armies a large space was cleared, and in the forefront of the Christian army Charles had sworn by the gospels and all the ritual of the Christian faith that he would abide by the

issue of the combat, and if Rinaldo was beaten would make a lasting peace and pay tribute to Agramant; and on the other side, Agramant had sworn on the Koran and by Mahomet that he would abide by the issue of the combat, and if his champion failed would pay tribute to Charles. And each of the kings had also sworn in no manner to interfere with the course of the fight. And on their part each of the two champions, Rinaldo and Rogero, had sworn that in case of any interference he would transfer his allegiance to the other side. If Agramant or any of the Saracens interfered then Rogero would become forthwith a vassal of Charles; and if the Christians disturbed the combat then Rinaldo vowed he would become vassal to Agramant.

And in the course of the combat (as is told in another story) Agramant, being in fear that his champion would be worsted, and being deluded into the belief that Rodomont had returned to his succour, broke his oath and attacked the Christians. And as soon as they saw that the peace was disturbed the two champions stopped their own fight, but not knowing to which side the breach of the stipulations was due they took no part in the general battle until they should learn with whom lay the fault. It was not long before Rogero discovered that it was the Saracen king who had broken his oath. And according to his own solemn vow he ought straightway to have gone over to Charles. And apart from his solemn vow he had the strongest reasons for leaving the Saracens; it seemed as if God had opened

to him the way to become a Christian and to redeem his promises to his sister and to his betrothed.

But when he saw that the general battle had turned against the Saracens (and it was mainly through the prowess of the two maiden knights), he found that he could not bring himself to desert his beaten king. Loyalty to his king mastered every other feeling. In the conflict of duties the weaker side in the matter of right conquered, simply because it was also the weaker side in the matter of strength. Rogero, urged by his chivalry, twisted his conscience into the belief that he had no right to make the vow he had made with Rinaldo; that in no case ought he to have vowed to desert his king. To Marfisa and to Bradamant he had always said he would find some honourable mode of parting; and until such were found he would not leave Agramant. And now it seemed to him that if he took advantage of the rout of the Saracens to join the Christians and to complete his marriage with Bradamant he would seem to all men to smirch his own honour to gain his own pleasure.

And being thus determined, after the great battle he took ship to follow his defeated king over the seas to Africa. It was in the storm that drove Gradasso and Agramant to Lipadusa that Rogero alone escaped with his life from the vessel that later on was borne unguided to the sands of Biserta (as told in another place).

Rogero had saved his life only by strong swimming, and as he swam his mind recovered its proper balance

and his conscience the proper touch of honour. In the face of death—for he never thought to survive the struggle with the waves—his solemn vow before the combat seemed now of overpowering strength. It seemed now to him that God had prepared the way for him to leave his Pagan allies and become a Christian ; that God had given him the choice and he had refused. And then in the bitterness of approaching death he thought of his lost Bradamant. And in the depths of despair he sent up to God a broken-hearted prayer that if this time he were saved from death he would ever after serve Christ as his supreme lord and master. And his prayer was heard, and on the rocky islet that had threatened the ship with destruction he made a landing, and with his last remnant of strength he climbed up the rocks.

At first he feared that he had only changed the manner of his death and had only escaped from the sea to die of thirst and hunger, but there came down to him a holy man who for many years had lived on this islet a life of prayer. And he took Rogero to his cell and told him how he had been forewarned of his coming and forewarned also of his coming fate. And he showed to him the error of his ways, and he cried to him in reproof Saul ! Saul ! and afterwards baptized him in the Christian faith.

And Rogero remained with the holy man on the island during the time that Biserta was besieged and the great fight of three against three was fought in Lipadusa.

Now after Orlando had finished the ordering of

the tomb for Brandimarte in Sicily he set sail for France with Rinaldo and the wounded Oliver and Sobrino. And on the voyage the pilot of the vessel said to Orlando that on a little island that lay nearly in their course was a holy hermit who had the power of curing whomsoever he would of wounds or diseases. And Orlando bade him steer for the islet, and they landed, and there they found Rogero; though none knew him except Sobrino, for Rinaldo had only seen him in battle in full armour with visor down. And the holy man by the aid of God and his simples cured the wounded foot of Oliver; and the old king Sobrino, who was already almost persuaded to be a Christian by the death of Agramant and the courtesy of Orlando, now when he saw the miracle done on Oliver became quite converted to the true faith, and he, too, was healed of his wounds.

And when Orlando and the other paladins found that the other guest was Rogero, and that he had become a Christian, their joy knew no bounds, and most of all Rinaldo rejoiced because he was told by the hermit of Rogero's love for his sister Bradamant. And under the guidance of the man of God and with Orlando and Oliver as willing witnesses, Rinaldo made promise of Bradamant's hand to Rogero. And greatly all rejoiced at the prospect of so noble a union.

At length they set sail for France in the full confidence that the betrothal would be confirmed with the utmost readiness by the Emperor Charles and the parents of Bradamant and Rinaldo, Prince Amon of Montalbano and Beatrice.

Charles had already received news of the fight in Lipadusa and of its outcome, and he had heard also much of Rogero from Marfisa his sister. To pay fitting honour to his paladins, who had been the mainstay of his Empire, he sent the noblest of the kingdom to meet them on the banks of the Seine, and when they came near to the city walls he himself went out to meet them with a noble company of kings and dukes, and with his consort attended by beautiful ladies in rich attire. The joyous Emperor, and his paladins, and his nobles, and all the common people gave welcome to Orlando and the others ; and when the greetings had been exchanged of friends and relatives, Orlando, Rinaldo, and Oliver presented Rogero to the Emperor. And they told him how he was the son of Rogero of Risa, and of valour equal to his father's, as well the Christian army had proved in battle. And then came forward Marfisa and Bradamant to welcome Rogero, and Marfisa kissed him with her lips and Bradamant with her looks. The Emperor made Rogero again mount his horse, for he had dismounted to do reverence to the king, and ride by his side.

With triumphal pomp and gorgeous festival they returned together to the city. And the city was all green with leaves and garlands, and the streets were all covered with draperies, and from the windows and balconies ladies and damsels showered down flowers on the conquerors. And here and there they passed under triumphal arches and saw great pictures that showed the ruins of Biserta a prey

to the flames; and here and there were stages with living plays and living pictures, and at every coign of vantage was written up, "To the liberators of the Empire." And to the sound of trumpet and fife and all sorts of musical harmonies, and with laughter and plaudits, and with shouts of jubilation and goodwill from the crowded masses of the populace, the great Emperor and his baronage alighted at the palace, and for many days the goodly company held high festival, with tournaments and mimes and comedies and dances and banquets.

In the midst of these festivities it chanced one day that Rinaldo told his father, Prince Amon, how he had promised Bradamant to Rogero in the presence of Orlando and Oliver, and how they thought as he did, that in valour and nobility of blood no alliance could be more fitting.

But Amon heard his son with bitter anger that he should have dared without his consent to promise his sister in marriage. And he told him how he designed that she should become the wife of Leo the son of the Greek Emperor Constantine, and by no means of this Rogero, who not only was no king but had nothing in the world, and did not seem to know that without riches little account is taken of nobility and less of valour.

But much more aggrieved than Amon was his wife Beatrice, and much she blamed the presumption of her son, and in public and in private she denied that ever Rogero should marry her daughter, and with all her might she designed to make her the

Empress of the East. But Rinaldo obstinately refused to lessen his promise by one iota. And the mother, who fully believed that Bradamant was of her own mind, said to her that rather than be the wife of a poor cavalier it were better to be dead, and that if she bore with this insult from her brother never again would she be received as her mother's daughter, and she bade her stand firm and not be forced by Rinaldo.

Bradamant, be it remembered, had been trained up from childhood to feats of arms, and was accounted by Charles himself as the equal of any of his paladins, even her brother Rinaldo. All alone she had been used to ride like any errant knight in quest of adventures, and as free from fear as if escorted by a thousand horse. It was on the battlefield she had first met Rogero, and their love had been knit together in fighting side by side. She had never loved before, and she loved Rogero with the extremity of passion.

And yet this Bradamant in the presence of her mother stood silent and said not a word in reply to her scornful abuse of her lover; because, strange as it seems in these days, she held her mother, simply because she was her mother, in such reverence and respect that she could not even think of disobedience. And yet, on the other hand, she was so loyal to truth and to love that she could not say one word of assent: she could only sigh and say nothing. But when she found herself alone she gave way to a passion of grief and lamentation. And her mind

was tossed this way and that with doubts and perplexities; honour to her parents fought with love for Rogero; if her parents disapproved she had on her side her brother Rinaldo, the man of their house of the highest renown, and she had the approval of Orlando their cousin, the greatest of all the paladins; and she herself had drawn Rogero to the Christian faith; and her brother had betrothed her before the highest witnesses, whilst as yet the betrothal to the Greek was only in the air. And her last word to her heart was that she ought not to break her promise to Rogero, which had been made into a solemn betrothal by Rinaldo.

And if Bradamant was troubled, no less also was Rogero, for he had heard through the city the rumour of the suit of the son of the Eastern Emperor. And well he knew that it was only in riches he himself was deemed of lesser worth. In every other good that man may get by gift from nature or by his own labour he knew that none surpassed him; not in bodily form or strength, or in greatness of heart, or in kingly bearing; well he knew his own worth, and to no man in the world would he give way in body or soul: only in lands and treasure was he lacking—only, alas! in those things that the common crowd thinks of the utmost value.

But the more he thought the more was he troubled. And in the midst of his trouble sprang up the fear that Bradamant might be attracted by this imperial marriage, and might rather obey her father than remember her troth plighted with him.

The rumour of Rogero's fears at last reached Bradamant herself, and in pity of her lover she sent to him by a faithful maiden a message: "Such as I was to you so will I be till death, and beyond death if such a thing can be; let love be kind to me or cruel, let fortune smile on me or fortune frown, immovable as a rock shall stand my faith though buffeted on every side by wind and wave; I have not changed in calm or storm, nor ever shall through all eternity. Sooner shall a leaden chisel fashion an image out of adamant than any blow of fortune change my faith; sooner shall the mountain torrent run back to the mountain top than my thoughts of you go back on their path. Yours is the lordship over me, and never to a new prince was deeper fealty sworn and never did king or emperor have a more secure possession than you hold of the fortress of my soul. It shall yield to no assault: not to riches nor to nobility nor to crown imperial nor to fickle change of fancy. Do not fear that ever on my heart shall be engraved any face but yours, and not from a hundred blows shall your image take one single mark. Force may shatter the precious stone and break in pieces ivory or marble, but force cannot mould them to new shapes, and so may love break my heart but never fasten on it the image of another." And many more words she sent by her messenger, but no sooner was the message given than a new peril arose. For Bradamant on a sudden passed from words to deeds, and with undaunted courage, and putting aside all respect of persons,

she presented herself before King Charles and said: "Sire, if ever I wrought for your majesty any deed that seemed good in your sight may you be pleased to grant me a boon. And before I put it in words promise me on your kingly faith to grant me the favour, and what I ask shall be just and fair."

"Noble lady," replied the king, "your valour merits whatever boon you may ask, and I swear to grant you your request to the half of my kingdom." "The boon I ask," said the maiden knight, "is that never shall a husband be given to me who does not first show that he can conquer me in fight. Whosoever shall wish to win me must prove me with lance or sword, and if he is beaten let him mate with another." And the Emperor with joyous look said her request was worthy of her high renown, and that she might be well assured of his promise. And the prayer and the grant were made in open court, and the same day the news was told to Amon and Beatrice. And her parents were mightily enraged with their daughter, for well they knew that her design was to beat away Leo, the son of the Emperor, and give herself to Rogero. And as quickly as they might they laid a snare and took her away from the court, and brought her to a stronghold lately given by Charles to Amon; and here they kept her prisoner with the intent to send her to the East, so that willing or unwilling she should wed Leo and put aside Rogero. The valorous Bradamant, who was as maidenly as knightly, never tried to escape, though the gates of the fortress were opened to her;

but her heart was fixed to suffer any durance or torture rather than give up Rogero. But Rinaldo, who saw that by the guile of Amon his sister had been taken out of his hand, and that he could no longer give her to Rogero as he had promised, was bitterly vexed, and in his angry words passed the bounds of filial honour. But little cared Amon for words, and was bent on having his will with his daughter.

When Rogero heard of these things he feared that he would lose his lady, and that she would be forced to wed Leo, if Leo were allowed to live ; and without saying a word to any one he determined that Leo should die, and that at the same time he would take from his father life and throne.

He put on the armour which first had been Hector's, and had been restored to Rogero by Orlando after the fight in Lipadusa, and he saddled his good horse Frontino ; but he changed his plume and shield and surcoat, and instead of a silver eagle he used for device a white unicorn. Of his squires he chose one he deemed most faithful, and he enjoined him in no place and to no man to say that he was Rogero. And riding beyond the Rhine and through Austria and Hungary, he came at last down the right bank of the Danube in sight of Belgrade.

Where the Save flows into the Danube and turns with it to the sea in fuller volume, Rogero saw a great people under the imperial flag, for Constantine had designed to win back from the Bulgarians the city they had captured from him. And the Emperor

was there in person, and with him was his son Leo. The Bulgarian army lay opposite, outstretched from the hill down to the river Save. And across this river the Greeks were trying to throw a bridge of boats, and the Bulgars were fighting against them when Rogero came in sight. The Greeks under their Emperor were four to one in number, and first of all they made a feint with their boats to cross the river to the city ; but meanwhile Leo had been sent by a wide circuit far to the west, and had thrown a bridge across the river, and with foot and horse not less than twenty thousand had passed along the river-side and attacked the Bulgarians in flank. And as soon as the Emperor saw his son's forces engaged, he joined boat to boat in real earnest, and with all his strength also passed over. The king of the Bulgarians, who commanded in person, a bold and prudent knight, tried by every means at every spot to withstand this fierce attack, but all in vain ; for Leo himself unhorsed him, and when he would not surrender he was smitten by a thousand blades. Up to this point the Bulgarians had kept a bold front, but when they saw their king fallen, and all around the growing tempest of war, they turned their backs and fled. Rogero, who had seen their discomfiture, and was filled with hatred of Constantine and Leo, on the instant determined to give aid to the Bulgarians. He spurred Frontino and got in front of the flying horsemen, who were already fleeing from the plain to the mountains, and many of them he made to stay their flight and turn against

the enemy. Then he put his lance in rest and led the charge on the Greeks. And in the forefront of the Greeks was a knight most richly armed and blazing in red and gold, and he drave his lance through his breast and a span beyond, breaking the armour like glass. Now the youth was a nephew to Constantine, son to his sister, and dear to him as his own son. Then Rogero drew his sword, the fateful Balisarda, and cutting through everything made bloody havoc of the Greeks. And as they saw the blows that none could withstand they lost heart, and the face of the battle on a sudden was changed, and the Greeks were in flight before the Bulgarians, with broken ranks and not a standard raised against the foe. From a hill near by Prince Leo saw his people put to flight, and amazed and sorrow-stricken he saw numbers falling before a single knight, so that by one man his whole army seemed destroyed. And yet though he mourned his own losses, he could not but praise the gallantry of the single knight. He saw well that the shining golden arms and their strange emblazoning betokened a foreign ally to his enemies, and so cruel were the blows he dealt, that to Leo he seemed to be an angel sent from heaven to avenge the untold sins of the Greeks against their God. And being himself a man of great heart and lofty soul, instead of hating the cause of all this ruin to his army, he loved so valorous a knight, and rather than that he should be slain he would have suffered a sixfold loss in men and put in peril his kingdom.

And as a little child when she has been beaten for a fault and put away by her mother in seeming anger, does not turn for comfort to her sister or her father but runs back to her mother with open arms, even so Leo, though Rogero had destroyed the first of his squadrons and put to flight the rest, could not hate him, because his valour drew him more to love than his offence drove him into anger. But no such return of love was made by Rogero, who tried on all sides to find the man he hated, and he called on him by name and bade others point him out, so eager was he in his hatred to kill him. But good fortune and the prudence of the Greek prevented their meeting, and Leo, to save his army from destruction, gave orders to retire on the bridge by which they had crossed, and at the same time sent a messenger to his father to cross the river by his own bridge whilst yet there was time. As it was, many of the Greeks were captured, and many were slain from the hill down to the river, and not one would have escaped but that they quickly got beyond the river; and in their haste many fell from the crowded boats and were drowned, and many fled far up the stream in hopes to find a ford. The battle for that day was now spent, and after the death of their king the Bulgarians would have been utterly destroyed but for the good knight of the white unicorn on the red shield, and they pressed around him with joyful acclamations. And some fell on their knees to him and some tried to kiss his feet and hands, and happy was the man who saw him and more fortunate was he who could

touch him, for they looked on him as a thing divine, and they prayed their saviour to be their captain and king.

But Rogero made reply that some day he might be their king or their captain as they wished, but for that day he would not take kingly sceptre or marshal's baton, because before Leo could pass the river he must pursue him and that he would not turn back till he had caught him and slain him; for he had journeyed a thousand miles and more for this and for no other purpose. And without an instant's pause he turned on the way by which they told him Leo had fled, and with such speed did he ride on Frontino that he left all others behind, even his faithful squire. But Leo had made good his flight and had passed the bridge, and broken and burned his boats, and when night fell Rogero lost his way and rode on through the night vainly searching for some friendly castle or village. At break of day he came to a city called Novengrado, and it seemed good to him to stay in this place for a day to rest his wearied horse. Now the lord of this city, by name Ungiardo, was an ally and friend of Constantine, and he had sent him levies of horse and foot. All unwitting Rogero came into this town and sought out the shelter of an inn. And to the same inn had come a fugitive from the battle, to whom fear had given wings and who was still shaking with fear. And as soon as he saw the shield and the unicorn he knew that this was the knight who had defeated the Greeks with so great slaughter, and he ran to

the castle and told the lord of the place this great news.

Ungiardo was greatly delighted, though he could not understand how the bird, without being driven, should so readily have fallen into the net. Mindful of the report that Rogero had by his own hand routed the Greek army, he waited until he was asleep and could be easily secured. He was made prisoner, and Ungiardo sent in haste a messenger to give the news to Constantine. The Emperor had withdrawn his forces from the banks of the Save to a city under the governance of the father of the youth who had been first killed by the knight of the unicorn. And here Constantine was fortifying the walls and strengthening the gates, for he was fearful that under this new leader the Bulgarians might again attack and rout the remnant of his forces. When he heard of the capture he knew not how to contain himself for joy, and he was as assured of victory as if in a duel the right hand of his enemy had been cut off. Not less reason for joy had Leo, for he thought to subdue Belgrade and all the territory of the Bulgarians, and then he designed to make of this new enemy a friend with magnificent gifts and enroll him in his service; and with such a champion on his side he would not envy Charlemagne his Orlando and Rinaldo.

Very different were the thoughts of Theodora, the mother of the dead boy, and she threw herself at the feet of her brother Constantine and with a flood of tears melted his heart. "I will not rise," she said, "until you promise to let me take vengeance on the slayer

of my son now you have him prisoner. He was your nephew, and think how much he loved you, and what he did for your sake ; and think how wrong it would be not to avenge his death. Not long shall my son be in the underworld without a fitting vengeance ; give the prisoner to me and let me ease my heart with his punishment." So well she mourned, so well she grieved, and so well she plied her words, and so obstinately did she refuse to rise from her knees, though thrice and four times the Emperor bade her rise, that at last he was forced to satisfy her, and he ordered the prisoner to be put in her hand. And in less than a day the knight of the unicorn was given to the cruel Theodora. To have him quartered alive and held up to the scorn of the people seemed to her a little thing in punishment, and she set her mind to think out some unheard-of torment. Meantime, she had him bound hand and foot and thrown into a dark dungeon where never a ray of light could enter. A little mouldy bread was given him, and for two days he was allowed no food at all ; and his jailer was a man as cruel as herself and ready to do her will.

Meanwhile, King Charles kept in mind his promise to Bradamant that he would give her to no man in marriage unless he should prove his strength and courage in combat with her ; and so he made proclamation through all his empire, and soon the challenge was bruited over the world. And the challenge was this : " Whosoever desires in marriage the daughter of Prince Amon must fight with her

from sunrise to sunset, and if he can so long endure this trial unconquered, without more words the lady shall be his ; and she will give the choice of arms to the challenger whosoever he might chance to be." And indeed to her the choice of arms mattered not, for on horse or foot, with lance or sword, she was unsurpassed. Her father could not contend with his king, and after much vain counsel he took his daughter back to court. And Beatrice, her mother, though much angered, dressed her in splendid attire.

But when Bradamant found that Rogero was no longer at the court, no longer did it seem to her the same court that once she thought so beautiful. As one who has seen a garden in April or May all decked with leaves and flowers, and comes back to it when the sun has journeyed southwards and the days are shortened, and he finds his garden drear and wild and darksome, so to the lady seemed the court when Rogero had gone away quite other than it had been.

So grieved Bradamant because her lover had been taken away she knew not whither ; but how much more would she have sorrowed had she known he was in prison condemned to a cruel death !

It came to the ear of Leo, the courteous son of the Emperor, how Theodora was ill-using her prisoner, and how she was preparing for him a death of unheard-of torture, and by the will of God it came into his heart how he might save such valour from perishing. The courteous Leo, who so loved this Rogero, though he knew not who he was and was only moved by his superhuman valour,

set himself to find some plot or plan by which he might save his hero's life unknown to the cruel Theodora. And at last he found out a way. He spoke in secret to the captain of the prison who himself kept the keys, and he told him how he would like to see the captive knight before he was maimed by his last torments. And at nightfall he took with him a faithful servant, strong and brave, and he made the captain of the prison open to them without letting any other know who they were. And the captain, unattended and in secret, took Leo and his companion to the tower beneath which lay the prisoner awaiting the last penalty.

As soon as they reached the tower and the captain of the prison had turned his back on Leo and his companion in order to open the door, without a moment's warning they threw a noose round his neck and strangled him. Then they opened the trap door that gave entrance to Rogero's dungeon, and Leo, torch in hand, let himself down by the rope ladder. He found Rogero lying on an iron grating close to the water, tied hand and foot. So noisome was the place that of itself it would have killed the prisoner in less than a month. Leo at once began to loosen the bonds, all the time speaking to Rogero words of comfort, "Your valour, Sir Knight, has made me your willing slave to all eternity; and I must even choose your good rather than mine own, and put your friendship before my father and all my kinsmen. Know, Sir Knight, that I am Leo, son of Constantine, and I have come here in person

to your rescue, at great peril to myself, for my father would never forgive me for the hatred he bears to you for the slaughter of his army at Belgrade." And Rogero made answer, "Infinite thanks I owe you; and this life of mine that you now give to me shall be yours to do as you will with, and gladly will I lay it down for your sake." They drew Rogero up from the dungeon, and in his place left the dead body of the castellan, and they escaped unobserved of any. And Leo took Rogero to his own house and there concealed him for six days until he got back his strength, and in the meanwhile Leo recovered his arms and horse from the hand of Ungiardo. When in the morning the prison was found open and Rogero fled and the captain of the prison dead in his place, all sorts of rumours spread as to the rescue, but no suspicion ever came near to Leo, for all supposed he was embittered against his captive. And as Rogero lay in secret under the careful watch of Leo, his soul was filled with amazement at the sudden change of fortune. He had come a thousand miles to kill Leo, and on a sudden his hatred had given way to love; day and night he thought of nothing else but how he might make a fitting return for courtesy so magnificent. He longed for some occasion to show to Leo courtesy as great or even greater.

And the occasion was soon to be found, and Rogero to prove the victor in courtesy as in arms.

# XIII

# THE MARRIAGE OF BRADAMANT

## XIII

## THE MARRIAGE OF BRADAMANT

WHILST Rogero was still lying hid in the house of Leo there came to the city news of the proclamation by the king of France that whosoever would have Bradamant to wife must withstand her attack, sword in hand, from sunrise to sunset.

Now Leo, though a valiant knight, knew well his own powers, and he knew that such a trial he could not survive. As often happened in the days of chivalry, Leo had given his love to his ideal without even seeing her. He had heard of the prowess and of the gentleness of the maiden knight, and of her beauty and fearless courage, and he had worshipped her from afar like a goddess. He longed to make her Empress of the East, and to give his life in her service; but the more he honoured her the more he knew he could not gain her hand in battle. And in this strait the guileful wisdom of his Greek blood came to his aid. He bethought him of the rescued knight whose name he did not know—for now less than ever would Rogero have his name divulged. To Leo it seemed that no living knight, not even

Bradamant herself, could stand against him in single combat. And he designed to make Rogero fight in his name for the hand of Bradamant. No disguise, he thought, could be more complete than full armour with device on shield and surcoat changed, and none would know that another was playing his part.

It only remained to induce the rescued knight of the unicorn to undertake the task. But little need was there of the eloquence of the Greek, for more than by any words Rogero was moved by his own sense of obligation. And though to him it seemed incredible that he should fight with Bradamant to win her hand for another, yet such was his gratitude to Leo, and so was he overpowered by his courtesy, that with a face of joyous alacrity he consented at once. And although as soon as his word was given he was tormented night and day by grief, and knew that he had promised his own death, he never for a moment repented of the promise or flinched from the ordeal: for Leo he would die a thousand deaths. Of his own death he had no doubt at all; if he did not die of very grief, with his own hand he would loosen the soul from its earthly bonds. Die he must; the only question was the way of his death. Sometimes he thought to make of set purpose a weak defence, and lay open his heart to her sword; and to die by her hand would be a blessed death; but if he failed, then he would not fulfil his debt to Leo; and to Leo he had promised to fight for him and gain for him his chosen consort; he had promised to fight in very

deed and not in counterfeit. And in the conflict of thoughts and fears one thing only was always left: whatever betide he must keep his faith with Leo.

With a numerous company of knights and nobles they set out for Paris, and Rogero was disguised in Greek dress, so that no one knew that he was the knight of the unicorn. On their arrival Leo did not enter the city but pitched his tents in the open. The same day he sent an embassy to King Charles, and the king in person came to visit him and do him honour. Thereupon Leo told him the reason of his coming, and prayed the king to hasten the event: for he had come to make Bradamant his wife or meet his death at her hand in battle. Joyfully King Charles gave his consent. The next day was fixed for the combat, and all the night the king's men laboured to get ready the lists beneath the walls of Paris.

The night before the combat was to Rogero like the last night of the prisoner condemned to death. In order to make his disguise more certain he had chosen to fight with the sword only; for he feared that with lance and horse Bradamant would discover that he was not Leo. And when he chose the sword for weapon he did not mean to fight with the fateful Balisarda, which Orlando had restored to him after Lipadusa, for well he knew that no armour could withstand its keenness. And even the common sword that he did choose he took pains to blunt with a hammer, lest in the fight he should by accident wound his lady, for it was his intent to defend him-

self only, and to win the battle for Leo by simple endurance until sunset. To make his disguise more certain Rogero put on the surcoat of Leo over the armour of Hector, and he took Leo's red shield with the two-headed golden eagle of the Empire of the East. The two were of the same stature, and Rogero put on his armour in Leo's tent. And when he came forth, all men thought he was Leo, who, in truth, lay hidden, whilst Rogero was playing his part.

Far different were the designs of Bradamant. She herself, with her own hands, sharpened her sword, and all the time she prayed that it might pierce the armour with every blow, and at last reach the heart of the hated Leo. And she longed for the combat to begin, and as eagerly as the spirited horse at the starting-post she quivered with panting strength. And as soon as the signal was given she drew her blade and rushed on Rogero like a thunderbolt. But never did an ancient oak or strong-built tower yield less to the blast of the north wind ; never did a rock stand more unmoved in the beating of the waves of an angry sea than Rogero, safe under the arms of Hector, stood unmoved in the tempest of blows that Bradamant rained upon him on every side. And all the time Rogero kept only on the defensive, or if he struck a blow it fell as harmless as he meant. And as the day drew near its close the eagerness of Bradamant to bring the fight to a finish increased, and the words of the proclamation kept hammering in her ears that if she could not conquer the challenger in one day she must surrender herself. And with the

sun near its setting she put forth her last effort, but put it forth in vain.

By the irony of fate she had her wish : Rogero was fighting with her according to her design ; Rogero, the only man to whom she would yield ; but by the irony of fate she knew it not, and even with the last blow she hoped to kill the man she loved. But the relentless sun sank under the waves, and perforce Bradamant must cease the attack. Well pleased was King Charles, and well pleased were the nobles, who thought that in Leo their maiden knight had found a fitting consort ; and all of them believed it was Leo who so displayed the courtesies of defence. And Charles pronounced judgment, with the breaking up of the fight at sunset, that Bradamant should be given to Leo as wife without further delay.

Rogero, without a word, and with visor down and in full armour, went back to the shelter of the tents of Leo. And when Leo saw him return in safety, and knew that he had won for him the prize, he embraced him like a brother, and he himself unlaced his helmet. In his joy he promised Rogero any gift he might demand : no recompense seemed enough, not even if he gave him his imperial crown. But Rogero, as if wearied, answered never a word, and laid aside the borrowed surcoat and shield of Leo and took again his own unicorn. And pleading weariness, he got at last to his own tent. And in the dead of night he rose up and saddled his Frontino, and, unobserved of any, left Leo's camp. He threw the reins on the neck of his horse and left him

to take him whithersoever he would. His fixed thought was to be lost in the depths of the forest and to lie down to die. In the blackness of his remembrance there was not one ray of light or comfort. He wished he had been left to die in Theodora's prison; then at least Bradamant would have mourned his death, and she would have kept her freedom. And now he must die: there was no other way; and yet his lady must suffer. And sometime she must know that he had sacrificed her to Leo, and she would think he had cared little for her love and she would hate his memory.

At break of day he found himself deep in the forest, and he dismounted and loosed Frontino, and let him go where he would. And he bade farewell to his noble horse, and bitterly he remembered how Bradamant had once kept him under her charge in the days before their betrothal. And with this last farewell to Frontino he closed his eyes and waited for death.

Not less afflicted was Bradamant, for she could not now plead even for delay in her marriage with Leo. And to her also the only release seemed to be in death, for rather would she be dead than take any other than Rogero. And all alone in the darkness of her sorrow she made words for her thoughts: "Alas, my love, on what long journey can you have gone that you alone never heard of this challenge? If you had heard, surely you would have been the first to accept; surely you must have known the real meaning. I meant to hold the world at bay for your sake.

Perhaps this Leo has laid for you some snare, and has kept you a prisoner so that he might make the trial before you. In my pride I never dreamed that any knight but you could withstand my attack. I thought to myself to beat away all others, and to yield to you at the first blow. But God has punished me for my presumption; he has made me yield to a man who never before in his life wrought a deed worthy of fame." And then her thought took another course, and she said to herself that she would not give herself to Leo: she would break her word and her oath; and if to the world she seemed inconstant, in her heart she was more constant than the hardest rock—constant, as she had promised Rogero, to her only love; and for his sake she would break any other promise, and for his sake be thought by the world as fickle as a leaf in the wind. So she mourned all the night, and all unknown to her a way of escape was being prepared.

In the early morning Marfisa appeared before King Charles and fiercely declared that she would not suffer this great wrong to be done to her brother; that Bradamant had been betrothed to Rogero, and that she was in very deed his wife before God. And Marfisa declared that in her presence the two had said the words and given the pledges that make man and wife, and that neither one nor the other was free or could be free. Much perturbed was Charlemagne, and he sent at once for Bradamant, and in the presence of Amon her father told her all that Marfisa had said. And Bradamant

answered not a word, but held down her head as if in assent to the truth of Marfisa's words. Rinaldo and Orlando were delighted with this turn of fortune, for in their love of Rogero they had almost decided to take Bradamant from her father by force to prevent the marriage with Leo. And now they could plead that the promise and the pledges were as solemn as marriage, and that the betrothal could not be broken.

Prince Amon for his part declared that the story of a secret betrothal was a plot in his despite. Even supposing that there had been such pledges, still there was a fatal bar to their fulfilment. The promise must have been given before Rogero had been baptized Christian, and therefore, the one being Pagan and the other Christian, no betrothal of marriage could hold good. And in any case it was now too late to bring forward such an excuse : for Leo had been put to the peril of a combat, and the objection, if it were valid, should have been made before the proclamation of the challenge.

In his perplexity Charlemagne deferred the espousal with Leo, and prepared to lay the case before his great council, and all France was aflame with the dispute, some taking the side of Leo on the ground of the king's proclamation, but the greater part being in favour of Rogero, for the honour of the man and the love of his lady. And Marfisa again intervened. "No man," she said, "can take Bradamant to wife so long as Rogero lives ; if then Leo will have her let him fight with Rogero a duel to the death." And

Charles himself carried this challenge to Leo. Leo at once gave a ready assent to this new challenge ; for he thought again to let the knight of the unicorn play his part, and kill Rogero for him as he had won Bradamant. He did not know that the knight of the unicorn had buried himself in the depths of the forest, any more than he knew that in truth he was Rogero. But when he found that the knight did not return he began to fear that he must himself essay the battle with Rogero, and he had little hope of victory. Therefore he sent far and wide to find the knight of the unicorn, and himself took part in the search.

At last by the aid of the good genius [1] of Rogero, who more than once had saved him from himself and from others, Leo found his long-sought knight, but found him at the point of death in the forest. He had lain down in full armour with helmet on his head and sword at his side, and his head pillowed on his shield. And in his agony of regret and despair he did not hear the approach of Leo and Melissa, and quietly they came nearer, and when Leo saw his distress he took him in his arms as a brother, and he asked him, with the gentlest words that he could find, to let him know the reason of his grief. And he implored him by the love he bore him to let him share his distress or give him aid ; and all he had in the world he offered to his friend. And in the end Rogero could no longer refuse to yield to so great

[1] Melissa, who rescued Rogero from the power of Alcina, as is told in another story.

affection, and in a strained voice he began: "My lord, when you shall hear who and what I am you will no more try to save me from death—you will rather rejoice in it. Know, then, that I am that Rogero whom you have so much cause to hate. I am that Rogero who not so long ago left this court of France in search of you to kill you. For by your death alone it seemed to me I could save Bradamant from her father's plan of marriage with you. But since man proposes and God disposes, I fell into that need where your courtesy made me altogether change my wish, and not only did my hatred vanish, but I desired in every way I might to do you honour. You asked me, not knowing I was Rogero, to win for you the lady, and rather I had wished you to ask for the heart from my body. But you know how I answered to your desire, with no thought of myself. Bradamant is yours; take her to yourself in peace. Better seems to me your good than mine own. But let it content you when I lose her, as lose her I must, that at the same time I quit this life. But I must tell you that you cannot wed Bradamant whilst I am still alive, for between us there was a solemn betrothal, and in the eyes of God we are man and wife."

Thunderstruck was Leo, and for a time in his amazement he stood like a statue, without a movement of lip or eye,—an image of wonder. And when he knew indeed that it was Rogero, not a whit was his goodwill towards him abated, but so much the deeper was his sympathy. And to show that

he was in worth the son of an Emperor he vowed that if in all else he must yield to Rogero he would not be unequal to him in courtesy. And he said: "If on that day, my Rogero, when by your stupendous valour my army was destroyed I had known, as I know now, that you were Rogero, your courage would have taken hold on me just as much as it did when I did not know you; and it would have driven out from my heart the hatred I bore you as my rival. I will not deny that before I knew that you were Rogero I hated your name, but banish the thought that this old hatred will ever return. And if when I drew you up from the dungeon I had known the truth, I would have done to you the same as I will do now. And if at that time when I was not in your debt I would have willingly given up Bradamant, now that you have ventured your life for me, and for my sake given up your dearest hopes, I should be the most ungrateful of men if I did not now give up the claim. My claim is as nothing to yours, and though I loved her as the flower of chivalry, I loved her not in your manner, so that without her I could not live and if she were given to another I must die. Far be it from me to wish your betrothal should be broken by your death, so that she might be free to become my queen. Not only would I lose her, but I would lose all I have in the world and life itself rather than you should suffer such pain. I only complain of your distrust of me; you might have known you could do with me as you chose, and yet you chose to

die of grief rather than confide in me." Thus he spake, and every word that Rogero offered in reply he gently put aside, and at last Rogero said: "I surrender; I take my life again from you, but how shall I ever redeem this second debt?"

And Melissa had brought with her food and wine, and she ministered to Rogero, who was near to death through fasting and distress. And when Frontino heard the other horses he came back to his master; but in his weakness Rogero, even with the aid of Leo, could hardly mount. And after riding half a league or thereby, they came to a great abbey, and there they rested, until after three days the knight of the unicorn got back his strength.

When they came to the royal capital they heard that the night before an embassy had arrived from Bulgaria. And they were told that that nation had elected Rogero their king, and the ambassadors had hoped to find him in France with Charlemagne, and had come to offer him the crown and the lordship over their territory. The old squire of Rogero, who had come with them, had told them after the great battle (in spite of his master's command) the name of the knight of the unicorn, and passing by their own royal lineage they had chosen Rogero for their king. And they had heard of his capture by Ungiardo, and his torture by Theodora, and how he had escaped from his prison, but they knew no more, and had come in search of him to France, in the hope that he had returned to the Court of Charlemagne.

Rogero had entered Paris secretly and without

being recognised by any. The next morning Leo bade Rogero put on again the same surcoat with the two-headed golden eagle, and take the same shield, pierced and cut as they were in the fight with Bradamant, so that he might appear just as when he left the lists after his victory. And Leo chose for himself his richest jewels and his most magnificent royal robes, and unarmed and surrounded by a goodly company of his nobles, he took Rogero to present him to King Charles, and on their entrance he bowed before Charles, who had risen to do him honour. Then taking Rogero by the hand, he said, whilst all eyes were fixed upon them: "This is the knight who, disguised in these arms, made good his defence against the attack of Bradamant from sunrise to sunset; and since she failed to kill him or take him prisoner or drive him from the field, most noble king, by your own proclamation he has won Bradamant for wife. And he has now come hither to claim that she be given to him. And apart from the bond, there is none other so worthy of her either in valour or in the love that he bears to her; and should any dare to oppose his claim he is here to defend his right to the death." Charlemagne and the rest of his Court were struck with amazement, for they had supposed it was Leo himself who had gained the fight, and they wondered greatly who the unknown might be. But Marfisa heard this story of Leo with scornful impatience, and she hardly waited for him to finish his words when she broke in: "As Rogero is not here to take up this challenge for his betrothed I will take

it up—I, his sister. And I defy any one soever to say he has any claim on Bradamant, or dare put himself in merit before Rogero." And with such rage and sudden fierceness did she speak that many believed she would forthwith begin the attack on the disguised knight, even in the royal presence. But it seemed to Leo that he had carried his play far enough, and lifting up the helmet from Rogero's head he turned to Marfisa and said, "Here he is, ready to fight for himself." And quick as thought Marfisa threw her arms round Rogero's neck as if she would never leave him. And Rinaldo and Orlando and Charles himself pressed about him with joyful greetings, and the old king Sobrino and Dudon and Oliver and the rest of the paladins and all the Court crowded round him with acclamations.

And when the turmoil of joyousness was quieted a little, Leo told all the story of Rogero's defeat of the Greeks, and of his captivity and of his release, and how, to pay his debt in courtesy, he had of his own accord fought with Bradamant in Leo's name. And never in this world, said Leo, had courtesy been carried to so great a height.

And he told how Rogero thought to end his misery with his life, and how they had found him at the point of death, and so well did he tell the tale that every eye was moistened in sympathy. Then he turned upon Prince Amon and not only made him give up his opposition to Rogero, but made him go to him and ask his pardon and beg him to take his daughter Bradamant in marriage.

ROGERO REVEALED TO MARFISA IN THE COURT OF CHARLEMAGNE.

*To face page* 288.

Quickly there ran one and another to tell the news to Bradamant, and they found her weeping in the secrecy of her chamber, and with gladness one upon the other told her the joyous tidings. And the sudden change from the depths of grief to incredible delight almost stopped the beating of her heart. Scarcely could she stand on her feet, and despite of her courage and strength, known over all the world, she all but died for joy.

So great was the goodwill of all the Court and all the city to this noble union, that even Gano and the rest of the house of Maganza, who were to be the great betrayers, put on the semblance of joyousness and covered up their secret hatred with smiles. Besides their old enmities, they had lost in these latter days men of their house at the hands of Bradamant and Rogero, and they were enraged to see the house of Montalbano so honoured by the King. But as cunning as foxes they held their peace and waited.[1]

The ambassadors from Bulgaria, who had come to Charles in the hope of finding their champion of the unicorn, were overjoyed at the fulfilment of their hopes, and with reverence bowed before Rogero and begged him to return with them to Bulgaria. And they told him that in Adrianople the royal crown and sceptre awaited his coming; and they said they needed his help a second time, for they had heard that Constantine was himself preparing to attack them with a great host, and if he would come to their aid

[1] Gano was not only the arch-traitor at Roncesvalles, but according to the design of Boiardo's poem was to betray Rogero to his death.

they would make him Emperor of Constantinople. Rogero made acceptance of the offer of the crown and promised to go back to Bulgaria after the third month, and Leo assured him on his royal faith that so long as he was king of Bulgaria he need not fear that peace with the Greeks would be broken ; and that he need make no haste to leave France, for he would persuade his father the Emperor to give up all the lands and castles in dispute in honour of his friend. This offer of a kingdom to Rogero took away the last of the hindrances to his marriage, for Beatrice, the mother of Bradamant, who had thought the valour and noble descent of Rogero of little worth, was highly pleased to have for her son-in-law a king.

Under the orders of Charlemagne himself the most splendid festivals were designed for the celebration of the marriage in Paris. He honoured Bradamant as if she had been his own daughter, and he was ready to spend the half of his royal treasures. He held open court, and from far and near all sorts of people, rich and poor, knights and jugglers, Greeks and barbarians and Latins, came in such numbers that the city could not contain them, and they were forced to pitch their tents beyond the walls.

And the royal city itself was bedecked with a blaze of flowers and the greenery of intertwining branches, and with cloth of gold and silk and the richest adornments, and never in this world was a city seen so gay.

On the last day of the festivities a great banquet

was held on the open plain before Paris, where a few days before had been the fierce combat. On the right hand of Charlemagne sat Bradamant, and on his left Rogero. Hardly had the feast begun when there was seen spurring in haste across the plain towards the banqueting tables a knight in full armour. Huge of person was he, and of formidable aspect, and horse and man were all covered with black. The rider was Rodomont, king of Algiers. Through the scorn put upon him by Bradamant when she unhorsed him at his bridge he had made a vow not to wear armour, nor gird on sword, nor mount a horse, for a year and a month and a day, and for that time to live like a hermit in his cell. Such was the custom in those days of valiant knights for penance for their failure. And although during this long time he had heard of the great battle between Charlemagne and his sovereign king Agramant, he paid no heed, as if the matter concerned him not at all. But as soon as the year had passed and the month and the last long day, with new arms and horse and sword and lance he rode in fury to the Court of King Charles.

Without dismounting, without bending his head, or making one sign of salutation, he showed by his bearing how much he held in scorn the King and all his Court. Astonished were all the guests at such insolence, and they stopped their feasting and stopped their pleasant converse to hear what the insolent knight would say.

As soon as he had come in front of Charles and Rogero, with a loud voice, and full of pride, he cried

out: "I am Rodomont, king of Sarza, and I defy you, Rogero, to mortal combat. And before sunset I will prove on your body that you have been unfaithful to Agramant your lord, and that you deserve no honour from these knights because you are a traitor. And though your felony is known to all men, and you cannot deny that you have become a Christian, still, to make it doubly sure that you are a traitor, I am come to prove it on this field. And if any one here should offer to fight on your behalf, him also will I fight, and half a score besides. Against you all I will maintain what I have said."

At these words Rogero sprang up, and having asked leave of Charles, made reply that Rodomont lied, and who else soever called him traitor; that he had so borne himself with his king as to be blameless; that he had always done his duty by his sovereign; and that with his own hand and with aid from no other he would defend his cause, and that he would show Rodomont he should find his single arm more than enough.

But all the paladins one with another offered to fight in his cause: Rinaldo and Orlando, Oliver and Dudon, and the twin brothers Griphon and Aquilant; and most insistent of all was Marfisa. And they said to him that being newly wed he ought not so to trouble his own marriage feast. But Rogero answered, "Be still; to me such an excuse is foolishness." And he made them bring the arms that he had won of the Tartar king, which had first been worn by Hector, and his good horse Frontino.

And Orlando fastened on his spurs, and Charles himself girded on his sword, and Bradamant and Marfisa laced his armour. Astolpho held the horse and the son of Ogier the stirrup, and all about him were the rest of the famous paladins. And when he was armed and mounted they hastened to the lists that had been set up for friendly jousting in the festival. And the noble ladies and maidens with pale faces, as fearful as doves driven from a field of corn by a furious storm of hail and thunder, looked with dread on this sudden peril for Rogero, for they thought he could not withstand the giant Saracen. And so it seemed to all the common people, and even to the greater part of the knights and nobles. For they had in remembrance how Rodomont had raged through Paris, and, all unaided, had devastated half the city with sword and flame; and at that day, and for many a day after, there remained the wreckage of his ruinous onslaught, and greater loss the city never suffered. More than any other, in spite of her courage, trembled the heart of Bradamant; not that she believed the Saracen was in strength or courage better than Rogero, nor that Rodomont had the right on his side, which often gives honour where it is due, even to the weaker; for none of these things was she afraid—she feared for him only because fear is part of love.

How gladly would she herself have undertaken the fight, even if for certain it meant her death; how gladly would she have died more than once, if such a thing could be, to save her lover from the

chance of death. But no reason could she offer to make Rogero entrust to her the battle, and with sorrowful face and trembling heart she watched the struggle.

With lowered lance the knights met in full career, and on the shock the lances were shivered to splinters. The Pagan's lance, which struck the middle of the shield, had no effect on the perfect steel that Vulcan had tempered for Hector. But the lance of Rogero passed right through the shield of his enemy, and had the lance held firm it would have pierced the hauberk, even had it been of adamant, with such fury was it driven, and in one charge the battle would have ended. But the lance was broken, and with the shock both horses were thrown back on their haunches. With rein and spur both knights recovered, and in place of the lance took to the sword. And managing their horses with the highest skill each tried to find some weak spot in the armour of his opponent. No longer had Rodomont the dragon skin that was fashioned by Nimrod, which no steel could pierce ; no longer had he the heavy sword or the proved helmet of his ancestor ; for when he had been overthrown by Bradamant with the golden lance at the bridge he had left all his arms hanging on Isabella's tomb. The armour he now wore was armour of proof but not perfect as was the old, but not even the old armour that had come to him from Nimrod could have withstood the fateful Balisarda, which could cut through any steel and any magical charm. Rogero, with this mighty weapon, more than

once pierced the armour of Rodomont. When the Pagan saw the blood reddening his armour from many wounds, the tempest of his wrath rose to greater fury, and he threw away his useless shield, and with both hands and all his might struck the helmet of Rogero. As when by the engine placed between two ships a heavy weight is raised up by many men working at pulleys and is suddenly let fall on a great beam with sharpened end to drive it into the bed of a river, so heavy and so sudden was the blow from the two-handed sword of Rodomont that fell on the helmet of Rogero. The helmet, made by Vulcan, alone saved man and horse from being cut in two, and Rogero, stunned with the blow, swayed in the saddle. Quick as thought, before he could recover, the Saracen had given him a second blow, and hoping to make an end, for the third time he struck him with all his might. But this last time the tempered steel of the sword could no longer stand the strain, and it broke in pieces in the hand of the Saracen and left him disarmed. Nothing daunted, Rodomont threw himself on Rogero, who was all but senseless, swaying on his horse. Rudely the Saracen wakened him from his swooning, for with his mighty arm he caught him round the neck and by main force dragged him from the saddle and threw him to earth. But the fall all at once gave back to Rogero his senses, and even as he touched the ground he was filled with anger and shame when he saw the look on Bradamant's face, who in fear for her lover had herself almost fallen. With blood burning to avenge

his shame, Rogero sprang to his feet and grasped his sword and faced the Saracen. Rodomont tried to ride him down, but lightly Rogero stepped aside and caught the horse by the bridle with the left hand and dragged him round. At the same time, with his sword in the right hand, he wounded his enemy in the side and in the thigh. Rodomont, who still held in his hand the hilt of the broken sword, threatened again to stun him even with this fragment of his weapon, but Rogero seized him by the arm with both hands and dragged the Saracen from the saddle. Such was the strength and the dexterity of Rodomont that as he fell he kept his feet, and tried to grapple with his enemy. But Rogero kept him at bay with his sword, for he feared to be overpowered by the huge body of the Pagan, and he saw the blood streaming from thigh and side, and he knew that he must gain the victory if he waited. But Rodomont also knew his own peril in delay, and with all his force he hurled the fragment of his broken sword at Rogero. It struck him on the side of the helmet and glanced off neck and shoulder, and so heavy was the blow that Rogero could hardly keep his feet. Again the Pagan tried to close, but his wounded thigh hindered him, and he fell on one knee. Rogero, though nearly stunned, struck wildly at Rodomont, and at last made him rest one hand as well as the knee on the earth. But the Saracen again recovered and got to his feet and seized Rogero in his arms, and in a moment they were locked together. Rodomont was feeling the loss of blood from his

open wounds, and Rogero, who was getting back his strength, knew his advantage, and knew how to keep it. Where he saw the Saracen was bleeding most, there he pressed him most with arm and breast and rapid change of foot. Rodomont in a fury of rage caught Rogero by the neck and shoulder, and now dragging him forward and now thrusting him back, and now lifting him from the ground, he turned and twisted and tried to throw him to the earth. But Rogero put forth all his skill, and quickly changed his grip, so that at last he seized Rodomont round the middle, and at the same time with all his force pressing on his breast and on his wounded side, and crooking his right leg in the other's knee, he threw him so that head and back struck the ground. And with the fall the wounds of Rodomont sent out a fresh stream of blood that reddened all the earth. Then Rogero made haste so to use his good fortune that his foe should rise no more. With one hand he drew his dagger and raised it above the eyes of Rodomont, and with the other he seized him by the throat, whilst he pressed his knees into his stomach and wounded side. And Rodomont lay as helpless and crushed as the miner who in his greed for gold has burrowed so that the earth has fallen on him. And Rogero, pressing the point of his dagger to the bars of his visor, summoned him to surrender and promised him his life. But the other, who feared far less to die than to show by the least act a sign of cowardice, still twisted and struggled and answered not a word. If he was

conquered in strength he was not conquered in rage ; and as a great mastiff, with the fangs of a stronger hound in his throat, with burning eyes and foaming mouth still struggles on in vain, so did the Saracen still struggle with his conqueror. At last Rodomont in his twisting got free his right arm and found his dagger and tried to thrust it into the loins of Rogero. But the young hero saw his danger if he spared any longer the life of the Saracen. And lifting his hand as high as he could, twice and three times he buried his dagger in the head of Rodomont. And the wrathful soul that in this world had been so proud and insolent fled from the cold body and went blaspheming down to hell.

THE END

*Printed by* R. & R. Clark, Limited, *Edinburgh.*

# A SELECTION OF NEW BOOKS

SONGS FROM BOOKS. By RUDYARD KIPLING. Uniform with Poetical Works. Crown 8vo. 6s. Pocket Edition. Fcap. 8vo. Cloth, 4s. 6d. net. Limp Leather, 5s. net. *Edition de Luxe* (limited to 1000 copies). 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.

JUST SO STORIES. By RUDYARD KIPLING. With Illustrations by the Author, and 12 additional Illustrations in Colour by JOSEPH M. GLEESON. 4to. 6s. net.

THE FAIRY BOOK. The best popular Fairy Stories, selected and rendered anew by Mrs. CRAIK. With 32 Illustrations in Colour by WARWICK GOBLE. Crown 4to. 15s. net.

THE WORKS OF TENNYSON. With Notes by the Author. Edited with Memoir by HALLAM, LORD TENNYSON. With Portrait. Extra Crown 8vo. 10s. 6d. net.

THE GARDENER. POEMS. By RABINDRANATH TAGORE, Author of *Gitanjali*. Translated by the Author from the Original Bengali. Crown 8vo. 4s. 6d. net.

THE CRESCENT MOON. CHILD-POEMS. By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. Translated by the Author from the Original Bengali. With 8 Illustrations in Colour. Pott 4to. 4s. 6d. net.

THOMAS HARDY'S WESSEX. By HERMANN LEA. Fully Illustrated from Photographs by the Author. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.

# A SELECTION OF NEW BOOKS

## MY LIFE AMONG THE ESKIMOS.

By VILHJÁLMUR STEFÁNSSON. With Illustrations. 8vo.

## TRAVELS IN TURKEY.

By Sir MARK SYKES, Bart., M.P. With Illustrations and Maps. 8vo.

## IMPRESSIONS OF CANADA.

By FLORENCE PARBURY. With 16 Coloured Plates and 40 Pages of Illustrations. 8vo.

## WITH THE RUSSIAN PILGRIMS TO JERUSALEM.

By STEPHEN GRAHAM. With 38 Illustrations from Photographs by the Author, and a Route Map. 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.

## HUNTING THE ELEPHANT IN AFRICA.

By Captain C. H. STIGAND. With an Introduction by THEODORE ROOSEVELT. Illustrated. 8vo.

## HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN THE BORDER.

By ANDREW LANG and JOHN LANG. With Illustrations by HUGH THOMSON. Extra Crown 8vo. Gilt top. 5s. net. [*Highways and Byways Series*

## A LEISURELY TOUR IN ENGLAND.

By J. J. HISSEY. With 32 Illustrations from Photographs taken by the Author. 8vo. 10s. net.