The Faerie Queene

by Edmund Spenser

Free public domain classic — Noveliopdf

Book I

The Legend of the Knight of the Red Cross, or of Holiness

Lo! I, the man whose Muse whylome did maske, As time her taught, in lowly Shephards weeds, Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske, For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds, And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds; Whose praises having slept in silence long, Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds To blazon broade emongst her learned throng: Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moralize my song.

Helpe then, O holy Virgin! chiefe of nyne, Thy weaker Novice to performe thy will; Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still, Of Faerie knights, and fayrest Tanaquill, Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill, That I must rue his undeserved wrong: O, helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong!

And thou, most dreaded impe of highest Jove, Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart At that good knight so cunningly didst rove, That glorious fire it kindled in his hart; Lay now thy deadly Heben bowe apart, And with thy mother mylde come to myne ayde; Come, both; and with you bring triumphant Mart, In loves and gentle jollities arraid, After his murdrous spoyles and bloudie rage allayd.

And with them eke, O Goddesse heavenly bright! Mirrour of grace and Majestie divine, Great Ladie of the greatest Isle, whose light Like Phœbus lampe throughout the world doth shine, Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne, And raise my thoughtes, too humble and too vile, To thinke of that true glorious type of thine, The

argument of mine afflicted stile: The which to heare vouchsafe, O dearest dread, awhile!

Canto I

The Patron of true Holinesse Foule Errour doth defeate; Hypocrisie, him to entrappe, Doth to his home entreate.

A gentle knight was pricking on the plaine, Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde, Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine. The cruell markes of many a bloodie fielde; Yet armes till that time did he never wield. His angry steede did chide his foming bitt, As much disdayning to the curbe to yield. Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt, As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

And on his brest a bloodie Crosse he bore, The deare remembrance of his dying Lord, For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore, And dead, as living, ever him ador'd: Upon his shield the like was also scor'd, For soveraine hope which in his helpe he had. Right faithfull true he was in deede and word; But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad; Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

Upon a great adventure he was bond, That greatest Gloriana to him gave, (That greatest Glorious Queene of Faery lond) To winne him worshippe, and her grace to have, Which of all earthly thinges he most did crave: And ever as he rode his hart did earne To prove his puissance in battell brave Upon his foe, and his new force to learne Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

A lovely Lady rode him faire beside, Upon a lowly Asse more white than snow, Yet she much whiter; but the same did hide Under a vele, that wimpled was full low; And over all a blacke stole she did throw: As one that inly mournd, so was she sad, And heavie sate upon her palfry slow; Seemed in heart some hidden care she had, And by her, in her line, a milkewhite lambe she lad.

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe, She was in life, and every vertuous lore;

And by descent from Royall lynage came Of ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore Their scepters stretcht from East to Westerne shore, And all the world in their subjection held; Till that infernall feend with foule uprore Forwasted all their land, and them expeld; Whom to avenge she had this Knight from far compeld.

Behind her farre away a Dwarfe did lag, That lasie seemd, in being ever last, Or wearied with bearing of her bag Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past, The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast, And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine Did poure into his Lemans lap so fast, That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain; And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were fain.

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand, A shadie grove not farr away they spide, That promist ayde the tempest to withstand; Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride, Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide, Not perceable with power of any starr: And all within were pathes and alleies wide, With footing worne, and leading inward farr. Faire harbour that them seems; so in they entred ar.

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led, Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony, Which, therein shrouded from the tempest dred, Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky. Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy, The sayling Pine; the Cedar proud and tall; The vine-propp Elme; the Poplar never dry; The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all; The Alpine good for staves; the Cypresse funerall;

The Laurell, mede of mightie Conquerours And Poets sage; the Firre that weepeth still; The Willow, worne of forlorne Paramours; The Eugh, obedient to the benders will; The Birch for shaftes; the Sallow for the mill; The Mirrhe sweete-bleeding in the bitter wound; The warlike Beech; the Ash for nothing ill; The fruitful Olive; and the Platane round; The carver Holme; the Maple seeldom inward sound.

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way, Until the blustring storme is overblowne; When, weening to returne whence they did stray, They cannot finde

that path, which first was showne, But wander too and fro in waies unknowne, Furthest from end then, when they neerest weene, That makes them doubt their wits be not their owne: So many pathes, so many turnings seene, That which of them to take in diverse doubt they been.

At last resolving forward still to fare, Till that some end they finde, or in or out, That path they take that beaten seemd most bare, And like to lead the labyrinth about; Which when by tract they hunted had throughout, At length it brought them to a hollowe cave Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave, And to the Dwarfe awhile his needlesse spere he gave.

“Be well aware,” quoth then that Ladie milde, “Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke: The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde, Breedes dreadful doubts. Oft fire is without smoke, And perill without show: therefore your stroke, Sir Knight, withhold, till further tryall made.” “Ah Ladie,” (sayd he) “shame were to revoke The forward footing for an hidden shade: Vertue gives herself light through darknesse for to wade.”

“Yea but” (quoth she) “the perill of this place I better wot than you: though nowe too late To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace, Yet wisedome warnes, whilest foot is in the gate, To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate. This is the wandring wood, this Errours den, A monster vile, whom God and man does hate: Therefore I read beware.” “Fly, Fly!” (quoth then The fearefull Dwarfe) “this is no place for living men.”

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment, The youthfull Knight could not for ought be staide; But forth unto the darksom hole he went, And looked in: his glistring armor made A little glooming light, much like a shade; By which he saw the ugly monster plaine, Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide, But th’other halfe did womans shape retaine, Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

And, as she lay upon the durtie ground, Her huge long taile her den all overspred,

Yet was in knots and many boughtes upwound, Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed, Sucking upon her poisnous dugs; each one Of sundrie shape, yet all ill-favored: Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone, Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all were gone.

Their dam upstart out of her den affraide, And rushed forth, hurling her hideous taile About her cursed head; whose folds displaid Were stretcht now forth at length without entraile. She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle, Armed to point, sought backe to turne againe; For light she hated as the deadly bale, Ay wont in desert darkness to remaine, Where plain none might her see, nor she see any plaine.

Which when the valiant Elfe perceiv'd, he lept As Lyon fierce upon the flying pray, And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept From turning backe, and forced her to stay: Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray, And turning fierce her speckled taile advaunst, Threatning her angrie sting, him to dismay; Who, nought aghast, his mightie hand enhaunst: The stroke down from her head unto her shoulder glaunst.

Much daunted with that dint her fence was dazd; Yet kindling rage her selfe she gathered round, And all attonce her beastly bodie raizd With doubled forces high above the ground: Tho, wrapping up her wrethed sterne arownd, Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine All suddenly about his body wound, That hand or foot to stirr he strove in vaine. God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine!

His Lady, sad to see his sore constraint, Cried out, "Now, now, Sir knight, shew what ye bee; Add faith unto your force, and be not faint; Strangle her, els she sure will strangle thee." That when he heard, in great perplexitie, His gall did grate for griefe and high disdaine; And, knitting all his force, got one hand free, Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great paine, That soon to loose her wicked bands did her constraine.

Therewith she spewd out of her filthie maw A floud of poyson horrible and blacke, Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw, Which stunck so vildly, that it forst

him slacke His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe. Her vomit full of bookes and papers was, With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke, And creeping sought way in the weedy gras: Her filthie parbreake all the place defiled has.

As when old father Nilus gins to swell With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale, His fattie waves doe fertile slime outwell, And overflow each plaine and lowly dale: But, when his later spring gins to avale, Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherin there breed Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male And partly female, of his fruitful seed; Such ugly monstrous shapes elswher may no man reed.

The same so sore annoyed has the knight, That, welnigh choked with the deadly stinke, His forces faile, ne can no lenger fight: Whose corage when the feend perceivd to shrinke, She poured forth out of her hellish sinke Her fruitfull cursed spawne of serpents small, Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke, Which swarming all about his legs did crall, And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.

As gentle shepheard in sweete eventide, When ruddy Phebus gins to welke in west, High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide, Markes which doe byte their hasty supper best; A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him molest, All striving to infixe their feeble stinges, That from their noyance he no where can rest; But with his clownish hands their tender wings He trusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

Thus ill bestedd, and fearfull more of shame Then of the certeine perill he stood in, Halfe furious unto his foe he came, Resolvd in minde all suddenly to win, Or soone to lose, before he once would lin; And stroke at her with more than manly force, That from her body, full of filthie sin, He raft her hatefull heade without remorse: A streame of cole-black blood forth gushed from her corse.

Her scattred brood, soone as their Parent deare They saw so rudely falling to the ground, Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare Gathred themselves about her

body round, Weening their wonted entrance to have found At her wide mouth: but being there withstood, They flocked all about her bleeding wound, And sucked up their dying mother's blood; Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good

That detestable sight him much amazde, To see th'unkindly Impes, of heaven accurst, Devoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd, Having all satisfide their bloudy thurst, Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst, And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end Of such as drunke her life the which them nurst! Now needeth him no lenger labour spend, His foes have slaine themselves, with whom he should contend.

His Lady, seeing all that chaunst from farre, Approcht in hast to greet his victorie; And saide, "Faire knight, borne under happie starre, Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye, Well worthie be you of that Armory, Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day, And proov'd your strength on a strong enimie; Your first adventure: many such I pray, And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it may!"

Then mounted he upon his Steede again, And with the Lady backward sought to wend. That path he kept which beaten was most plaine, Ne ever would to any byway bend, But still did follow one unto the end; The which at last out of the wood them brought. So forward on his way (with God to frend) He passed forth, and new adventure sought: Long way he traveiled before he heard of ought.

At length they chaunst to meet upon the way An aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad, His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray, And by his belt his booke he hanging had: Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad, And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent, Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad; And all the way he prayed as he went, And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

He faire the knight saluted, looting low, Who faire him quited, as that courteous was; And after asked him, if he did know Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas? "Ah! my dear sonne," (quoth he) "how should, alas! Silly old man, that lives in

hidden cell, Bidding his beades all day for his trespas, Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell? With holy father fits not with such thinges to mell.

“But if of daunger, which hereby doth dwell, And homebredd evil ye desire to heare, Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell, That wasteth all this countrie, farre and neare.” “Of such,” (saide he) “I chiefly doe inquere, And shall thee well rewarde to shew the place, In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare; For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace, That such a cursed creature lives so long a space.”

“Far hence” (quoth he) “in wastfull wildernesse His dwelling is, by which no living wight May ever passe, but thorough great distresse.” “Now,” (said the Ladie,) “draweth toward night; And well I wote, that of your later fight Ye all forwearied be; for what so strong, But, wanting rest, will also want of might? The Sunne, that measures heaven all day long, At night doth baite his steedes the Ocean waves emong.

“Then with the Sunne take, Sir, your timely rest, And with new day new worke at once begin: Untroubled night, they say, gives counsell best.” “Right well, Sir knight, ye have advised bin,” Quoth then that aged man: “the way to win Is wisely to advise; now day is spent: Therefore with me ye may take up your In For this same night.” The knight was well content; So with that godly father to his home they went.

A litle lowly Hermitage it was, Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side, Far from resort of people that did pas In traveill to and froe: a little wyde There was an holy chappell edifyde, Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say His holy thinges each morne and eventyde; Thereby a christall streame did gently play, Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

Arrived there, the litle house they fill, Ne looke for entertainement where none was; Rest is their feast, and all things at their will: The noblest mind the best contentment has. With faire discourse the evening so they pas; For that olde man of pleasing

wordes had store, And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas: He told of Saintes and Popes, and evermore He strowd an Ave-Mary after and before.

The drouping night thus creepeth on them fast; And the sad humor loading their eyeliddes, As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleep them biddes. Unto their lodgings then his guestes he riddes: Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he findes, He to his studie goes; and there amiddes His magick bookes, and artes of sundrie kindes, He seekes out mighty charmes to trouble sleepy minds.

Then choosing out few words most horrible, (Let none them read) thereof did verses frame; With which, and other spelles like terrible, He bade awake blacke Plutoes griesly Dame; And cursed heven; and spake reprochful shame Of highest God, the Lord of life and light: A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name Great Gorgon, prince of darknes and dead night; At which Cocytus quakes, and Styx is put to flight.

And forth he cald out of deepe darkness dredd Legions of Sprights, the which, like little flyes Fluttring about his ever-damned hedd, Awaite whereto their service he applyes, To aide his friendes, or fray his enimies. Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo, And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes: The one of them he gave a message too, The other by him selfe staide, other worke to doo.

He, making speedy way through spersed ayre, And through the world of waters wide and deepe, To Morpheus house doth hastily repaire. Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe, And low, where dawning day doth never peepe, His dwelling is; there Tethys his wet bed Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steepe In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed, Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black doth spred.

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast, The one faire fram'd of burnisht Yvory, The other all with silver overcast; And wakeful dogges before them farr doe lye, Watching to banish Care their enimy, Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe. By

them the Sprite doth passe in quietly, And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deepe In drowsie fit he findes: of nothing he takes keepe.

And more to lulle him in his slumber soft, A trickling streame from high rock tumbling downe, And ever-drizling raine upon the loft, Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne. No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes, As still are wont t'annoy the walled towne, Might there be heard; but carelesse Quiet lyes Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimyes.

The Messenger approaching to him spake; But his waste wordes retournd to him in vaine: So sound he slept, that nought mought him awake. Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with paine, Whereat he gan to stretch; but he againe Shooke him so hard, that forced him to speake. As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake, He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence breake.

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake, And threatned unto him the dreaded name Of Hecate: whereat he gan to quake, And, lifting up his lompish head, with blame Halfe angrie asked him, for what he came. "Hether" (quoth he,) "me Archimago sent, He that the stubborne Sprites can wisely tame, He bids thee to him send for his intent A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers sent."

The God obayde; and, calling forth straight way A diverse Dreame out of his prison darke, Delivered it to him, and downe did lay His heavie head, devoide of careful carke; Whose sences all were straight benumbd and starke. He, backe returning by the Yvorie dore, Remounted up as light as chearefull Larke; And on his litle winges the dreame he bore In haste unto his Lord, where he him left afore.

Who all this while, with charmes and hidden artes, Had made a Lady of that other Spright, And fram'd of liquid ayre her tender partes, So lively and so like in all mens sight, That weaker sence it could have ravisht quight: The maker-selfe, for all his

wondrous witt, Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight. Her all in white he clad, and over it Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for Una fit.

Now, when that ydle dream was to him brought, Unto that Elfin knight he bad him fly, Where he slept soundly void of evil thought, And with false shewes abuse his fantasy, In sort as he him schooled privily: And that new creature, borne without her dew, Full of the makers guile, with usage sly He taught to imitate that Lady trew, Whose semblance she did carrie under feigned hew.

Thus, well instructed, to their worke they haste; And, comming where the knight in slomber lay, The one upon his hardie head him plaste, And made him dream of loves and lustfull play, That nigh his manly hart did melt away, Bathed in wanton blis and wicked joy. Then seemed him his Lady by him lay, And to him playnd, how that false winged boy Her chaste hart had subdewd to learne Dame Pleasures toy.

And she her selfe, of beautie soveraigne Queene, Fayre Venus, seemde unto his bed to bring Her, whom he, waking, evermore did weene To bee the chastest flowre that aye did spring On earthly braunch; the daughter of a king, Now a loose Leman to vile service bound: And eke the Graces seemed all to sing, Hymen Iö Hymen! dauncing all around; Whylst freshest Flora her with Yvie girlond crownd.

In this great passion of unwonted lust, Or wonted feare of doing ought amis, He starteth up, as seeming to mistrust Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his. Lo! there before his face his Ladie is, Under blacke stole hyding her bayted hooke; And as halfe blushing offred him to kiss, With gentle blandishment and lovely look, Most like that Virgin true which for her Knight him took.

All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight, And halfe enraged at her shamelesse guise, He thought have slaine her in his fierce despight; But hastie heat tempring with sufferance wise, He stayde his hand; and gan himselfe advise To prove his sense, and tempt her faigned truth. Wringing her hands, in wemens pitteous wise, Tho can she weepe, to stirre up gentle ruth Both for her noble blood, and for her

tender youth.

And sayd, “Ah Sir, my liege Lord, and my love, Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate, And mightie causes wrought in heaven above, Or the blind God that doth me thus amate, For hoped love to winne me certaine hate? Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die. Die is my dew; yet rew my wretched state, You, whom my hard avenging destinie Hath made judge of my life or death indifferently.

“Your owne deare sake forst me at first to leave My father’s kingdom”—There she stopt with teares; Her swollen hart her speech seemd to bereave, And then again begonne; “My weaker yeares, Captiv’d to fortune and frayle worldly feares, Fly to your fayth for succour and sure ayde: Let me not die in languor and long teares.” “Why, Dame,” (quoth he), “what hath ye thus dismayd? What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort me affrayd?”

“Love of your selfe,” she saide, “and deare constraint, Lets me not sleepe, but waste the wearie night In secret anguish and unpittied plaint, Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drowned quight.” Her doubtfull words made that redoubted knight Suspect her truth; yet since no’ untruth he knew, Her fawning love with foule disdainefull spight He would not shend; but said, “Deare dame, I rew, That for my sake unknowne such griefe unto you grew.

“Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground; For all so dear as life is to my hart, I deeme your love, and hold me to you bound: Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse smart, Where cause is none; but to your rest depart.” Not all content, yet seemd she to appease Her mournefull plaintes, beguiled of her art, And fed with words that could not chose but please: So, slyding softly forth, she turnd as to her ease.

Long after lay he musing at her mood, Much griev’d to thinke that gentle Dame so light, For whose defence he was to shed his blood. At last, dull wearines of former fight Having yrockt asleepe his irkesome spright, That troublous dreame gan freshly

tosse his braine With bowres, and beds, and ladies deare delight: But, when he saw his labour all was vaine, With that misformed spright he back returnd againe.

Canto II

The guilefull great Enchaunter parts The Redcross Knight from Truth: Into whose stead faire Falsehood steps And workes him woefull ruth.

By this the Northerne wagoner had set His sevenfold teme behind the stedfast starre That was in Ocean waves yet never wet, But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre To al that in the wide deepe wandring arre; And chearefull Chaunticlere with his note shrill Had warned once, that Phœbus fiery carre In hast was climbing up the Easterne hill, Full envious that night so long his roome did fill.

When those accursed messengers of hell, That feigning dreame, and that faire-forged Spright, Came to their wicked maister, and gan tel Their bootelesse paines, and ill succeeding night: Who, all in rage to see his skilfull might Deluded so, gan threaten hellish paine, And sad Proserpines wrath, them to affright; But, when he saw his threatning was but vaine, He cast about, and searcht his baleful bokes againe.

Eftsoones he tooke that miscreated faire, And that same other Spright, on whom he spred A seeming body of the subtle aire, Like a young Squire, in loves and lusty hed His wanton daies that ever loosely led, Without regard of armes and dreaded fight: Those twoo he tooke, and in a secrete bed, Covered with darkenes and misdeeming night, Them both together laid to joy in vaine delight.

Forthwith he runnes with feigned faithfull hast Unto his guest, who, after troublous sights And dreames, gan now to take more sound repast; Whom suddenly he wakes with fearful frights, As one aghast with feends or damned sprights, And to him cals; “Rise, rise! unhappy Swaine, That here wex old in sleepe, whiles wicked wights Have knit themselves in Venus shameful chaine: Come, see where your false Lady

doth her honor staine.”

All in amaze he suddenly up start With sword in hand, and with the old man went; Who soone him brought into a secret part, Where that false couple were full closely ment In wanton lust and lewd embracement: Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous fire; The eie of reason was with rage yblent; And would have slaine them in his furious ire, But hardly was restreined of that aged sire.

Retourning to his bed in torment great, And bitter anguish of his guilty sight, He could not rest; but did his stout heart eat, And wast his inward gall with deepe despight, Yrkesome of life, and too long lingring night. At last faire Hesperus in highest skie Had spent his lampe, and brought forth dawning light; Then up he rose, and clad him hastily: The dwarfe him brought his steed; so both away do fly.

Now when the rosy fingred Morning faire, Weary of aged Tithones saffron bed, Had spred her purple robe through deawy aire, And the high hils Titan discovered, The royall virgin shooke off drousy hed; And, rising forth out of her baser bowre, Lookt for her knight, who far away was fled, And for her dwarfe, that wont to waite each howre: Then gan she wail and weepe to see that woeful stowre.

And after him she rode, with so much speede As her slowe beast could make; but all in vaine, For him so far had borne his light-foot steede, Pricked with wrath and fiery fierce disdaine, That him to follow was but fruitlesse paine: Yet she her weary limbes would never rest; But every hil and dale, each wood and plaine, Did search, sore grieved in her gentle brest, He so ungently left her, whom she loved best.

But subtill Archimago, when his guests He saw divided into double parts, And Una wandring in woods and forrests, Th’end of his drift, he praisd his divelish arts, That had such might over true meaning harts: Yet rests not so, but other meanes doth make, How he may worke unto her further smarts; For her he hated as the hissing snake, And in her many troubles did most pleasure take.

He then devisde himselfe how to disguise; For by his mighty science he could take

As many formes and shapes in seeming wise, As ever Proteus to himselfe could make: Sometime a fowle, sometime a fish in lake, Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell; That of himselfe he ofte for feare would quake, And oft would flie away. O! who can tell The hidden powre of herbes, and might of Magick spell?

But now seemde best the person to put on Of that good knight, his late beguiled guest: In mighty armes he was yclad anon, And silver shield; upon his coward brest A bloody crosse, and on his craven crest A bounch of heares discolourd diversly. Full jolly knight he seemde, and wel addrest; And when he sate uppon his courser free, Saint George himselfe ye would have deemed him to be.

But he, the knight whose semblaunt he did beare, The true Saint George, was wandred far away, Still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare: Will was his guide, and griefe led him astray. At last him chaunst to meete upon the way A faithlesse Sarazin, all armde to point, In whose great shield was writ with letters gay Sans foy; full large of limbe and every joint He was, and cared not for God or man a point.

Hee had a faire companion of his way, A goodly Lady clad in scarlot red, Purfled with gold and pearle of rich assay; And like a Persian mitre on her hed Shee wore, with crowns and owches garnished, The which her lavish lovers to her gave. Her wanton palfrey all was overspred With tinsell trappings, woven like a wave, Whose bridle rung with golden bels and bosses brave.

With faire disport, and courting dalliaunce, She intertainde her lover all the way; But, when she saw the knight his speare advaunce, She soon left of her mirth and wanton play, And bad her knight addresse him to the fray, His foe was nigh at hand. He, prickte with pride, And hope to winne his Ladies hearte that day, Forth spurred fast: adowne his coursers side The red bloud trickling staind the way, as he did ride.

The knight of the Red Crosse, when him he spide Spurring so hote with rage dispiteous, Gan fairly couch his speare, and towards ride. Soone meete they both,

both fell and furious, That, daunted with theyr forces hideous, Their steeds doe stagger, and amazed stand; And eke themselves, too rudely rigorous, Astonied with the stroke of their owne hand, Doe backe rebutte, and ech to other yealdeth land.

As when two rams, stird with ambitious pride, Fight for the rule of the rich fleeced flocke, Their horned fronts so fierce on either side Doe meete, that, with the terror of the shocke Astonied, both stand sencelesse as a blocke, Forgetfull of the hanging victory: So stood these twaine, unmoved as a rocke, Both staring fierce, and holding idely The broken reliques of their former cruelty.

The Sarazin, sore daunted with the buffe, Snatcheth his sword, and fiercely to him flies; Who well it wards, and quyteth cuff with cuff: Each others equall puissance envies, And through their iron sides with cruell spies Does seeke to perce; repining courage yields No foote to foe: the flashing fier flies, As from a forge, out of their burning shields; And streams of purple blood new die the verdant fields.

“Curse on that Crosse,” (quoth then the Sarazin,) “That keepes thy body from the bitter fitt! Dead long ygoe, I wote, thou haddest bin, Had not thy charme from thee forwarned itt: But yet I warne thee now assured sitt, And hide thy head.” Therewith upon his crest With rigor so outrageous he smitt, That a large share it hewd out of the rest, And glauncing downe his shield from blame him fairly blest.

Who, thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping spark Of native vertue gan eftsoones revive; And at his haughty helmet making mark, So hugely stroke, that it the steele did rive, And cleft his head. He, tumbling downe alive, With bloudy mouth his mother earth did kis, Greeting his grave: his grudging ghost did strive With the fraile flesh; at last it flitted is, Whether the soules doe fly of men that live amis.

The Lady, when she saw her champion fall Like the old ruines of a broken towre, Staid not to waile his woefull funerall, But from him fled away with all her powre; Who after her as hastily gan scowre, Bidding the dwarfe with him to bring away The Sarazins shield, signe of his conqueroure. Her soone he overtooke, and bad to stay;

For present cause was none of dread her to dismay.

She turning backe, with ruefull countenaunce, Cride, “Mercy, mercy, Sir, vouchsafe to show On silly Dame, subject to hard mischaunce, And to your mighty wil!” Her humblesse low, In so ritch weedes, and seeming glorious show, Did much emmove his stout heroïcke heart; And said, “Deare dame, your suddein overthrow Much rueth me; but now put feare apart, And tel both who ye be, and who that tooke your part.”

Melting in teares, then gan she thus lament. “The wretched woman, whom unhappy howre Hath now made thrall to your commandement, Before that angry heavens lift to lowre, And fortune false betraide me to thy powre, Was (O! what now availeth that I was?) Borne the sole daughter of an Emperour; He that the wide West under his rule has, And high hath set his throne where Tiberis doth pas.

“He, in the first flowre of my freshest age, Betrothed me unto the onely haire Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage: Was never Prince so faithfull and so faire, Was never Prince so meeke and debonaire; But ere my hoped day of spousall shone, My dearest Lord fell from high honors staire Into the hands of his accursed fone, And cruelly was slaine; that shall I ever mone.

“His blessed body, spoild of lively breath, Was afterward, I know not how, convaid, And fro me hid: of whose most innocent death When tidings came to mee, unhappy maid, O, how great sorrow my sad soule assaid! Then forth I went his woefull course to find, And many yeares throughout the world I straid, A virgin widow; whose deepe wounded mind With love long time did languish, as the striken hind.

“At last it chaunced this proud Sarazin To meete me wandring; who perforce me led With him away, but yet could never win The Fort, that Ladies hold in soveraigne dread. There lies he now with foule dishonor dead, Who, whiles he livde, was called proud Sans foy, The eldest of three brethren; all three bred Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sans joy; And twixt them both was born the bloody bold Sans loy.

“In this sad plight, friendlesse, unfortunate, Now miserable I, Fidessa, dwell, Craving of you, in pity of my state, To doe none ill, if please ye not doe well.” He in great passion al this while did dwell, More busying his quicke eies her face to view, Then his dull eares to heare what shee did tell; And said, “faire lady, hart of flint would rew The undeserved woes and sorrowes, which me shew.

“Henceforth in safe assuraunce may ye rest, Having both found a new friend to your aid, And lost an old foe that did you molest: Better new friend than an old foe is said.” With chaunge of chear the seeming simple maid Let fal her eien, as shamefast, to the earth, And yeelding soft, in that she nought gainsaid, So forth they rode, he feining seemely merth, And shee coy lookes: so dainty, they say, maketh derth.

Long time they thus together traveiled; Til, weary of their way, they came at last Where grew two goodly trees, that faire did spred Their armes abroad, with gray mosse overcast; And their greene leaves, trembling with every blast, Made a calme shadowe far in compasse round: The fearefull shepheard, often there aghast, Under them never sat, ne wont there sound His mery oaten pipe, but shund th’unlucky ground.

But this good knight, soone as he them can spie, For the coole shade him thither hastly got: For golden Phœbus, now ymounted hie, From fiery wheeles of his faire chariot Hurled his beame so scorching cruell hot, That living creature mote it not abide; And his new Lady it endured not. There they alight, in hope themselves to hide From the fierce heat, and rest their weary limbs a tide.

Faire seemely pleasaunce each to other makes, With goodly purposes, there as they sit; And in his falsed fancy he her takes To be the fairest wight that lived yit; Which to expresse he bends his gentle wit; And, thinking of those braunches greene to frame A girlond for her dainty forehead fit, He pluckt a bough; out of whose rifte there came Small drops of gory blood, that trickled down the same.

Therewith a piteous yelling voice was heard, Crying, “O! spare with guilty hands to teare My tender sides in this rough rynd embard; But fly, ah! fly far hence away, for feare Least to you hap that happened to me heare, And to this wretched Lady, my deare love; O, too deare love, love bought with death too deare!” Astond he stood, and up his heare did hove; And with that suddein horror could no member move.

At last whenas the dreadfull passion Was overpast, and manhood well awake, Yet musing at the straunge occasion, And doubting much his fence, he thus bespake: “What voice of damned Ghost from Limbo lake, Or guilefull spright wandring in empty aire, Both which fraile men doe oftentimes mistake, Sends to my doubtful eares these speaches rare, And ruefull plaints, me bidding guiltlesse blood to spare?”

Then groning deep; “Nor damned Ghost,” (quoth he,) “Nor guileful sprite to thee these words doth speake; But once a man, Fradubio, now a tree; Wretched man, wretched tree! whose nature weake A cruell witch, her cursed will to wreake, Hath thus transformed, and plast in open plaines, Where Boreas doth blow full bitter bleake, And scorching Sunne does dry my secret vaines; For though a tree I seme, yet cold and heat me paines.”

“Say on Fradubio, then, or man or tree,” Quoth then the Knight; “by whose mischievous arts Art thou misshaped thus, as now I see? He oft finds med’cine who his griefe imparts, But double griefs afflict concealing harts, As raging flames who striveth to suppresse.” “The author then,” (said he) “of all my smarts, Is one Duessa, a false sorceresse, That many errant knights hath broght to wretchednesse.

“In prime of youthly yeares, when corage hott The fire of love, and joy of chevalree, First kindled in my breast, it was my lott To love this gentle Lady, whome ye see Now not a Lady, but a teeming tree; With whome, as once I rode accompanyde, Me chaunced of a knight encountred be, That had a like faire Lady by his syde; Like a faire Lady, but did fowle Duessa hyde.

“Whose forged beauty he did take in hand All other Dames to have exceeded farre: I

in defence of mine did likewise stand, Mine, that did then shine as the Morning starre. So both to batteill fierce arraunged arre; In which his harder fortune was to fall Under my speare: such is the dye of warre. His Lady, left as a prise martiall, Did yield her comely person to be at my call.

“So doubly lov’d of ladies, unlike faire, Th’one seeming such, the other such indeede, One day in doubt I cast for to compare Whether in beauties glorie did exceede: A Rosy girlond was the victors meede. Both seemde to win, and both seemde won to bee, So hard the discord was to be agreede. Frælissa was as faire as faire mote bee, And ever false Duessa seemde as faire as shee.

“The wicked witch, now seeing all this while The doubtfull ballaunce equally to sway, What not by right she cast to win by guile; And by her hellish science raisd streight way A foggy mist, that overcast the day, And a dull blast, that breathing on her face Dimmed her former beauties shining ray, And with foule ugly forme did her disgrace: Then was she fayre alone, when none was faire in place.

“Then cride she out, ‘Fye, fye! deformed wight, Whose borrowed beautie now appeareth plaine To have before bewitched all mens sight: O! leave her soone, or let her soone be slaine.’ Her loathly visage viewing with disdaine, Eftsoones I thought her such as she me told, And would have killed her; but with faigned paine The false witch did my wrathfull hand withhold: So left her, where she now is turnd to treen mould.

“Thensforth I tooke Duessa for my Dame, And in the witch unweeting joyd long time; Ne ever wist but that she was the same; Till on a day (that day is everie Prime, When Witches wont do penance for their crime,) I chaunst to see her in her proper hew, Bathing her selfe in origane and thyme: A filthy foule old woman I did vew, That ever to have toucht her I did deadly rew.

“Her neather partes misshapen, monstruous, Were hidd in water, that I could not see; But they did seeme more foule and hideous, Then womans shape man would believe

to bee. Thensforth from her most beastly companie I gan refraine, in minde to slipp away, Soone as appeard safe opportunitie: For danger great, if not assurd decay, I saw before mine eyes, if I were knowne to stray.

“The divelish hag by chaunges of my cheare Perceiv’d my thought; and, drownd in sleepie night, With wicked herbes and oyntments did besmeare My body all, through charmes and magicke might, That all my senses were bereaved quight: Then brought she me into this desert waste, And by my wretched lovers side me pight; Where now, enclosd in wooden wals full faste, Banisht from living wights, our wearie daies we waste.”

“But how long time,” said then the Elfin knight, “Are you in this misformed house to dwell?” “We may not chaunge,” (quoth he,) “this evil plight, Till we be bathed in a living well: That is the terme prescribed by the spell.” “O! how,” sayd he, “mote I that well out find, That may restore you to your wonted well?” “Time and suffised fates to former kynd Shall us restore; none else from hence may us unbynd.”

The false Duessa, now Fidessa hight, Heard how in vaine Fradubio did lament, And knew well all was true. But the good knight, Full of sad feare and ghastly dreriment, When all this speech the living tree had spent, The bleeding bough did thrust into the ground, That from the blood he might be innocent, And with fresh clay did close the wooden wound: Then, turning to his Lady, dead with feare her fownd.

Her seeming dead he found with feigned feare, As all unweeting of that well she knew; And paynd himselfe with busie care to reare Her out of carelesse swowne. Her eyelids blew, And dimmed sight, with pale and deadly hew, At last she up gan lift: with trembling cheare Her up he tooke, (too simple and too trew) And oft her kist. At length, all passed feare, He set her on her steede, and forward forth did beare.

Canto III

Forsaken Truth long seeks her love, And makes the Lyon mylde; Marres blide Devotions mart, and fals In hand of leachour vylde.

Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollownesse, That moves more deare compassion of mind, Then beautie brought t'unworthie wretchednesse Through envies snares, or fortunes freakes unkind. I, whether lately through her brightnes blynd, Or through alleageance, and fast fealty, Which I do owe unto all womankynd, Feele my hart perst with so great agony, When such I see, that all for pitty I could dy.

And now it is empassioned so deepe, For fairest Unaes sake, of whom I sing, That my frayle eies these lines with teares do steepe, To thinke how she through guyleful handeling, Though true as touch, though daughter of a king, Though faire as ever living wight was fayre, Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting, Is from her knight divorced in despayre, And her dew loves deryv'd to that vile witches shayre.

Yet she, most faithfull Ladie, all this while Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd, Far from all peoples preace, as in exile, In wildernesse and wastfull deserts strayd, To seeke her knight; who, subtily betrayd Through that late vision which th'Enchaunter wrought, Had her abandond. She, of nought affrayd, Through woods and wastnes wide him daily sought; Yet wished tydinges none of him unto her brought.

One day, nigh wearie of the yrkesome way, From her unhastie beast she did alight; And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay In secrete shadow, far from all mens sight: From her fayre head her fillet she undight, And layd her stole aside. Her angels face, As the great eye of heaven, shyned bright, And made a sunshine in the shady place: Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.

It fortuned, out of the thickest wood A ramping Lyon rushed suddeinly, Hunting full greedy after salvage blood. Soone as the royall virgin he did spy, With gaping mouth at her ran greedily, To have attonce devourd her tender corse; But to the pray when as he drew more ny, His bloody rage aswaged with remorse, And, with the sight

amazd, forgat his furious forse.

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet, And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong, As he her wronged innocence did weet. O, how can beautie maister the most strong, And simple truth subdue avenging wrong! Whose yielded pryde and proud submission, Still dreading death, when she had marked long, Her hart gan melt in great compassion; And drizling teares did shed for pure affection.

“The Lyon, Lord of everie beast in field,” Quoth she, “his princely puissance doth abate, And mightie proud to humble weake does yield, Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate; But he, my Lyon, and my noble Lord, How does he find in cruell hart to hate Her, that him lov’d, and ever most adord As the God of my life? why hath he me abhord?”

Redounding teares did choke th’end of her plaint, Which softly ecchoed from the neighbour wood; And, sad to see her sorrowfull constraint, The kingly beast upon her gazing stood: With pittie calmd downe fell his angry mood. At last, in close hart shutting up her payne, Arose the virgin, borne of heavenly brood, And to her snowy Palfrey got agayne, To seeke her strayed Champion if she might attayne.

The Lyon would not leave her desolate, But with her went along, as a strong gard Of her chast person, and a faythfull mate Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard: Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and ward; And, when she wakt, he wayted diligent, With humble service to her will prepard: From her fayre eyes he tooke commandement, And ever by her lookes conceived her intent.

Long she thus traveiled through deserts wyde, By which she thought her wandring knight shold pas, Yet never shew of living wight espyde; Till that at length she found the troden gras, In which the tract of peoples footing was, Under the steepe foot of a mountaine hore: The same she followes, till at last she has A damzel spyde, slow footing her before, That on her shoulders sad a pot of water bore.

To whom approching she to her gan call, To weet, if dwelling place were nigh at

hand; But the rude wench her answer'd nought at all, She could not heare, nor speake, nor understand; Till, seeing by her side the Lyon stand, With suddeine feare her pitcher downe she threw, And fled away: for never in that land Face of fayre Ladie she before did vew, And that dredd Lyons looke her cast in deadly hew.

Full fast she fled, ne ever lookt behynd, As if her life upon the wager lay; And home she came, whereas her mother blynd Sate in eternall night: nought could she say; But, suddeine catching hold, did her dismay With quaking hands, and other signes of feare: Who, full of ghastly fright and cold affray, Gan shut the dore. By this arrived there Dame Una, weary Dame, and entrance did requere.

Which when none yielded, her unruly Page With his rude clawes the wicket open rent, And let her in; where, of his cruell rage Nigh dead with feare, and faint astonishment, Shee found them both in darksome corner pent; Where that old woman day and night did pray Upon her beads, devoutly penitent: Nine hundred Pater nosters every day, And thrise nine hundred Aves she was wont to say.

And to augment her painefull penaunce more, Thrise every weeke in ashes shee did sitt, And next her wrinkled skin rough sackecloth wore, And thrise three times did fast from any bitt; But now, for feare her beads she did forgett: Whose needlesse dread for to remove away, Faire Una framed words and count'naunce fitt; Which hardly doen, at length she gan them pray, That in their cotage small that night she rest her may.

The day is spent; and commeth drowsie night, When every creature shrowded is in sleepe. Sad Una downe her laies in weary plight, And at her feete the Lyon watch doth keepe: In stead of rest she does lament and weepe, For the late losse of her deare loved knight, And sighes, and grones, and evermore does steepe Her tender brest in bitter teares all night; All night she thinks too long, and often lookes for light.

Now when Aldeboran was mounted hye Above the shinie Cassiopeias chaire, And

all in deadly sleepe did drowned lye, One knocked at the dore, and in would fare; He knocked fast, and often curst, and sware, That ready entraunce was not at his call; For on his backe a heavy load he bare Of nightly stelths, and pillage severall, Which he had got abroad by purchas criminall.

He was, to weete, a stout and sturdy thiefe, Wont to robbe churches of their ornaments, And poore mens boxes of their due reliefe, Which given was to them for good intents: The holy Saints of their rich vestiments He did disrobe, when all men carelesse slept, And spoild the Priests of their habiliments; Whiles none the holy things in safety kept, Then he by conning sleights in at the window crept.

And all that he by right or wrong could find, Unto this house he brought, and did bestow Upon the daughter of this woman blind, Abessa, daughter of Corceca slow, With whom he whoredome usd, that few did know, And fed her fatt with feast of offerings, And plenty, which in all the land did grow: Ne spared he to give her gold and rings; And now he to her brought part of his stolen things.

Thus, long the dore with rage and threats he bett, Yet of those fearfull women none durst rize, The Lyon frayed them, him in to lett. He would no lenger stay him to advize, But open breakes the dore in furious wize, And entring is, when that disdainfull beast, Encountring fierce, him suddein doth surprize; And, seizing cruell clawes on trembling brest, Under his Lordly foot him proudly hath supprest.

Him booteth not resist, nor succour call, His bleeding hart is in the vengers hand; Who streight him rent in thousand peeces small, And quite dismembred hath: the thirsty land Dronke up his life; his corse left on the strand. His fearefull freends weare out the wofull night, Ne dare to weepe, nor seeme to understand The heavie hap which on them is alight; Affraid least to themselves the like mishappen might.

Now when broad day the world discovered has, Up Una rose, up rose the lyon eke; And on their former journey forward pas, In waies unknowne, her wandring knight to seeke, With paines far passing that long wandring Greeke, That for his love

refused deitye. Such were the labours of this Lady meeke, Still seeking him, that from her still did flye; Then furthest from her hope, when most she weened nye.

Soone as she parted thence, the fearfull twayne, That blind old woman, and her daughter deare Came forth; and, finding Kirkrapine there slayne, For anguish great they gan to rend their heare, And beat their brests, and naked flesh to teare: And when they both had wept and wayld their fill, Then forth they ran, like two amazed deare, Halfe mad through malice and revenging will, To follow her that was the causer of their ill.

Whome overtaking, they gan loudly bray, With hollow houling, and lamenting cry; Shamefully at her rayling all the way, And her accusing of dishonesty, That was the flowre of faith and chastity: And still, amidst her rayling, she did pray That plagues, and mischiefes, and long misery, Might fall on her, and follow all the way, And that in endlesse error she might ever stray.

But, when she saw her prayers nought prevaile, Shee backe retourned with some labour lost; And in the way, as shee did weepe and waile, A knight her met in mighty armes embost, Yet knight was not for all his bragging bost; But subtill Archimag, that Una sought By traynes into new troubles to have toste: Of that old woman tidings he besought, If that of such a Lady shee could tellen ought.

Therewith she gan her passion to renew, And cry, and curse, and raile, and rend her heare, Saying, that harlott she too lately knew, That causd her shed so many a bitter teare; And so forth told the story of her feare. Much seemed he to mone her haplesse chaunce, And after for that Lady did inquere; Which being taught, he forward gan advaunce His fair enchaunted steed, and eke his charmed launce.

Ere long he came where Una traveild slow, And that wilde champion wayting her besyde; Whome seeing such, for dread hee durst not show Him selfe too nigh at hand, but turned wyde Unto an hil; from whence when she him spyde, By his like seeming shield her knight by name She weend it was, and towards him gan ride:

Approaching nigh she wist it was the same; And with faire fearefull humblesse towards him shee came:

And weeping said, “Ah, my long lacked Lord, Where have ye bene thus long out of my sight? Much feared I to have bene quite abhord, Or ought have done, that ye displeasen might, That should as death unto my deare heart light: For since mine eye your joyous sight did mis, My chearefull day is turnd to chearelesse night, And eke my night of death the shadow is; But welcome now, my light, and shining lampe of blis!”

He thereto meeting said, “My dearest Dame, Far be it from your thought, and fro my wil, To thinke that knighthood I so much should shame, As you to leave that have me loved stil, And chose in Faery court, of meere goodwil, Where noblest knights were to be found on earth. The earth shall sooner leave her kindly skil To bring forth fruit, and make eternal derth, Then I leave you, my liefe, yborn of hevenly berth.

“And sooth to say, why I lefte you so long, Was for to seeke adventure in straunge place; Where, Archimago said, a felon strong To many knights did daily worke disgrace; But knight he now shall never more deface: Good cause of mine excuse, that mote ye please Well to accept, and evermore embrace My faithfull service, that by land and seas Have vowd you to defend. Now then, your plaint appease.”

His lovely words her seemd due recompence Of all her passed paines: one loving howre For many yeares of sorrow can dispence; A dram of sweete is worth a pound of sowre. Shee has forgott how many a woeful stowre For him she late endurd; she speakes no more Of past: true is, that true love hath no powre To looken backe; his eies be fixt before. Before her stands her knight, for whom she toyld so sore.

Much like, as when the beaten marinere, That long hath wandred in the Ocean wide, Ofte soust in swelling Tethys saltish teare; And long time having tand his tawney hide With blustring breath of Heaven, that none can bide, And scorching flames of fierce Orions hound; Soone as the port from far he has espide, His chearfull whistle

merily doth sound, And Nereus crownes with cups; his mates him pledg around.

Such joy made Una, when her knight she found; And eke th'enchaunter joyous seemde no lesse Then the glad marchant, that does vew from ground His ship far come from watrie wildernesse; He hurles out vowes, and Neptune oft doth blesse. So forth they past; and all the way they spent Discoursing of her dreadful late distresse, In which he askt her, what the Lyon ment; Who told her all that fell, in journey as she went.

They had not ridden far, when they might see One pricking towards them with hastie heat, Full strongly armd, and on a courser free That through his fiersnesse fomed all with sweat, And the sharpe yron did for anger eat, When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed side: His looke was sterne, and seemed still to threat Cruell revenge, which he in hart did hyde; And on his shield Sansloy in bloody lines was dyde.

When nigh he drew unto this gentle payre, And saw the Red crosse which the knight did beare, He burnt in fire; and gan eftsoones prepare Himselfe to batteill with his couched speare. Loth was that other, and did faint through feare, To taste th'untryed dint of deadly steele: But yet his Lady did so well him cheare, That hope of new good hap he gan to feele; So bent his speare, and spurd his horse with yron heele.

But that proud Paynim forward came so ferce And full of wrath, that, with his sharphead speare, Through vainly crossed shield he quite did perce; And, had his staggering steed not shronke for feare, Through shield and body eke he should him beare: Yet, so great was the puissance of his push, That from his sadle quite he did him beare. He, tombling rudely downe, to ground did rush, And from his gored wound a well of bloud did gush.

Dismounting lightly from his loftie steed, He to him lept, in minde to reave his life, And proudly said; "Lo! there the worthie meed Of him that slew Sansfoy with bloody knife: Henceforth his ghost, freed from repining strife, In peace may passen over Lethe lake; When mourning altars, purgd with enimies life, The black infernall

Furies doen aslake: Life from Sansfoy thou tookst, Sansloy shall from thee take."

Therewith in haste his helmet gan unlace, Till Una cride, "O! hold that heavie hand, Deare Sir, what ever that thou be in place: Enough is, that thy foe doth vanquisht stand Now at thy mercy: Mercy not withstand; For he is one the truest knight alive, Though conquered now he lye on lowly land; And, whilest him fortune favourd, fayre did thrive In bloudy field; therefore, of life him not deprive."

Her piteous wordes might not abate his rage, But, rudely rending up his helmet, would Have slayne him streight; but when he sees his age, And hoarie head of Archimago old, His hasty hand he doth amased hold, And halfe ashamed wondred at the sight: For the old man well knew he, though untold, In charmes and magick to have wondrous might, Ne ever wont in field, ne in round lists, to fight:

And said, "Why Archimago, lucklesse syre, What doe I see? what hard mishap is this, That hath thee hether brought to taste mine yre? Or thine the fault, or mine the error is, In stead of foe to wound my friend amis?" He answered nought, but in a traunce still lay, And on those guilefull dazed eyes of his The cloude of death did sit. Which doen away, He left him lying so, ne would no lenger stay:

But to the virgin comes; who all this while Amased stands, her selfe so mockt to see By him, who has the guerdon of his guile, For so misfeigning her true knight to bee: Yet is she now in more perplexitie, Left in the hand of that same Paynim bold, From whom her booteth not at all to flie: Who, by her cleanly garment catching hold, Her from her Palfrey pluckt, her visage to behold.

But her fiers servant, full of kingly aw And high disdaine, whenas his soveraine Dame So rudely handled by her foe he saw, With gaping jawes full greedy at him came, And, ramping on his shield, did weene the same Have reft away with his sharp rending clawes: But he was stout, and lust did now inflame His corage more, that from his griping pawes He hath his shield redeemd, and forth his swerd he drawes.

O! then, too weake and feeble was the forse Of salvage beast his puissance to withstand; For he was strong, and of so mightie corse, As ever wielded speare in warlike hand, And feates of armes did wisely understand. Eft soones he perced through his chaufed chest With thrilling point of deadly yron brand, And launcht his Lordly hart: with death opprest He ror'd aloud, whiles life forsooke his stubborne brest.

Who now is left to keepe the forlorne maid From raging spoile of lawlesse victors will? Her faithfull gard remov'd, her hope dismaid, Her selfe a yielded pray to save or spill: He now, Lord of the field, his pride to fill, With foule reproches and disdaineful spight Her vildly entertaines; and, will or nill, Beares her away upon his courser light: Her prayers nought prevaile, his rage is more of might.

And all the way, with great lamenting paine, And piteous plaintes, she filleth his dull eares, That stony hart could riven have in twaine; And all the way she wetts with flowing teares; But he, enrag'd with rancor, nothing heares. Her servile beast yet would not leave her so, But followes her far off, ne ought he feares To be partaker of her wandring woe; More mild in beastly kind then that her beastly foe.

Canto IV

To sinfull house of Pryde Duessa Guydes the faithfull knight; Where, brothers death to wreak, Sansjoy Doth challenge him to fight.

Young knight whatever, that dost armes professe, And through long labours huntest after fame, Beware of fraud, beware of ficklenesse, In choice, and chaunge of thy deare-loved Dame; Least thou of her believe too lightly blame, And rash misweening doe thy hart remove: For unto knight there is no greater shame Then lightnesse and inconstancie in love: That doth this Redcrosse knights ensample plainly prove.

Who, after that he had faire Una lorne, Through light misdeeming of her loialtie;

And false Duessa in her sted had borne, Called Fidess', and so supposd to be, Long with her traveild; till at last they see A goodly building bravely garnished; The house of mightie Prince it seemd to be, And towards it a broad high way that led, All bare through peoples feet which thether traveiled.

Great troupes of people traveild thetherward Both day and night, of each degree and place; But few returned, having scaped hard, With balefull beggery, or foule disgrace; Which ever after in most wretched case, Like loathsome lazars, by the hedges lay. Thether Duessa badd him bend his pace, For she is wearie of the toilsom way, And also nigh consumed is the lingring day.

A stately Pallace built of squared bricke, Which cunningly was without morter laid, Whose wals were high, but nothing strong nor thick, And golden foile all over them displaid, That purest skye with brightnesse they dismaid: High lifted up were many loftie towres, And goodly galleries far over laid, Full of faire windowes and delightful bowres: And on the top a Diall told the timely howres.

It was a goodly heape for to behould, And spake the praises of the workmans witt; But full great pittie, that so faire a mould Did on so weake foundation ever sitt: For on a sandie hill, that still did flitt And fall away, it mounted was full hie, That every breath of heaven shaked itt: And all the hinder partes, that few could spie, Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.

Arrived there, they passed in forth right; For still to all the gates stood open wide: Yet charge of them was to a Porter hight, Cald Malvenú, who entrance none denide: Thence to the hall, which was on every side With rich array and costly arras dight. Infinite sortes of people did abide There waiting long, to win the wished sight Of her, that was the Lady of that Pallace bright.

By them they passe, all gazing on them round, And to the Presence mount; whose glorious vew Their frayle amazed senses did confound: In living Princes court none ever knew Such endlesse richesse, and so sumpteous shew; Ne Persia selfe, the

nourse of pompous pride, Like ever saw. And there a noble crew Of Lords and Ladies stood on every side, Which with their presence fayre the place much beautifide.

High above all a cloth of State was spred, And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day; On which there sate, most brave embellished With royall robes and gorgeous array, A mayden Queene that shone as Titans ray, In glistring gold and perelesse pretious stone; Yet her bright blazing beautie did assay To dim the brightnesse of her glorious throne, As envying her selfe, that too exceeding shone:

Exceeding shone, like Phœbus fayrest childe, That did presume his fathers fyrie wayne, And flaming mouthes of steedes, unwonted wilde, Through highest heaven with weaker hand to rayne: Proud of such glory and advancement vayne, While flashing beames do daze his feeble eyen, He leaves the welkin way most beaten playne, And, rapt with whirling wheeles, inflames the skyen With fire not made to burne, but fayrely for to shyne.

So proud she shyned in her Princely state, Looking to heaven, for earth she did disdayne, And sitting high, for lowly she did hate: Lo underneath her scornefull feete was layne A dreadfull Dragon with an hideous trayne; And in her hand she held a mirrhour bright, Wherein her face she often vewed fayne, And in her selfe-lov'd semblance tooke delight; For she was wondrous faire, as any living wight.

Of griesly Pluto she the daughter was, And sad Proserpina, the Queene of hell; Yet did she thinke her pearelesse worth to pas That parentage, with pride so did she swell; And thundring Jove, that high in heaven doth dwell And wield the world, she claymed for her syre, Or if that any else did Jove excell; For to the highest she did still aspyre, Or, if ought higher were than that, did it desyre.

And proud Lucifera men did her call, That made her selfe a Queene, and crownd to be; Yet rightfull kingdome she had none at all, Ne heritage of native soveraintie; But

did usurpe with wrong and tyrannie Upon the scepter which she now did hold: Ne ruld her Realme with lawes, but pollicie, And strong advizement of six wisards old, That, with their counsels bad, her kingdome did uphold.

Soone as the Elfin knight in presence came, And false Duessa, seeming Lady fayre, A gentle Husher, Vanitie by name, Made rowme, and passage for them did prepaire: So goodly brought them to the lowest stayre Of her high throne; where they, on humble knee Making obeysaunce, did the cause declare, Why they were come her roiall state to see, To prove the wide report of her great Majestee.

With loftie eyes, halfe loth to looke so lowe, She thancked them in her disdainefull wise; Ne other grace vouchsafed them to showe Of Princesse worthy; scarse them bad arise. Her Lordes and Ladies all this while devise Themselves to setten forth to straungers sight: Some frounce their curled heare in courtly guise; Some prancke their ruffes; and others trimly dight Their gay attyre; each others greater pride does spight.

Goodly they all that knight doe entertayne, Right glad with him to have increast their crew; But to Duess' each one himselfe did payne All kindnesse and faire courtesie to shew, For in that court whylome her well they knew: Yet the stout Faerie mongst the middest crowd Thought all their glorie vaine in knightly vew, And that great Princesse too exceeding prowd, That to strange knight no better countenance allowd.

Suddein upriseth from her stately place The roiall Dame, and for her coche doth call: All hurtlen forth; and she, with princely pace, As faire Aurora in her purple pall Out of the East the dawning day doth call. So forth she comes; her brightnes brode doth blaze. The heapes of people, thronging in the hall, Doe ride each other upon her to gaze: Her glorious glitter and light doth all mens eies amaze.

So forth she comes, and to her coche does clyme, Adorned all with gold and girlonds gay, That seemd as fresh as Flora in her prime; And strove to match, in

roiall rich array, Great Junoes golden chayre; the which, they say, The gods stand gazing on, when she does ride To Joves high hous through heavens bras-paved way, Drawne of fayre Pecocks, that excell in pride, And full of Argus eyes their tayles dispredden wide.

But this was drawne of six unequall beasts, On which her six sage Counsellours did ryde, Taught to obay their bestiall beheasts, With like conditions to their kindes applyde: Of which the first, that all the rest did guyde, Was sluggish Idlenesse, the nourse of sin; Upon a slouthfull Asse he chose to ryde, Arayd in habit blacke, and amis thin, Like to an holy Monck, the service to begin.

And in his hand his Portesse still he bare, That much was worne, but therein little redd; For of devotion he had little care, Still drownd in sleepe, and most of his daies dedd: Scarse could he once uphold his heavie hedd, To looken whether it were night or day. May seeme the wayne was very evill ledd, When such an one had guiding of the way, That knew not whether right he went, or else astray.

From worldly cares himselfe he did esloyne, And greatly shunned manly exercise; From everie worke he chalenged essoyne, For contemplation sake: yet otherwise His life he led in lawlesse riotise, By which he grew to grievous malady; For in his lustlesse limbs, through evil guise, A shaking fever raignd continually. Such one was Idlenesse, first of this company.

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony, Deformed creature, on a filthie swyne. His belly was upblowne with luxury, And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne; And like a Crane his necke was long and fyne With which he swallowed up excessive feast, For want whereof poore people oft did pyne: And all the way, most like a brutish beast, He spued up his gorge, that all did him deteast.

In greene vine leaves he was right fitly clad, For other clothes he could not weare for heate; And on his head an yvie girland had, From under which fast trickled downe the sweat. Still as he rode he somewhat still did eat, And in his hand did beare a

bouzing can, Of which he supt so oft, that on his seat His dronken corse he scarse upholden can: In shape and life more like a monster then a man.

Unfit he was for any worldly thing, And eke unhable once to stirre or go; Not meet to be of counsell to a king, Whose mind in meat and drinke was drowned so, That from his frend he seeldome knew his fo. Full of diseases was his carcas blew, And a dry dropsie through his flesh did flow, Which by misdiet daily greater grew. Such one was Gluttony, the second of that crew.

And next to him rode lustfull Lechery Upon a bearded Gote, whose rugged heare, And whally eies (the signe of gelosy,) Was like the person selfe whom he did beare: Who rough, and blacke, and filthy, did appeare, Unseemely man to please faire Ladies eye; Yet he of Ladies oft was loved deare, When fairer faces were bid standen by: O! who does know the bent of womens fantasy?

In a greene gowne he clothed was full faire, Which underneath did hide his filthinesse; And in his hand a burning hart he bare, Full of vaine follies and new fanglenesse: For he was false, and fraught with ficklenesse, And learned had to love with secret lookes; And well could daunce, and sing with ruefulnesse; And fortunes tell, and read in loving bookes, And thousand other waies to bait his fleshly hookes.

Inconstant man, that loved all he saw, And lusted after all that he did love; Ne would his looser life be tide to law, But joyd weake wemens hearts to tempt, and prove, If from their loyall loves he might them move: Which lewdnes fild him with reprochfull pain Of that foule evill, which all men reprove, That rotts the marrow, and consumes the braine. Such one was Lechery, the third of all this traine.

And greedy Avarice by him did ride, Uppon a Camell loaden all with gold: Two iron coffers hong on either side, With precious metall full as they might hold; And in his lap an heap of coine he told; For of his wicked pelfe his God he made, And unto hell him selfe for money sold: Accursed usury was all his trade, And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce waide.

His life was nigh unto deaths dore yplaste; And thred-bare cote, and cobled shoes, hee ware; Ne scarse good morsell all his life did taste, But both from backe and belly still did spare, To fill his bags, and richesse to compare: Yet childe ne kinsman living had he none To leave them to; but thorough daily care To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne, He led a wretched life, unto himselfe unknowne.

Most wretched wight, whom nothing might suffise; Whose greedy lust did lacke in greatest store; Whose need had end, but no end covetise; Whose welth was want, whose plenty made him pore; Who had enough, yett wished ever more; A vile disease: and eke in foote and hand A grievous gout tormented him full sore, That well he could not touch, nor goe, nor stand. Such one was Avarice, the fourth of this faire band.

And next to him malicious Envy rode Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw Between his cankred teeth a venemous tode, That all the poison ran about his chaw; But inwardly he chawed his owne maw At neighbours welth, that made him ever sad, For death it was, when any good he saw; And wept, that cause of weeping none he had; But when he heard of harme he wexed wondrous glad.

All in a kirtle of discolourd say He clothed was, ypaynted full of eies; And in his bosome secretly there lay An hatefull Snake, the which his taile uptyes In many folds, and mortall sting implyes. Still as he rode he gnasht his teeth to see Those heapes of gold with griple Covetyse; And grudged at the great felicitee Of proud Lucifera, and his owne companee.

He hated all good workes and vertuous deeds, And him no lesse, that any like did use; And who with gratious bread the hungry feeds, His almes for want of faith he doth accuse. So every good to bad he doth abuse; And eke the verse of famous Poets witt He does backebite, and spightfull poison spues From leprous mouth on all that ever writt. Such one vile Envy was, that fifte in row did sitt.

And him beside rides fierce revenging Wrath, Upon a Lion, loth for to be led; And

in his hand a burning brond he hath, The which he brandisheth about his hed: His eies did hurle forth sparcles fiery red, And stared sterne on all that him beheld; As ashes pale of hew, and seeming ded; And on his dagger still his hand he held, Trembling through hasty rage when choler in him sweld,

His ruffin raiment all was staind with blood Which he had spilt, and all to rags yrent, Through unadvized rashnes woxen wood; For of his hands he had no governement: Ne car'd for blood in his avengement, But, when the furious fitt was overpast, His cruel facts he often would repent; Yet, wilfull man, he never would forecast How many mischieves should ensue his heedlesse hast.

Full many mischiefes follow cruell Wrath: Abhorred bloodshed, and tumultuous strife, Unmanly murder, and unthrifty scath, Bitter despight, with rancours rusty knife, And fretting griefe, the enemy of life: All these, and many evils moe haunt ire, The swelling Splene, and Frenzy raging rife, The shaking Palsey, and Saint Fraunces fire. Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly tire.

And, after all, upon the wagon beame, Rode Sathan with a smarting whip in hand, With which he forward lasht the laesy teme, So oft as Slowth still in the mire did stand. Huge routs of people did about them band, Showting for joy; and still before their way A foggy mist had covered all the land; And, underneath their feet, all scattered lay Dead sculls and bones of men whose life had gone astray.

So forth they marchen in this goodly sort, To take the solace of the open aire, And in fresh flowring fields themselves to sport: Emongst the rest rode that false Lady faire, The foule Duessa, next unto the chaire Of proud Lucifer', as one of the traine: But that good knight would not so nigh repaire, Him selfe estraunging from their joyaunce vaine, Whose fellowship seemd far unfitt for warlike swaine.

So, having solaced themselves a space With pleasaunce of the breathing fields yfed, They backe retourned to the princely Place; Whereas an errant knight in armes ycled, And heathnish shield, wherein with letters red, Was writt Sansjoy, they new

arrived find: Enflam’d with fury and fiers hardy hed, He seemd in hart to harbour thoughts unkind, And nourish bloody vengeaunce in his bitter mind.

Who, when the shamed shield of slaine Sansfoy He spide with that same Faery champions page, Bewraying him that did of late destroy His eldest brother; burning all with rage, He to him lept, and that same envious gage Of victors glory from him snacht away: But th’Elfin knight, which ought that warlike wage, Disdaind to loose the meed he wonne in fray; And, him rencountring fierce, reskewd the noble pray.

Therewith they gan to hurtlen greedily, Redoubted battaile ready to darrayne, And clash their shields, and shake their swerds on hy, That with their sturre they troubled all the traine; Till that great Queene, upon eternall paine Of high displeasure that ensewen might, Commaunded them their fury to refraine; And, if that either to that shield had right, In equall lists they should the morrow next it fight.

“Ah dearest Dame,” quoth then the Paynim bold, “Pardon the error of enraged wight, Whome great griefe made forgett the raines to hold Of reasons rule, to see this recreaunt knight, No knight, but treachour full of false despight And shameful treason, who through guile hath slayn The prowest knight that ever field did fight, Even stout Sansfoy, (O who can then refrayn?) Whose shield he beares renverst, the more to heap disdayn.

“And, to augment the glorie of his guile, His dearest love, the faire Fidessa, loe! Is there possessed of the traytour vile; Who reapes the harvest sowen by his foe, Sowen in bloodie field, and bought with woe: That brothers hand shall dearely well requight, So be, O Queene! you equall favour showe.” Him litle answerd th’angry Elfin knight; He never meant with words, but swords, to plead his right:

But threw his gauntlet, as a sacred pledge His cause in combat the next day to try: So been they parted both, with harts on edge To be aveng’d each on his enimy. That night they pas in joy and jollity, Feasting and courting both in bowre and hall; For Steward was excessive Gluttony, That of his plenty poured forth to all Which doen,

the Chamberlain, Slowth, did to rest them call.

Now whenas darkesome night had all displayd Her cole-blacke curtein over brightest skye; The warlike youthes, on dayntie couches layd, Did chace away sweet sleepe from sluggish eye, To muse on meanes of hoped victory. But whenas Morpheus had with leaden mace Arrested all that courtly company, Uprose Duessa from her resting place, And to the Paynims lodging comes with silent pace.

Whom broad awake she findes, in troublous fitt, Fore-casting how his foe he might annoy; And him amoves with speaches seeming fitt: “Ah deare Sansjoy, next dearest to Sansfoy, Cause of my new griefe, cause of my new joy; Joyous to see his ymage in mine eye, And greevd to thinke how foe did him destroy, That was the flowre of grace and chevalrye; Lo! his Fidessa, to thy secret faith I flye.”

With gentle wordes he can her fayrely greet, And bad say on the secrete of her hart. Then, sighing soft; “I learne that litle sweet Oft tempred is,” (quoth she,) “with muchell smart: For since my brest was launcht with lovely dart Of deare Sansfoy, I never joyed howre, But in eternall woes my weaker hart Have wasted, loving him with all my powre, And for his sake have felt full many an heavie stowre.

“At last, when perils all I weened past, And hop’d to reape the crop of all my care, Into new woes unweeting I was cast By this false faytor, who unworthie ware His worthie shield; whom he with guilefull snare Entrapped slew, and brought to shamefull grave: Me, silly maid, away with him he bare, And ever since hath kept in darksom cave, For that I would not yeeld that to Sansfoy I gave.

“But since faire Sunne hath sperst that lowring clowd, And to my loathed life now shewes some light, Under your beames I will me safely shrowd From dreaded storme of his disdainfull spight: To you th’inheritance belonges by right Of brothers prayse, to you eke longes his love. Let not his love, let not his restlesse spright, Be unreveng’d, that calles to you above From wandring Stygian shores, where it doth endlesse move.”

Thereto said he, “Faire Dame, be nought dismaid For sorrowes past; their griefe is with them gone: Ne yet of present perill be affraid, For needlesse feare did never vantage none; And helplesse hap it booteth not to mone. Dead is Sansfoy, his vitall paines are past, Though greeved ghost for vengeance deep do grone: He lives that shall him pay his dewties last, And guiltie Elfin blood shall sacrifice in hast.”

“O! but I feare the fickle freakes,” (quoth shee) “Of fortune false, and oddes of armes in field.” “Why, dame,” (quoth he) “what oddes can ever bee, Where both doe fight alike, to win or yield?” “Yea, but,” (quoth she) “he beares a charmed shield, And eke enchaunted armes, that none can perce; Ne none can wound the man that does them wield.” “Charmed or enchaunted,” answerd he then ferce, “I no whitt reck; ne you the like need to reherce.

“But, faire Fidessa, sithens fortunes guile, Or enimies powre, hath now captived you, Returne from whence ye came, and rest a while, Till morrow next that I the Elfe subdew, And with Sansfoyes dead dowry you endew.” “Ah me! that is a double death,” (she said) “With proud foes sight my sorrow to renew: Where ever yet I be, my secret aide Shall follow you.” So, passing forth, she him obaid.

Canto V

The faithful knight in equal field Subdues his faithlesse foe; Whom false Duessa saves, and for His cure to hell does goe.

The noble hart that harbours vertuous thought, And is with childe of glorious great intent, Can never rest, untill it forth have brought Th’eternall brood of glorie excellent: Such restlesse passion did all night torment The flaming corage of that Faery knight, Devizing how that doughtie turnament With greatest honour he atchieven might: Still did he wake, and still did watch for dawning light.

At last, the golden Orientall gate Of greatest heaven gan to open fayre; And Phoebus, fresh as brydegrome to his mate, Came dauncing forth, shaking his deawie

hayre, And hurld his glistring beams through gloomy ayre. Which when the wakeful Elfe perceiv'd, streight way, He started up, and did him selfe prepayre In sunbright armes, and battailous array; For with that Pagan proud he combatt will that day.

And forth he comes into the commune hall; Where earely waite him many a gazing eye, To weet what end to straunger knights may fall. There many Minstrales maken melody, To drive away the dull melancholy; And many Bardes, that to the trembling chord Can tune their timely voices cunningly; And many Chroniclers, that can record Old loves, and warres for Ladies doen by many a Lord.

Soone after comes the cruell Sarazin, In woven maile all armed warily; And sternly lookes at him, who not a pin Does care for looke of living creatures eye. They bring them wines of Greece and Araby, And daintie spices fetch from furthest Ynd, To kindle heat of corage privily; And in the wine a solemne oth they bynd T'observe the sacred lawes of armes that are assynd.

At last forth comes that far renowmed Queene: With royall pomp and princely majestie She is ybrought unto a paled greene, And placed under stately canapee, The warlike feates of both those knights to see. On th'other side in all mens open vew Duessa placed is, and on a tree Sansfoy his shield is hangd with bloody hew; Both those the lawrell girlonds to the victor dew.

A shrilling trompett sownded from on hye, And unto battaill bad them selves addresse: Their shining shieldes about their wrestes they tye, And burning blades about their heades doe blesse, The instruments of wrath and heavinesse. With greedy force each other doth assayle, And strike so fiercely, that they do impresse Deepe dinted furrowes in the battred mayle: The yron walles to ward their blowes are weak and fraile.

The Sarazin was stout and wondrous strong, And heaped blowes like yron hammers great; For after blood and vengeance he did long: The knight was fiers, and full of youthly heat, And doubled strokes, like dreaded thunders threat; For all for praise

and honour he did fight. Both stricken stryke, and beaten both doe beat, That from their shields forth flyeth fine light, And hewen helmets deepe shew marks of eithers might.

So th'one for wrong, the other strives for right. As when a Gryfon, seized of his pray, A Dragon fiers encountreth in his flight, Through widest ayre making his ydle way, That would his rightfull ravine rend away: With hideous horror both together smight, And souce so sore that they the heavens affray; The wise Southsayer, seeing so sad sight, Th'amazed vulgar telles of warres and mortall fight.

So th'one for wrong, the other strives for right, And each to deadly shame would drive his foe: The cruell steele so greedily doth bight In tender flesh, that streames of blood down flow; With which the armes, that earst so bright did show, Into a pure vermillion now are dyde. Great ruth in all the gazers harts did grow, Seeing the gored woundes to gape so wyde, That victory they dare not wish to either side.

At last the Paynim chaunst to cast his eye, His suddein eye flaming with wrathfull fyre, Upon his brothers shield, which hong thereby: Therewith redoubled was his raging yre, And said; "Ah! wretched sonne of wofull syre, Doest thou sit wayling by blacke Stygian lake, Whylest here thy shield is hangd for victors hyre? And, sluggish german, doest thy forces slake To after-send his foe, that him may overtake?

"Goe, caytive Elfe, him quickly overtake, And soone redeeme from his long-wandring woe: Goe, guiltie ghost, to him my message make, That I his shield have quit from dying foe." Therewith upon his crest he stroke him so, That twise he reeled, readie twise to fall: End of the doubtfull battaile deemed tho The lookers on; and lowd to him gan call The false Duessa, "Thine the shield, and I, and all!"

Soone as the Faerie heard his Ladie speake, Out of his swowning dreame he gan awake; And quickning faith, that earst was woxen weake, The creeping deadly cold away did shake: Tho mov'd with wrath, and shame, and Ladies sake, Of all attonce

he cast avengd to be, And with so' exceeding furie at him strake, That forced him to stoupe upon his knee: Had he not stouped so, he should have cloven bee.

And to him said; "Goe now, proud Miscreant, Thyselfe thy message do to german deare; Alone he, wandring, thee too long doth want: Goe say, his foe thy shield with his doth beare." Therewith his heavie hand he high gan reare, Him to have slaine; when lo! a darkesome clowd Upon him fell: he no where doth appeare, But vanisht is. The Elfe him calls alowd, But answer none receives; the darknes him does shrowd.

In haste Duessa from her place arose, And to him running said; "O! prowest knight, That ever Ladie to her love did chose, Let now abate the terrour of your might, And quench the flame of furious despight, And bloodie vengeance: lo! th'infernall powres, Covering your foe with cloud of deadly night, Have borne him hence to Plutoes balefull bowres: The conquest yours, I yours, the shield and glory yours."

Not all so satisfide, with greedy eye He sought all round about, his thristy blade To bathe in blood of faithlesse enimy; Who all that while lay hid in secret shade. He standes amazed how he thence should fade: At last the trumpets Triumph sound on hie; And running Heralds humble homage made, Greeting him goodly with new victorie, And to him brought the shield, the cause of enmitie.

Wherewith he goeth to that soveraine Queene; And falling her before on lowly knee, To her makes present of his service seene: Which she accepts with thankes and goodly gree, Greatly advauncing his gay chevalree: So marcheth home, and by her takes the knight, Whom all the people followe with great glee, Shouting, and clapping all their hands on hight, That all the ayre it fills, and flyes to heaven bright.

Home is he brought, and layd in sumptous bed, Where many skilfull leaches him abide To salve his hurts, that yet still freshly bled. In wine and oyle they wash his woundes wide, And softly gan embalme on everie side: And all the while most heavenly melody About the bed sweet musicke did divide, Him to beguile of griefe

and agony; And all the while Duessa wept full bitterly.

As when a wearie traveiler, that strayes By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed Nile, Unweeting of the perillous wandring wayes, Doth meete a cruell craftie Crocodile, Which, in false griefe hyding his harmefull guile, Doth weepe full sore, and sheddeth tender teares; The foolish man, that pities all this while His mournefull plight, is swallowed up unwares, Forgetfull of his owne that mindes an others cares.

So wept Duessa untill eventyde, That shyning lampes in Joves high house were light; Then forth she rose, ne lenger would abide, But comes unto the place where th'Hethen knight, In slombring swownd, nigh voyd of vitall spright, Lay cover'd with inchaunted cloud all day: Whom when she found, as she him left in plight, To wayle his wofull case she would not stay, But to the Easterne coast of heaven makes speedy way:

Where griesly Night, with visage deadly sad, That Phœbus chearefull face durst never vew, And in a foule blacke pitchy mantle clad, She findes forth comming from her darksome mew, Where she all day did hide her hated hew. Before the dore her yron charet stood, Already harnessed for journey new, And cole blacke steedes yborne of hellish brood, That on their rusty bits did champ as they were wood.

Who when she saw Duessa, sunny bright, Adornd with gold and jewels shining cleare, She greatly grew amazed at the sight, And th'unacquainted light began to feare, For never did such brightnes there appeare; And would have backe retyred to her cave, Untill the witches speach she gan to heare, Saying; "Yet, O thou dreaded Dame! I crave Abyde, till I have told the message which I have."

She stayd; and foorth Duessa gan proceede: "O! thou most auncient Grandmother of all, More old then Jove, whom thou at first didst breede, Or that great house of Gods cælestiall, Which wast begot in Dæmogorgons hall, And sawst the secrets of the world unmade: Why suffredst thou thy Nephewes deare to fall, With Elfin sword most shamefully betrade? Lo! where the stout Sansjoy doth sleepe in deadly shade.

“And him before, I saw with bitter eyes The bold Sansfoy shrinck underneath his speare: And now the pray of fowles in field he lyes, Nor wayld of friends, nor layd on groning beare, That whylome was to me too dearely deare. O! what of gods then boots it to be borne, If old Aveugles sonnes so evill heare? Or who shall not great Nightes children scorne, When two of three her Nephewes are so fowle forlorne?

“Up, then! up, dreary Dame, of darknes Queene! Go, gather up the reliques of thy race; Or else goe them avenge, and let be seene That dreaded Night in brightest day hath place, And can the children of fayre light deface.” Her feeling speaches some compassion mov’d In hart, and chaunge in that great mothers face: Yet pitty in her hart was never prov’d Till then, for evermore she hated, never lov’d:

And said, “Deare daughter, rightly may I rew The fall of famous children borne of mee, And good successes which their foes ensew: But who can turne the stream of destinee, Or breake the chayne of strong necessitee, Which fast is tyde to Joves eternall seat? The sonnes of Day he favoureth, I see, And by my ruines thinkes to make them great: To make one great by others losse is bad excheat.

“Yet shall they not escape so freely all, For some shall pay the price of others guilt; And he the man that made Sansfoy to fall, Shall with his owne blood price that he hath spilt. But what art thou, that telst of Nephews kilt?” “I, that do seeme not I, Duessa ame,” Quoth she, “how ever now, in garments gilt And gorgeous gold arayd, I to thee came, Duessa I, the daughter of Deceipt and Shame.”

Then, bowing downe her aged backe, she kist The wicked witch, saying, “In that fayre face The false resemblaunce of Deceipt, I wist, Did closely lurke; yet so true-seeming grace It carried, that I scarse in darksome place Could it discerne, though I the mother bee Of falshood, and roote of Duessaes race. O welcome, child! whom I have longd to see, And now have seene unwares. Lo! now I goe with thee.”

Then to her yron wagon she betakes, And with her beares the fowle welfavourd witch. Through mirkesome aire her ready way she makes: Her twyfold Teme, of

which two blacke as pitch, And two were browne, yet each to each unlich, Did softly swim away, ne ever stamp Unlesse she chaunst their stubborne mouths to twitch; Then, foming tarre, their bridles they would champ, And trampling the fine element would fiercely ramp.

So well they sped, that they be come at length Unto the place whereas the Paynim lay, Devoid of outward sence and native strength, Coverd with charmed cloud from vew of day, And sight of men, since his late luckelesse fray. His cruell wounds, with cruddy bloud congeald, They binden up so wisely as they may, And handle softly, till they can be heald: So lay him in her charett, close in night conceald.

And, all the while she stood upon the ground, The wakefull dogs did never cease to bay, As giving warning of th'unwonted sound, With which her yron wheeles did them affray, And her darke griesly looke them much dismay: The messenger of death, the ghastly owle, With drery shriekes did also her bewray; And hungry wolves continually did howle At her abhorred face, so filthy and so fowle.

Thence turning backe in silence softe they stole, And brought the heavy corse with easy pace To yawning gulfe of deepe Avernus hole. By that same hole an entraunce, darke and bace, With smoake and sulphur hiding all the place, Descends to hell: there creature never past, That backe retourned without heavenly grace; But dreadfull Furies, which their chaines have brast, And damned sprights sent forth to make ill men aghast.

By that same way the direfull dames doe drive Their mournefull charett, fild with rusty blood, And downe to Plutoes house are come bilive: Which passing through, on every side them stood The trembling ghosts with sad amazed mood, Chattring their iron teeth, and staring wide With stony eies; and all the hellish brood Of feends infernall flockt on every side, To gaze on erthly wight that with the Night durst ride.

They pas the bitter waves of Acheron, Where many soules sit wailing woefully, And come to fiery flood of Phlegeton, Whereas the damned ghosts in torments fry, And

with sharp shrilling shriekes doe bootlesse cry, Cursing high Jove, the which them thither sent. The house of endlesse paine is built thereby, In which ten thousand sorts of punishment The cursed creatures doe eternally torment.

Before the threshold dreadfull Cerberus His three deformed heads did lay along, Curled with thousand adders venemous, And lilled forth his bloody flaming tong: At them he gan to reare his bristles strong, And felly gnarre, untill Dayes enemy Did him appease; then downe his taile he hong, And suffered them to passen quietly; For she in hell and heaven had power equally.

There was Ixion turned on a wheele, For daring tempt the Queene of heaven to sin; And Sisyphus an huge round stone did reele Against an hill, ne might from labour lin; There thristy Tantalus hong by the chin; And Tityus fed a vultur on his maw; Typhœus joynts were stretched on a gin; Theseus condemned to endlesse slouth by law; And fifty sisters water in leke vessels draw.

They all, beholding worldly wights in place, Leave off their worke, unmindfull of their smart, To gaze on them; who forth by them doe pace, Till they be come unto the furthest part; Where was a Cave ywrought by wondrous art, Deepe, darke, uneasy, dolefull, comfortlesse, In which sad Aesculapius far apart Emprisond was in chaines remedilesse; For that Hippolytus rent corse he did redresse.

Hippolytus a jolly huntsman was, That wont in charett chace the foming bore: He all his Peeres in beauty did surpas, But Ladies love as losse of time forbore: His wanton stepdame loved him the more; But, when she saw her offred sweets refusd, Her love she turnd to hate, and him before His father fierce of treason false accusd And with her gealous termes his open eares abusd:

Who, all in rage, his Sea-god syre besought Some cursed vengeaunce on his sonne to cast. From surging gulf two Monsters streight were brought, With dread whereof his chacing steedes aghast Both charett swifte and huntsman overcast: His goodly corps, on ragged cliffs yrent, Was quite dismembred, and his members chast

Scattered on every mountaine as he went, That of Hippolytus was lefte no moniment.

His cruell stepdame, seeing what was donne, Her wicked daies with wretched knife did end, In death avowing th'innocence of her sonne. Which hearing, his rash syre began to rend His heare, and hasty tong that did offend: Tho, gathering up the reliques of his smart, By Dianes meanes, who was Hippolyts frend, Them brought to Aesculape, that by his art Did heale them all againe, and joyned every part.

Such wondrous science in mans witt to rain When Jove avizd, that could the dead revive, And fates expired could renew again, Of endlesse life he might him not deprive, But unto hell did thrust him downe alive, With flashing thunderbolt ywounded sore: Where, long remaining, he did alwaies strive Himselfe with salves to health for to restore, And slake the heavenly fire that raged evermore.

There auncient Night arriving did alight From her nigh weary wayne, and in her armes To Aesculapius brought the wounded knight: Whome having softly disaraid of armes, Tho gan to him discover all his harmes, Beseeching him with prayer and with praise, If either salves, or oyles, or herbes, or charmes, A fordonne wight from dore of death mote raise, He would at her request prolong her nephews daies.

"Ah Dame," (quoth he) "thou temptest me in vaine, To dare the thing, which daily yet I rew, And the old cause of my continued paine With like attempt to like end to renew. Is not enough, that, thrust from heaven dew, Here endlesse penaunce for one fault I pay, But that redoubled crime with vengeaunce new Thou biddest me to eeke? Can Night defray The wrath of thundring Jove, that rules both night and day?"

"Not so," (quoth she) "but, sith that heavens king From hope of heaven hath thee excluded quight, Why fearest thou, that canst not hope for thing; And fearest not that more thee hurten might, Now in the powre of everlasting Night? Goe to then, O thou far renowmed sonne Of great Apollo! shew thy famous might In medicine, that els hath to thee wonne Great pains, and greater praise, both never to be donne."

Her words prevaild: And then the learned leach His cunning hand gan to his wounds to lay, And all things els the which his art did teach: Which having seene, from thence arose away The mother of dredd darknesse, and let stay Aveugles sonne there in the leaches cure; And, backe retourning, took her wonted way To ronne her timely race, whilst Phoebus pure In westerne waves his weary wagon did recure.

The false Duessa, leaving noyous Night, Returnd to stately pallace of Dame Pryde: Where when she came, she found the Faery knight Departed thence; albee his woundes wyde Not throughly heald unready were to ryde. Good cause he had to hasten thence away; For on a day his wary Dwarfe had spyde Where in a dungeon deepe huge nombers lay Of caytive wretched thralls, that wayled night and day:

A ruefull sight as could be seene with eie, Of whom he learned had in secret wise The hidden cause of their captivitie; How mortgaging their lives to Covetise, Through wastfull Pride and wanton Riotise, They were by law of that proud Tyrannesse, Provokt with Wrath and Envyes false surmise, Condemned to that Dongeon mercilesse, Where they should live in wo, and dye in wretchednesse.

There was that great proud king of Babylon, That would compell all nations to adore, And him as onely God to call upon; Till, through celestiall doome thrown out of dore, Into an Oxe he was transformd of yore. There also was king Crœsus, that enhaunst His hart too high through his great richesse store; And proud Antiochus, the which advaunst His cursed hand gainst God, and on his altares daunst.

And them long time before, great Nimrod was, That first the world with sword and fire warrayd; And after him old Ninus far did pas In princely pomp, of all the world obayd. There also was that mightie Monarch layd Low under all, yet above all in pride, That name of native syre did fowle upbrayd, And would as Ammons sonne be magnifide, Till, scornd of God and man, a shamefull death he dide.

All these together in one heape were throwne, Like carkases of beastes in butchers stall. And in another corner wide were strowne The Antique ruins of the Romanes

fall: Great Romulus, the Grandsyre of them all; Proud Tarquin, and too lordly Lentulus; Stout Scipio, and stubborne Hanniball; Ambitious Sylla, and sterne Marius; High Caesar, great Pompey, and fiers Antonius.

Amongst these mightie men were wemen mixt, Proud wemen, vaine, forgetfull of their yoke: The bold Semiramis, whose sides transfixt With sonnes own blade her fowle reproches spoke: Fayre Sthenobœa, that her selfe did choke With wilfull chord for wanting of her will; High minded Cleopatra, that with stroke Of Aspes sting her selfe did stoutly kill; And thousands moe the like that did that dongeon fill.

Besides the endlesse routes of wretched thralles, Which thither were assembled day by day From all the world, after their wofull falles, Through wicked pride and wasted welthes decay. But most of all, which in that dongeon lay, Fell from high Princes courtes, or Ladies bowres, Where they in ydle pomp, or wanton play, Consumed had their goods and thriftlesse howres, And lastly thrown themselves into these heavy stowres.

Whose case whenas the careful Dwarfe had tould, And made ensample of their mournfull sight Unto his Maister, he no lenger would There dwell in perill of like painefull plight, But earely rose; and, ere that dawning light Discovered had the world to heaven wyde, He by a privy Posterne tooke his flight, That of no envious eyes he mote be spyde; For, doubtlesse, death ensewd if any him descryde.

Scarse could he footing find in that fowle way, For many corses, like a great Lay-stall, Of murdred men, which therein strowed lay Without remorse or decent funerall; Which al through that great Princesse pride did fall, And came to shamefull end. And them besyde, Forth ryding underneath the castell wall, A Donghill of dead carcases he spyde; The dreadfull spectacle of that sad house of Pryde.

Canto VI

From lawlesse lust by wondrous grace Fayre Una is releast: Whom salvage nation

does adore, And learnes her wise beheast.

As when a ship, that flyes fayre under sayle, An hidden rocke escaped hath unwares, That lay in waite her wrack for to bewaile, The Marriner yet halfe amazed stares At perill past, and yet in doubt ne dares To joy at his foolhappie oversight: So doubly is distrest twixt joy and cares The dreadlesse corage of this Elfin knight, Having escapt so sad ensamples in his sight.

Yet sad he was, that his too hastie speed The fayre Duess' had forst him leave behind; And yet more sad, that Una, his deare dreed, Her truth had staynd with treason so unkind: Yet cryme in her could never creature find; But for his love, and for her own selfe sake, She wandred had from one to other Ynd, Him for to seeke, ne ever would forsake, Till her unwares the fiers Sansloy did overtake:

Who, after Archimagoes fowle defeat, Led her away into a forest wilde; And, turning wrathfull fyre to lustfull heat, With beastly sin thought her to have defilde, And made the vassall of his pleasures vilde. Yet first he cast by treatie, and by traynes Her to persuade that stubborne fort to yilde: For greater conquest of hard love he gaynes, That workes it to his will, then he that it constraines.

With fawning wordes he courted her a while; And, looking lovely and oft sighing sore, Her constant hart did tempt with diverse guile. But wordes, and lookes, and sighes she did abhore; As rock of Diamond stedfast evermore. Yet for to feed his fyrie lustfull eye, He snatcht the vele that hong her face before: Then gan her beautie shyne as brightest skye, And burnt his beastly hart t'efforce her chastitye.

So when he saw his flatt'ring artes to fayle, And subtile engines bett from batteree; With greedy force he gan the fort assayle, Whereof he weend possessed soone to bee, And win rich spoile of ransackt chastitee. Ah heavens! that doe this hideous act behold, And heavenly virgin thus outraged see, How can ye vengeance just so long withhold, And hurle not flashing flames upon that Paynim bold?

The pitteous mayden, carefull, comfortlesse, Does throw out thrilling shriekes, and

shrieking cryes, The last vaine helpe of wemens great distresse, And with loud plaintes importuneth the skyes, That molten starres doe drop like weeping eyes; And Phœbus, flying so most shamefull sight, His blushing face in foggy cloud implyes, And hydes for shame. What witt of mortal wight Can now devise to quitt a thrall from such a plight?

Eternall providence, exceeding thought, Where none appeares can make her selfe a way. A wondrous way it for this Lady wrought, From Lyons clawes to pluck the gryped pray. Her shrill outcryes and shrieks so loud did bray, That all the woodes and forestes did resownd: A troupe of Faunes and Satyres far away Within the wood were dauncing in a rownd, Whiles old Sylvanus slept in shady arber sownd:

Who, when they heard that pitteous strained voice, In haste forsooke their rurall meriment, And ran towardes the far rebownded noyce, To weet what wight so loudly did lament. Unto the place they come incontinent: Whom when the raging Sarazin espyde, A rude, mishapen, monstrous rablement, Whose like he never saw, he durst not byde, But got his ready steed, and fast away gan ryde.

The wyld wood-gods, arrived in the place, There find the virgin, doolfull, desolate, With ruffled rayments, and fayre blubbred face, As her outrageous foe had left her late; And trembling yet through feare of former hate. All stand amazed at so uncouth sight, And gin to pittie her unhappie state: All stand astonied at her beautie bright, In their rude eyes unworthie of so wofull plight.

She, more amazd, in double dread doth dwell; And every tender part for feare does shake. As when a greedy Wolfe, through honger fell, A seely Lamb far from the flock does take, Of whom he meanes his bloody feast to make, A Lyon spyes fast running towards him, The innocent pray in hast he does forsake; Which, quitt from death, yet quakes in every lim, With chaunge of feare, to see the Lyon looke so grim.

Such fearefull fitt assaid her trembling hart, Ne word to speake, ne joynt to move,

she had; The salvage nation feele her secret smart, And read her sorrow in her count'nance sad; Their frowning forheades, with rough hornes yclad, And rustick horror, all asyde doe lay; And, gently grenning, shew a semblance glad To comfort her; and, feare to put away, Their backward bent knees teach her humbly to obay.

The doubtfull Damzell dare not yet committ Her single person to their barbarous truth; But still twixt feare and hope amazd does sitt, Late learnd what harme to hasty trust ensu'th. They, in compassion of her tender youth, And wonder of her beautie soverayne, Are wonne with pitty and unwonted ruth; And, all prostrate upon the lowly playne, Doe kisse her feete, and fawne on her with count'nance fayne.

Their harts she ghesseth by their humble guise, And yieldes her to extremitie of time: So from the ground she fearelesse doth arise, And walketh forth without suspect of crime. They, all as glad as birdes of joyous Pryme, Thence lead her forth, about her dauncing round, Shouting, and singing all a shepheards ryme; And with greene braunches strowing all the ground, Do worship her as Queene with olive girlond cround.

And all the way their merry pipes they sound, That all the woods with doubled Eccho ring; And with their horned feet doe weare the ground, Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant Spring. So towards old Sylvanus they her bring; Who, with the noyse awaked, commeth out To weet the cause, his weake steps governing And aged limbs on cypresse stadle stout; And with an yvie twyne his waste is girt about.

Far off he wonders what them makes so glad; Or Bacchus merry fruit they did invent, Or Cybeles franticke rites have made them mad: They, drawing nigh, unto their God present That flowre of fayth and beautie excellent. The God himselfe, vewing that mirrhour rare, Stood long amazd, and burnt in his intent: His owne fayre Dryope now he thinkes not faire, And Pholoe fowle, when her to this he doth compaire.

The woodborne people fall before her flat, And worship her as Goddesse of the

wood; And old Sylvanus selfe bethinkes not what To thinke of wight so fayre, but gazing stood In doubt to deeme her borne of earthly brood: Sometimes dame Venus selfe he seemes to see; But Venus never had so sober mood: Sometimes Diana he her takes to be, But misseth bow and shaftes, and buskins to her knee.

By vew of her he ginneth to revive His ancient love, and dearest Cyparisse; And calles to mind his pourtraiture alive, How fayre he was, and yet not fayre to this; And how he slew with glauncing dart amisse A gentle Hynd, the which the lovely boy Did love as life, above all worldly blisse; For griefe whereof the lad n'ould after joy, But pynd away in anguish and selfe-wild annoy.

The wooddy nymphes, faire Hamadryades, Her to behold do thither runne apace; And all the troupe of light-foot Naiades Flocke all about to see her lovely face; But, when they vewed have her heavenly grace, They envy her in their malitious mind, And fly away for feare of fowle disgrace: But all the Satyres scorne their woody kind, And henceforth nothing faire but her on earth they find.

Glad of such lucke, the luckelesse lucky mayd Did her content to please their feeble eyes, And long time with that salvage people stayd, To gather breath in many miseryes. During which time her gentle wit she plyes To teach them truth, which worshipt her in vaine, And made her th'Image of Idolatryes; But when their bootlesse zeale she did restrayne From her own worship, they her Asse would worship fayn.

It fortuned, a noble warlike knight By just occasion to that forrest came To seeke his kindred, and the lignage right From whence he tooke his weldeserved name: He had in armes abroad wonne muchell fame, And fild far landes with glorie of his might: Plaine, faithfull, true, and enimy of shame, And ever lov'd to fight for Ladies right; But in vaine glorious frayes he litle did delight.

A Satyres sonne, yborne in forrest wyld, By straunge adventure as it did betyde, And there begotten of a Lady myld, Fayre Thyamis, the daughter of Labryde; That was in

sacred bandes of wedlocke tyde To Therion, a loose unruly swayne, Who had more joy to raunge the forrest wyde, And chase the salvage beast with busie payne, Then serve his Ladies love, and waste in pleasures vayne.

The forlorne mayd did with loves longing burne, And could not lacke her lovers company; But to the woods she goes, to serve her turne, And seeke her spouse that from her still does fly, And followes other game and venery: A Satyre chaunst her wandring for to finde; And, kindling coles of lust in brutish eye, The loyall linkes of wedlocke did unbinde, And made her person thrall unto his beastly kind.

So long in secret cabin there he held Her captive to his sensuall desyre, Till that with timely fruit her belly sweld, And bore a boy unto that salvage syre: Then home he suffred her for to retyre, For ransome leaving him the late-borne childe; Whom, till to ryper yeares he gan aspyre, He nousled up in life and manners wilde, Emongst wild beastes and woods, from lawes of men exilde.

For all he taught the tender ymp was but To banish cowardize and bastard feare: His trembling hand he would him force to put Upon the Lyon and the rugged Beare; And from the she Beares teats her whelps to teare; And eke wyld roring Buls he would him make To tame, and ryde their backes, not made to beare; And the Robuckes in flight to overtake, That everie beast for feare of him did fly, and quake.

Thereby so fearlesse and so fell he grew, That his own syre, and maister of his guise, Did often tremble at his horrid vew; And oft, for dread of hurt, would him advise The angry beastes not rashly to despise, Nor too much to provoke; for he would learne The Lyon stoup to him in lowly wise, (A lesson hard) and make the Libbard sterne Leave roaring, when in rage he for revenge did earne.

And for to make his powre approved more, Wyld beastes in yron yokes he would compell; The spotted Panther, and the tusked Bore, The Pardale swift, and the Tigre cruell, The Antelope, and Wolfe both fiers and fell; And them constraine in equall teme to draw. Such joy he had their stubborne harts to quell, And sturdie courage

tame with dreadfull aw, That his beheast they feared as a tyrans law.

His loving mother came upon a day Unto the woodes, to see her little sonne; And chaunst unwares to meet him in the way, After his sportes and cruell pastime donne; When after him a Lyonesse did runne, That roaring all with rage did lowd requere Her children deare, whom he away had wonne: The Lyon whelpes she saw how he did beare, And lull in rugged armes withouten childish feare.

The fearefull Dame all quaked at the sight, And turning backe gan fast to fly away; Untill, with love revokt from vaine affright, She hardly yet perswaded was to stay, And then to him these womanish words gan say: “Ah Satyrane, my dearling and my joy, For love of me leave off this dreadfull play; To dally thus with death is no fit toy: Go, find some other play-fellowes, mine own sweet boy.”

In these and like delightes of bloody game He trayned was, till ryper years he raught; And there abode, whylst any beast of name Walkt in that forrest, whom he had not taught To feare his force: and then his courage haught Desyrd of forreine foemen to be knowne, And far abroad for straunge adventures sought; In which his might was never overthrowne; But through al Faery lond his famous worth was blown.

Yet evermore it was his maner faire, After long labours and adventures spent, Unto those native woods for to repaire, To see his syre and ofspring auncient. And now he thither came for like intent; Where he unwares the fairest Una found; Straunge Lady in so straunge habiliment, Teaching the Satyres, which her sat around, Trew sacred lore, which from her sweet lips did redound.

He wondred at her wisedome hevenly rare, Whose like in womens witt he never knew; And, when her curteous deeds he did compare, Gan her admire, and her sad sorrowes rew; Blaming of Fortune, which such troubles threw, And joyd to make proofe of her cruelty On gentle Dame, so hurtlesse and so trew: Thenceforth he kept her goodly company, And learnd her discipline of faith and verity.

But she, all vowd unto the Redcrosse Knight, His wandring perill closely did lament, Ne in this new acquaintaunce could delight; But her deare heart with anguish did torment, And all her witt in secret counsels spent, How to escape. At last in privy wise To Satyrane she shewed her intent; Who, glad to gain such favour, gan devise, How with that pensive Maid he best might thence arise.

So on a day, when Satyres all were gone To do their service to Sylvanus old, The gentle virgin, left behinde alone, He led away with corage stout and bold. Too late it was to Satyres to be told, Or ever hope recover her againe: In vaine he seekes that having cannot hold. So fast he carried her with carefull paine, That they the woods are past, and come now to the plaine.

The better part now of the lingring day They traveild had, whenas they far espide A weary wight forwandring by the way; And towards him they gan in haste to ride, To weete of newes that did abroad betide, Or tidings of her knight of the Redcrosse; But he them spying gan to turne aside For feare, as seemd, or for some feigned losse: More greedy they of newes fast towards him do crosse.

A silly man, in simple weeds forworne, And soild with dust of the long dried way; His sandales were with toilsome travell torne, And face all tand with scorching sunny ray, As he had traveild many a sommers day Through boyling sands of Arabie and Ynde, And in his hand a Jacobs staffe, to stay His weary limbs upon; and eke behind His scrip did hang, in which his needments he did bind.

The knight, approching nigh, of him inquerd Tidings of warre, and of adventures new; But warres, nor new adventures, none he herd. Then Una gan to aske, if ought he knew, Or heard abroad of that her champion trew, That in his armour bare a croslet red? “Ay me! Deare dame,” (quoth he) “well may I rew To tell the sad sight which mine eies have red; These eies did see that knight both living and eke ded.”

That cruell word her tender hart so thrild, That suddein cold did ronne through every vaine, And stony horrour all her sences fild With dying fitt, that downe she fell for

paine. The knight her lightly reared up againe, And comforted with curteous kind reliefe: Then, wonne from death, she bad him tellen plaine The further processe of her hidden griefe: The lesser pangs can beare who hath endur'd the chief.

Then gan the Pilgrim thus: "I chaunst this day, This fatall day that shall I ever rew, To see two knights, in travell on my way, (A sory sight) arraung'd in batteill new, Both breathing vengeaunce, both of wrathfull hew. My feareful flesh did tremble at their strife, To see their blades so greedily imbrew, That, dronke with blood, yet thristed after life: What more? the Redcrosse knight was slain with Paynim knife."

"Ah! dearest Lord," (quoth she) "how might that bee, And he the stoutest knight that ever wonne?" "Ah! dearest dame," (quoth hee) "how might I see The thing that might not be, and yet was donne?" "Where is," (said Satyrane) "that Paynims sonne, That him of life, and us of joy, hath refte?" "Not far away," (quoth he) "he hence doth wonne, Foreby a fountaine, where I late him lefte Washing his bloody wounds, that through the steele were cleft."

Therewith the knight thence marched forth in hast, Whiles Una, with huge heavinesse opprest, Could not for sorrow follow him so fast; And soone he came, as he the place had ghest, Whereas that Pagan proud him selfe did rest In secret shadow by a fountaine side: Even he it was, that earst would have suppress Faire Una; whom when Satyrane espide, With foule reprochfull words he boldly him defide.

And said; "Arise, thou cursed Miscreaunt, That hast with knightlesse guile, and trecherous train, Faire knighthood fowly shamed, and doest vaunt That good knight of the Redcrosse to have slain: Arise, and with like treason now maintain Thy guilty wrong, or els thee guilty yield." The Sarazin, this hearing, rose amain, And, catching up in hast his three-square shield And shining helmet, soone him buckled to the field.

And, drawing nigh him, said; "Ah! misborn Elfe, In evill houre thy foes thee hither sent Anothers wrongs to wreak upon thy selfe: Yet ill thou blamest me for having

blent My name with guile and traiterous intent: That Redcrosse knight, perdie, I never slew; But had he beene where earst his armes were lent, Th'enchaunter vaine his errour should not rew: But thou his errour shalt, I hope, now proven trew."

Therewith they gan, both furious and fell, To thunder blowes, and fiersly to assaile Each other, bent his enimy to quell, That with their force they perst both plate and maile, And made wide furrowes in their fleshes fraile, That it would pitty any living eie. Large floods of blood adowne their sides did raile; But floods of blood could not them satisfie: Both hongred after death; both chose to win, or die.

So long they fight, and full revenge pursue, That, fainting, each themselves to breathen lett, And, ofte refreshed, battell oft renue. As when two Bores, with rancling malice mett, Their gory sides fresh bleeding fiercely frett; Til breathlesse both themselves aside retire, Where foming wrath their cruell tuskes they whett, And trample th'earth, the whiles they may respire, Then backe to fight againe, new breathed and entire.

So fiersly, when these knights had breathed once, They gan to fight retourne, increasing more Their puissant force, and cruell rage attonce, With heaped strokes more hugely then before; That with their drery wounds, and bloody gore, They both, deformed, scarsely could bee known. By this, sad Una fraught with anguish sore, Led with their noise which through the aire was thrown, Arriv'd wher they in erth their fruitles blood had sown.

Whom all so soone as that proud Sarazin Espide, he gan revive the memory Of his leud lusts, and late attempted sin, And lefte the doubtfull battell hastily, To catch her, newly offred to his eie; But Satyrane, with strokes him turning, staid, And sternely bad him other businesse plie Then hunt the steps of pure unspotted Maid: Wherewith he al enrag'd these bitter speaches said.

"O foolish faeries' sonne! what fury mad Hath thee incenst to hast thy dolefull fate? Were it not better I that Lady had Then that thou hadst repented it too late? Most

sencelesse man he, that himselfe doth hate, To love another: Lo! then, for thine ayd, Here take thy lovers token on thy pate." So they to fight; the whiles the royall Mayd Fledd farre away, of that proud Paynim sore afrayd.

But that false Pilgrim, which that leasing told, Being in deed old Archimage, did stay In secret shadow all this to behold; And much rejoyced in their bloody fray: But, when he saw the Damsell passe away, He left his stond, and her pursewd apace, In hope to bring her to her last decay. But for to tell her lamentable cace, And eke this battels end, will need another place.

Canto VII

The Redcrosse knight is captive made By Gyaunt proud apprest: Prince Arthure meets with Una great Ly with those news distrest.

What man so wise, what earthly witt so ware, As to discry the crafty cunning traine, By which deceipt doth maske in visour faire, And cast her coulours, died deepe in graine, To seeme like truth, whose shape she well can faine, And fitting gestures to her purpose frame, The guiltlesse man with guile to entertaine? Great maistresse of her art was that false Dame, The false Duessa, cloked with Fidessaes name.

Who when, returning from the drery Night, She fownd not in that perilous hous of Pryde, Where she had left the noble Redcrosse knight, Her hoped pray, she would no lenger byde, But forth she went to seeke him far and wide. Ere long she fownd, whereas he wearie sate To reste him selfe foreby a fountaine syde, Disarmed all of yron-coted Plate; And by his side his steed the grassy forage ate.

Hee feedes upon the cooling shade, and bayes His sweatie forehead in the breathing wynd, Which through the trembling leaves full gently playes, Wherein the chearefull birds of sundry kynd Doe chaunt sweet musick to delight his mynd. The witch approching gan him fayrely greet, And with reproch of carelesnes unkynd Upbrayd, for leaving her in place unmeet, With fowle words tempring faire, soure gall with

hony sweet.

Unkindnesse past, they gan of solace treat, And bathe in pleasaunce of the joyous shade, Which shielded them against the boyling heat, And with greene boughes decking a gloomy glade, About the fountaine like a girlond made; Whose bubbling wave did ever freshly well, Ne ever would through fervent sommer fade: The sacred Nymph, which therein wont to dwell, Was out of Dianes favor, as it then befell.

The cause was this: one day, when Phœbe fayre With all her band was following the chace, This nymph, quite tyr'd with heat of scorching ayre, Satt downe to rest in middest of the race: The goddesse wroth gan fowly her disgrace, And badd the waters, which from her did flow, Be such as she her selfe was then in place. Thenceforth her waters wexed dull and slow, And all that drinke thereof do faint and feeble grow.

Hereof this gentle knight imweeting was; And lying downe upon the sandie graile, Dronke of the streame, as cleare as christall glas: Eftsoones his manly forces gan to fayle, And mightie strong was turnd to feeble frayle. His chaunged powres at first them selves not felt; Till crudled cold his corage gan assayle, And cheareful blood in fayntnes chill did melt, Which like a fever fit through all his bodie swelt.

Yet goodly court he made still to his Dame, Pourd out in loosnesse on the grassy grownd, Both carelesse of his health, and of his fame; Till at the last he heard a dreadfull sownd, Which through the wood loud bellowing did rebownd, That all the earth for terror seemd to shake, And trees did tremble. Th'Elfe, therewith astownd, Upstarted lightly from his looser make, And his unready weapons gan in hand to take.

But ere he could his armour on him dight, Or gett his shield, his monstrous enimy With sturdie steps came stalking in his sight, An hideous Geaunt, horrible and hye, That with his tallnesse seemd to threat the skye; The ground eke groned under him for dreed: His living like saw never living eye, Ne durst behold: his stature did

exceed The hight of three the tallest sonnes of mortall seed.

The greatest Earth his uncouth mother was, And blustring Æolus his boasted syre; Who with his breath, which through the world doth pas, Her hollow womb did secretly inspyre, And fild her hidden caves with stormie yre, That she conceiv'd; and trebling the dew time In which the wombes of wemen doe expyre, Brought forth this monstrous masse of earthly slyme, Puft up with emptie wynd, and fild with sinfull cryme.

So growen great, through arrogant delight Of th'high descent whereof he was yborne, And through presumption of his matchlesse might, All other powres and knighthood he did scorne. Such now he marcheth to this man forlorne, And left to losse; his stalking steps are stayde Upon a snaggy Oke, which he had torne Out of his mothers bowelles, and it made His mortall mace, wherewith his foemen he dismayde.

That, when the knight he spyde, he gan advaunce With huge force and insupportable mayne, And towardes him with dreadfull fury praunce; Who haplesse, and eke hopelesse, all in vaine Did to him pace sad battaile to darrayne, Disarmd, disgraste, and inwardly dismayde; And eke so faint in every joynt and vayne, Through that fraile fountain which him feeble made, That scarsely could he weeld his bootlesse single blade.

The Geaunt strooke so maynly mercilesse, That could have overthrowne a stony towre; And, were not hevenly grace that did him blesse, He had beene pouldred all as thin as flowre: But he was wary of that deadly stowre, And lightly lept from underneath the blow: Yet so exceeding was the villeins powre, That with the winde it did him overthrow, And all his sences stound that still he lay full low.

As when that divelish yron Engin, wrought In deepest Hell, and framd by Furies skill, With windy Nitre and quick Sulphur fraught, And ramd with bollet rownd, ordaind to kill, Conceiveth fyre, the heavens it doth fill With thundring noyse, and

all the ayre doth choke, That none can breath, nor see, nor heare at will, Through smouldry cloud of duskish stincking smoke; That th'only breath him daunts, who hath escapt the stroke.

So daunted when the Geaunt saw the knight, His heavie hand he heaved up on hye, And him to dust thought to have battred quight, Untill Duessa loud to him gan crye, "O great Orgoglio! greatest under skye, O! hold thy mortall hand for Ladies sake; Hold for my sake, and doe him not to dye, But vanquisht thine eternall bondslave make, And me, thy worthy meed, unto thy Leman take."

He hearkned, and did stay from further harmes, To gayne so goodly guerdon as she spake: So willingly she came into his armes, Who her as willingly to grace did take, And was possessed of his newfound make. Then up he tooke the slombred sencelesse corse, And, ere he could out of his swowne awake, Him to his castle brought with hastie forse, And in a Dongeon deepe him threw without remorse.

From that day forth Duessa was his deare, And highly honourd in his haughtie eye: He gave her gold and purple pall to weare, And triple crowne set on her head full hye, And her endowd with royall majestye. Then, for to make her dreaded more of men, And peoples hartes with awfull terror tye, A monstrous beast ybredd in filthy fen He chose, which he had kept long time in darksom den.

Such one it was, as that renowmed Snake Which great Alcides in Stremona slew, Long fostred in the filth of Lerna lake: Whose many heades, out budding ever new, Did breed him endlesse labor to subdew. But this same Monster much more ugly was, For seven great heads out of his body grew, An yron brest, and back of scaly bras, And all embrewd in blood his eyes did shine as glas.

His tayle was stretched out in wondrous length, That to the hous of hevenly gods it raught: And with extorted powre, and borrow'd strength, The everburning lamps from thence it braught, And prowdly threw to ground, as things of naught; And underneath his filthy feet did tread The sacred thinges, and holy heastes foretaught.

Upon this dreadfull Beast with sevenfold head He sett the false Duessa, for more aw and dread.

The wofull Dwarfe, which saw his maisters fall Whiles he had keeping of his grasing steed, And valiant knight become a caytive thrall, When all was past, tooke up his forlorne weed; His mightie Armour, missing most at need; His silver shield, now idle, maisterlesse; His poynant speare that many made to bleed, The rueful moniments of heavinesse; And with them all departes to tell his great distresse.

He had not travaild long, when on the way He wofull Lady, wofull Una, met, Fast flying from that Paynims greedy pray, Whilest Satyrane him from pursuit did let: Who when her eyes she on the Dwarf had set, And saw the signes that deadly tydinges spake, She fell to ground for sorrowfull regret, And lively breath her sad brest did forsake; Yet might her pitteous hart be seene to pant and quake.

The messenger of so unhappie newes Would faine have dyde: dead was his hart within, Yet outwardly some little comfort shewes. At last, recovering hart, he does begin To rubb her temples, and to chaufe her chin, And everie tender part does tosse and turne: So hardly he the flitted life does win Unto her native prison to retourne; Then gins her grieved ghost thus to lament and mourne:

“Ye dreary instruments of dolefull sight, That doe this deadly spectacle behold, Why doe ye lenger feed on loathed light, Or liking find to gaze on earthly mould, Sith cruell fates the carefull threds unfould, The which my life and love together tyde? Now let the stony dart of sencelesse cold Perce to my hart, and pas through everie side, And let eternall night so sad sight fro me hyde.

“O lightsome day! the lampe of highest Jove, First made by him mens wandring wayes to guyde, When darknesse he in deepest dongeon drove; Henceforth thy hated face for ever hyde, And shut up heavens windowes shyning wyde; For earthly sight can nought but sorrow breed, And late repentance which shall long abyde: Mine eyes no more on vanitie shall feed, But seeled up with death shall have their deadly

meed.”

Then downe againe she fell unto the ground, But he her quickly reared up againe: Thrise did she sinke adowne in deadly swownd, And thrise he her reviv’d with busie paine. At last when life recover’d had the raine, And over-wrestled his strong enimy, With foltring tong, and trembling everie vaine, “Tell on,” (quoth she) “the wofull Tragedy, The which these reliques sad present unto mine eye.

“Tempestuous fortune hath spent all her spight, And thrilling sorrow throwne his utmost dart: Thy sad tong cannot tell more heavy plight Then that I feele, and harbour in mine hart: Who hath endur’d the whole can beare ech part. If death it be, it is not the first wound That launched hath my brest with bleeding smart. Begin, and end the bitter balefull stound; If lesse then that I feare, more favour I have found.”

Then gan the Dwarfe the whole discourse declare; The subtile traines of Archimago old; The wanton loves of false Fidessa fayre, Bought with the blood of vanquisht Paynim bold; The wretched payre transformd to treën mould; The house of Pryde, and perilles round about; The combat which he with Sansjoy did hould; The lucklesse conflict with the Gyaunt stout, Wherein captiv’d, of life or death he stood in doubt.

She heard with patience all unto the end, And strove to maister sorrowfull assay, Which greater grew the more she did contend, And almost rent her tender hart in tway; And love fresh coles unto her fire did lay; For greater love, the greater is the losse. Was never Lady loved dearer day Then she did love the knight of the Redcrosse, For whose deare sake so many troubles her did tosse.

At last when fervent sorrow slaked was, She up arose, resolving him to find Alive or dead; and forward forth doth pas, All as the Dwarfe the way to her assynd; And evermore, in constant carefull mind, She fedd her wound with fresh renewed bale. Long tost with stormes, and bet with bitter wind, High over hills, and lowe adowne the dale, She wandred many a wood, and measurd many a vale.

At last she chaunced by good hap to meet A goodly knight, faire marching by the way, Together with his Squyre, arayed meet: His glitterand armour shined far away, Like glauncing light of Phœbus brightest ray; From top to toe no place appeared bare, That deadly dint of steele endanger may. Athwart his brest a bauldrick brave he ware, That shind, like twinkling stars, with stones most pretious rare.

And in the midst thereof one pretious stone Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous mights, Shapt like a Ladies head, exceeding shone, Like Hesperus emongst the lesser lights, And strove for to amaze the weaker sights: Thereby his mortall blade full comely hong In yvory sheath, ycarv'd with curious slights, Whose hilts were burnisht gold, and handle strong Of mother perle; and buckled with a golden tong.

His haughtie Helmet, horrid all with gold, Both glorious brightnesse and great terrour bredd: For all the crest a Dragon did enfold With greedie pawes, and over all did spredd His golden winges: his dreadfull hideous hedd, Close couched on the bever, seemd to throw From flaming mouth bright sparckles fiery redd, That suddeine horrour to faint hartes did show; And scaly tayle was stretcht adowne his back full low.

Upon the top of all his loftie crest, A bounch of heares discolourd diversly, With sprincled pearle and gold full richly drest, Did shake, and seemd to daunce for jollity, Like to an almond tree ymounted hye On top of greene Selinis all alone, With blossoms brave bedecked daintily; Whose tender locks do tremble every one At everie little breath that under heaven is blowne.

His warlike shield all closely cover'd was, Ne might of mortall eye be ever seene; Not made of steele, nor of enduring bras, Such earthly mettals soon consumed beene, But all of Diamond perfect pure and cleene It framed was, one massy entire mould, Hewen out of Adamant rocke with engines keene, That point of speare it never percen could, Ne dint of direfull sword divide the substance would.

The same to wight he never wont disclose, But whenas monsters huge he would dismay, Or daunt unequall armies of his foes, Or when the flying heavens he would affray; For so exceeding shone his glistring ray, That Phœbus golden face it did attaint, As when a cloud his beames doth overlay; And silver Cynthia wexed pale and faynt, As when her face is staynd with magicke arts constraint.

No magicke arts hereof had any might, Nor bloody wordes of bold Enchaunters call; But all that was not such as seemd in sight Before that shield did fade, and suddeine fall: And when him list the raskall routes appall, Men into stones therewith he could transmew, And stones to dust, and dust to nought at all; And, when him list the prouder lookes subdew, He would them gazing blind, or turne to other hew.

Ne let it seeme that credence this exceedes; For he that made the same was knowne right well To have done much more admirable deedes. It Merlin was, which whylome did excell All living wightes in might of magicke spell: Both shield and sword, and armour all he wrought For this young Prince, when first to armes he fell; But, when he dyde, the Faery Queene it brought To Faerie lond, where yet it may be seene, if sought:

A gentle youth, his dearely loved Squire, His speare of heben wood behind him bare, Whose harmeful head, thrise heated in the fire, Had riven many a brest with pikehead square: A goodly person, and could menage faire His stubborne steed with curbed canon bitt, Who under him did trample as the aire, And chauft that any on his backe should sitt: The yron rowels into frothy fome he bitt.

Whenas this knight nigh to the Lady drew, With lovely court he gan her entertaine; But, when he heard her answers loth, he knew Some secret sorrow did her heart distraine; Which to allay, and calme her storming paine, Faire feeling words he wisely gan display, And for her humor fitting purpose faine, To tempt the cause it selfe for to bewray, Wherewith enmovd, these bleeding words she gan to say.

“What worlds delight, or joy of living speach, Can hart, so plungd in sea of sorrowes

deep, And heaped with so huge misfortunes, reach? The carefull cold beginneth for to creep, And in my heart his yron arrow steep, Soone as I thinke upon my bitter bale. Such helplesse harmes yts better hidden keep, Then rip up griefe where it may not availe: My last left comfort is my woes to weepe and waile."

"Ah Lady deare," quoth then the gentle knight, "Well may I ween your griefe is wondrous great; For wondrous great griefe groneth in my spright, Whiles thus I heare you of your sorrowes treat. But, woefull Lady, let me you intrete, For to unfold the anguish of your hart: Mishaps are maistred by advice discrete, And counsell mitigates the greatest smart: Found never help who never would his hurts impart."

"O, but," (quoth she) "great griefe will not be tould, And can more easily be thought then said." "Right so," (quoth he) "but he that never would Could never: will to might gives greatest aid." "But griefe," (quoth she) "does greater grow displaid, If then it find not helpe, and breeds despaire." "Despaire breeds not," (quoth he) "where faith is staid." "No faith so fast," (quoth she) "but flesh does paire." "Flesh may empaire," (quoth he) "but reason can repaire."

His goodly reason, and well-guided speach, So deepe did settle in her gracious thought, That her perswaded to disclose the breach Which love and fortune in her heart had wrought; And said; "Faire Sir, I hope good hap hath brought You to inquere the secrets of my griefe, Or that your wisedome will direct my thought, Or that your prowesse can me yield reliefe: Then, heare the story sad, which I shall tell you briefe.

"The forlorne Maiden, whom your eies have seene The laughing stocke of fortunes mockeries, Am th'onely daughter of a King and Queene, Whose parents deare, whiles equal destinies Did ronne about, and their felicities The favourable heavens did not envy, Did spred their rule through all the territories, Which Phison and Euphrates floweth by, And Gehons golden waves doe wash continually:

“Till that their cruell cursed enemy, An huge great Dragon, horrible in sight, Bred in the loathly lakes of Tartary, With murdrous ravine, and devouring might, Their kingdome spoild, and countrey wasted quight: Themselves, for feare into his jawes to fall, He forst to castle strong to take their flight; Where, fast embard in mighty brasen wall, He has them now fowr years besiegd to make them thrall.

“Full many knights, adventurous and stout, Have enterpriz’d that Monster to subdew: From every coast that heaven walks about Have thither come the noble Martial crew, That famous harde atchievements still pursew; Yet never any could that girlond win, But all still shronke, and still he greater grew: All they, for want of faith, or guilt of sin, The pitteous pray of his fiers cruelty have bin.

“At last, yled with far reported praise, Which flying fame throughout the world had spred, Of doughty knights, whom Faery land did raise, That noble order hight of maidenhed, Forthwith to court of Gloriane I sped, Of Gloriane, great Queene of glory bright, Whose kingdomes seat Cleopolis is red; There to obtaine some such redoubted knight, That Parents deare from tyrants powre deliver might.

“Yt was my chaunce (my chaunce was faire and good) There for to find a fresh unproved knight; Whose manly hands imbrewd in guilty blood Had never beene, ne ever by his might Had throwne to ground the unregarded right: Yet of his prowesse proofe he since hath made (I witnes am) in many a cruell fight; The groning ghosts of many one dismaide Have felt the bitter dint of his avenging blade.

“And ye, the forlorne reliques of his powre, His biting sword, and his devouring speare, Which have endured many a dreadfull-stowre, Can speake his prowesse that did earst you beare, And well could rule; now he hath left you heare To be the record of his ruefull losse, And of my dolefull disaventurous deare. O! heavie record of the good Red Crosse, Where have yee left your lord that could so well you tosse?

“Well hoped I, and faire beginnings had, That he my captive languor should redeeme: Till, all unweeting, an Enchaunter bad His sence abusd, and made him to

misdeeme My loyalty, not such as it did seeme, That rather death desire then such despight. Be judge, ye heavens, that all things right esteeme, How I him lov'd, and love with all my might. So thought I eke of him, and think I thought aright.

"Thenceforth me desolate he quite forsooke, To wander where wilde fortune would me lead, And other bywaies he himselfe betooke, Where never foote of living wight did tread, That brought not backe the balefull body dead: In which him chaunced false Duessa meete, Mine onely foe, mine onely deadly dread; Who with her witchcraft, and misseeming sweete, Inveigled him to follow her desires unmeete.

"At last, by subtile sleights she him betraid Unto his foe, a Gyaunt huge and tall; Who him disarmed, dissolute, dismaid, Unwares surprised, and with mighty mall The monster mercilesse him made to fall, Whose fall did never foe before behold: And now in darkesome dungeon, wretched thrall, Remedilesse for aie he doth him hold. This is my cause of griefe, more great then may be told."

Ere she had ended all she gan to faint: But he her comforted, and faire bespake: "Certes, Madame, ye have great cause of plaint; That stoutest heart, I weene, could cause to quake: But be of cheare, and comfort to you take; For till I have acquitt your captive knight, Assure your selfe I will you not forsake." His chearefull words reviv'd her chearelesse spright, So forth they went, the Dwarfe them guiding ever right.

Canto VIII

Faire virgin to redeem her deare, Brings Arthur to the fight: Who slays the Gyaunt, wounds the beast, And strips Duessa quight

Ay me! how many perils doe enfold The righteous man, to make him daily fall, Were not that heavenly grace doth him uphold, And stedfast truth acquite him out of all. Her love is firme, her care continuall, So oft as he, through his own foolish pride Or weaknes, is to sinfull bands made thrall: Els should this Redcrosse knight in

bands have dyde, For whose deliverance she this Prince doth thither guyd.

They sadly traveild thus, untill they came Nigh to a castle builded strong and hye: Then cryde the Dwarfe, “Lo! yonder is the same, In which my Lord, my liege, doth lucklesse ly Thrall to that Gyaunts hatefull tyranny: Therefore, deare Sir, your mightie powres assay.” The noble knight alighted by and by From loftie steed, and badd the Ladie stay, To see what end of fight should him befall that day.

So with his Squire, th’admirer of his might, He marched forth towardes that castle wall, Whose gates he fownd fast shutt, ne living wight To warde the same, nor answere commers call. Then tooke that Squire an horne of bugle small, Which hong adowne his side in twisted gold And tasselles gay. Wyde wonders over all Of that same hornes great virtues weren told, Which had approved bene in uses manifold.

Was never wight that heard that shrilling sownd, But trembling feare did feel in every vaine: Three miles it might be easy heard arownd, And Ecchoes three aunswer’d it selfe againe: No false enchauntment, nor deceiptfull traine, Might once abide the terror of that blast, But presently was void and wholly vaine: No gate so strong, no locke so firme and fast, But with that percing noise flew open quite, or brast.

The same before the Geaunts gate he blew, That all the castle quaked from the grownd, And every dore of freewill open flew. The Gyaunt selfe, dismaied with that sownd, Where he with his Duessa dalliaunce fownd, In hast came rushing forth from inner bowre, With staring countenance sterne, as one astownd, And staggering steps, to weet what suddein stowre Had wrought that horror strange, and dar’d his dreaded powre.

And after him the proud Duessa came, High mounted on her many headed beast, And every head with fyrie tongue did flame, And every head was crowned on his creast, And bloody mouthed with late cruell feast. That when the knight beheld, his mightie shild Upon his manly arme he soone addrest, And at him fiersly flew, with

corage fild, And eger greedinesse through every member thrild.

Therewith the Gyant buckled him to fight, Inflamd with scornefull wrath and high disdaine, And lifting up his dreadfull club on hight, All armd with ragged snubbes and knottie graine, Him thought at first encounter to have slaine. But wise and wary was that noble Pere; And, lightly leaping from so monstrous maine, Did fayre avoide the violence him nere: It booted nought to thinke such thunderbolts to beare.

Ne shame he thought to shonne so hideous might: The ydle stroke, enforcing furious way, Missing the marke of his misaymed sight, Did fall to ground, and with his heavy sway So deepely dinted in the driven clay, That three yardes deepe a furrow up did throw. The sad earth, wounded with so sore assay, Did grone full grievous underneath the blow, And trembling with strange feare did like an erthquake show.

As when almightie Jove, in wrathfull mood, To wreake the guilt of mortall sins is bent, Hurles forth his thundring dart with deadly food Enrold in flames, and smouldring dreriment, Through riven cloudes and molten firmament; The fiers threeforked engin, making way, Both loftie towres and highest trees hath rent, And all that might his angry passage stay; And, shooting in the earth, castes up a mount of clay.

His boystrous club, so buried in the grownd, He could not rearen up againe so light, But that the Knight him at advantage fownd; And, whiles he strove his combred clubbe to quight Out of the earth, with blade all burning bright He smott off his left arme, which like a block Did fall to ground, depriv’d of native might: Large streames of blood out of the truncked stock Forth gushed, like fresh water streame from riven rocke.

Dismayed with so desperate deadly wound, And eke impatient of unwonted payne, He loudly brayd with beastly yelling sownd, That all the fieldes rebellowed againe. As great a noyse, as when in Cymbrian plaine An heard of Bulles, whom kindly rage doth sting, Doe for the milky mothers want complaine, And fill the fieldes with

troublous bellowing: The neighbor woods arownd with hollow murmur ring.

That when his deare Duessa heard, and saw The evil stownd that daungerd her estate, Unto his aide she hastily did draw Her dreadfull beast; who, swolne with blood of late, Came ramping forth with proud presumpteous gate, And threatned all his heades like flaming brandes. But him the Squire made quickly to retrate, Encountring fiers with single sword in hand; And twixt him and his Lord did like a bulwarke stand.

The proud Duessa, full of wrathfull spight, And fiers disdaine to be affronted so, Enforst her purple beast with all her might, That stop out of the way to overthroe, Scorning the let of so unequall foe: But nathemore would that corageous swayne To her yeeld passage gainst his Lord to goe, But with outrageous strokes did him restraine, And with his body bard the way atwixt them twaine.

Then tooke the angrie witch her golden cup, Which still she bore, replete with magick artes; Death and despeyre did many thereof sup, And secret poyson through their inner partes, Th'eternall bale of heavie wounded harts: Which, after charmes and some enchauntments said, She lightly sprinkled on his weaker partes: Therewith his sturdie corage soon was quayd, And all his sences were with suddein dread dismayd.

So downe he fell before the cruell beast, Who on his neck his bloody clawes did seize, That life nigh crusht out of his panting brest: No powre he had to stirre, nor will to rize. That when the carefull knight gan well avise, He lightly left the foe with whom he fought, And to the beast gan turne his enterprise; For wondrous anguish in his hart it wrought, To see his loved Squyre into such thraldom brought:

And, high advauncing his blood-thirstie blade, Stroke one of those deformed heades so sore, That of his puissaunce proud ensample made: His monstrous scalpe downe to his teeth it tore, And that misformed shape misshaped more. A sea of blood gusht from the gaping wownd, That her gay garments staynd with filthy gore, And

overflowed all the field arownd, That over shoes in blood he waded on the grownd.

Thereat he rored for exceeding paine, That to have heard great horror would have bred; And scourging th'emptie ayre with his long trayne, Through great impatience of his grieved hed, His gorgeous ryder from her loftie sted Would have cast downe, and trodd in durty myre, Had not the Gyaunt soone her succoured; Who, all enrag'd with smart and frantick yre, Came hurtling in full fiers, and forst the knight retyre.

The force, which wont in two to be disperst, In one alone left hand he now unites, Which is through rage more strong then both were erst; With which his hideous club aloft he dites, And at his foe with furious rigor smites, That strongest Oake might seeme to overthrow. The stroke upon his shield so heavie lites, That to the ground it doubleth him full low: What mortall wight could ever beare so monstrous blow?

And in his fall his shield, that covered was, Did loose his vele by chaunce, and open flew; The light whereof, that hevens light did pas, Such blazing brightnesse through the ayer threw, That eye mote not the same endure to vew. Which when the Gyaunt spyde with staring eye, He downe let fall his arme, and soft withdrew His weapon huge, that heaved was on hye For to have slain the man, that on the ground did lye.

And eke the fruitfull-headed beast, amazd At flashing beames of that sunshiny shield, Became stark blind, and all his sences dazd, That downe he tumbled on the durtie field, And seemd himselfe as conquered to yield. Whom when his maistresse proud perceiv'd to fall, Whiles yet his feeble feet for faintnesse reeld, Unto the Gyaunt lowdly she gan call; "O! helpe, Orgoglio; helpe! or els we perish all."

At her so pitteous cry was much amoov'd Her champion stout; and for to ayde his frend, Againe his wonted angry weapon proov'd, But all in vaine, for he has redd his end In that bright shield, and all their forces spend Them selves in vaine: for, since that glauncing sight, He hath no powre to hurt, nor to defend. As where th'Almighties lightning brond does light, It dimmes the dazed eyen, and daunts the sences quight.

Whom when the Prince, to batteill new addrest And threatning high his dreadfull stroke, did see, His sparkling blade about his head he blest, And smote off quite his right leg by the knee, That downe he tombled; as an aged tree, High growing on the top of rocky clift, Whose hartstrings with keene steele nigh hewen be; The mightie trunck, halfe rent with ragged rift, Doth roll adowne the rocks, and fall with fearefull drift.

Or as a Castle, reared high and round, By subtile engins and malitious slight Is undermined from the lowest ground, And her foundation forst, and feebled quight, At last downe falles; and with her heaped hight Her hastie ruine does more heavie make, And yields it selfe unto the victours might. Such was this Gyaunts fall, that seemd to shake The stedfast globe of earth, as it for feare did quake.

The knight, then lightly leaping to the pray, With mortall steele him smot againe so sore, That headlesse his unweldy bodie lay, All wallowd in his owne fowle bloody gore, Which flowed from his wounds in wondrous store. But, soone as breath out of his brest did pas, That huge great body, which the Gyaunt bore, Was vanisht quite; and of that monstrous mas Was nothing left, but like an emptie blader was.

Whose grievous fall when false Duessa spyde, Her golden cup she cast unto the ground, And crowned mitre rudely threw asyde: Such percing griefe her stubborne hart did wound, That she could not endure that dolefull stound, But leaving all behind her fled away: The light-foot Squyre her quickly turnd around, And, by hard meanes enforcing her to stay, So brought unto his Lord as his deserved pray.

The roiall Virgin which beheld from farre, In pensive plight and sad perplexitie, The whole atchievement of this doubtfull warre, Came running fast to greet his victorie, With sober gladnesse and myld modestie; And with sweet joyous cheare him thus bespake: “Fayre braunch of noblesse, flowre of chevalrie, That with your worth the world amazed make, How shall I quite the paynes ye suffer for my sake?

“And you, fresh budd of vertue springing fast, Whom these sad eyes saw nigh unto

deaths dore, What hath poore Virgin for such perill past Wherewith you to reward? Accept therefore My simple selfe, and service evermore: And he that high does sit, and all things see With equall eye, their merites to restore, Behold what ye this day have done for mee, And what I cannot quite requite with usuree.

“But sith the heavens, and your faire handeling, Have made you master of the field this day, Your fortune maister eke with governing, And, well begonne, end all so well, I pray! Ne let that wicked woman scape away; For she it is, that did my Lord bethrall, My dearest Lord, and deepe in dongeon lay, Where he his better dayes hath wasted all: O heare, how piteous he to you for ayd does call!”

Forthwith he gave in charge unto his Squyre, That scarlot whore to keepen carefully; Whyles he himselfe with greedie great desyre Into the Castle entred forcibly, Where living creature none he did espye. Then gan he lowdly through the house to call; But no man car’d to answere to his crye: There raignd a solemne silence over all; Nor voice was heard, nor wight was seene in bowre or hall.

At last, with creeping crooked pace forth came An old old man, with beard as white as snow, That on a staffe his feeble steps did frame, And guyde his wearie gate both too and fro, For his eye sight him fayled long ygo; And on his arme a bounch of keyes he bore, The which unused rust did overgrow: Those were the keyes of every inner dore; But he could not them use, but kept them still in store.

But very uncouth sight was to behold, How he did fashion his untoward pace; For as he forward moovd his footing old, So backward still was turnd his wrincled face: Unlike to men, who ever, as they trace, Both feet and face one way are wont to lead. This was the auncient keeper of that place, And foster father of the Gyaunt dead; His name Ignaro did his nature right aread.

His reverend heares and holy gravitee The knight much honord, as beseemed well; And gently askt, where all the people bee, Which in that stately building wont to dwell: Who answerd him full soft, he could not tell. Again he askt, where that same

knight was layd, Whom great Orgoglio with his puissaunce fell Had made his caytive thrall: againe he sayde, He could not tell; ne ever other answere made.

Then asked he, which way he in might pas? He could not tell, againe he answered. Thereat the courteous knight displeased was, And said; “Old syre, it seemes thou hast not red How ill it sits with that same silver hed, In vaine to mocke, or mockt in vaine to bee: But if thou be, as thou art pourtrahed With natures pen, in ages grave degree, Aread in graver wise what I demaund of thee.”

His answere likewise was, he could not tell: Whose sencelesse speach, and doted ignorance, Whenas the noble Prince had marked well, He ghest his nature by his countenance, And calmd his wrath with goodly temperance. Then, to him stepping, from his arme did reach Those keyes, and made himselfe free enterance. Each dore he opened without any breach, There was no barre to stop, nor foe him to empeach.

There all within full rich arayd he found, With royall arras, and resplendent gold, And did with store of every thing abound, That greatest Princes presence might behold. But all the floore (too filthy to be told) With blood of guiltlesse babes, and innocents trew, Which there were slaine as sheepe out of the fold, Defiled was, that dreadfull was to vew; And sacred ashes over it was strowed new.

And there beside of marble stone was built An Altare, carv’d with cunning ymagery, On which trew Christians blood was often spilt, And holy Martyres often doen to dye With cruell malice and strong tyranny: Whose blessed sprites, from underneath the stone, To God for vengeance cryde continually; And with great griefe were often heard to grone, That hardest heart would bleede to hear their piteous mone.

Through every rowme he sought, and everie bowr, But no where could he find that wofull thrall: At last he came unto an yron doore, That fast was lockt, but key found not at all Emongst that bounch to open it withall; But in the same a little grate was pight, Through which he sent his voyce, and lowd did call With all his powre, to weet if living wight Were housed therewithin, whom he enlargen might.

Therewith an hollow, dreary, murmuring voyce These pitteous plaintes and dolours did resound: “O! who is that, which bringes me happy choyce Of death, that here lye dying every stound, Yet live perforce in balefull darkenesse bound? For now three Moones have changed thrice their hew, And have been thrice hid underneath the ground, Since I the heavens chearefull face did vew. O! welcome thou, that doest of death bring tydings trew.”

Which when that Champion heard, with percing point Of pitty deare his heart was thrilled sore; And trembling horrour ran through every joynt, For ruth of gentle knight so fowle forlore: Which shaking off, he rent that yron dore With furious force and indignation fell; Where entred in, his foot could find no flore, But all a deepe descent, as darke as hell, That breathed ever forth a filthie banefull smell.

But nether darkenesse fowle, nor filthy bands, Nor noyous smell, his purpose could withhold, (Entire affection hateth nicer hands) But that with constant zele and corage bold, After long paines and labors manifold, He found the meanes that Prisoner up to reare; Whose feeble thighes, unable to uphold His pined corse, him scarse to light could beare; A ruefull spectacle of death and ghastly drere.

His sad dull eies, deepe sunck in hollow pits, Could not endure th’unwonted sunne to view; His bare thin cheekes for want of better bits, And empty sides deceived of their dew, Could make a stony hart his hap to rew; His rawbone armes, whose mighty brawned bowrs Were wont to rive steele plates, and helmets hew, Were clene consum’d; and all his vitall powres Decayd, and al his flesh shronk up like withered flowres.

Whome when his Lady saw, to him she ran With hasty joy: to see him made her glad, And sad to view his visage pale and wan, Who earst in flowres of freshest youth was clad. Tho, when her well of teares she wasted had, She said; “Ah dearest Lord! what evill starre On you hath frownd, and pourd his influence bad, That of your selfe ye thus berobbed arre, And this misseeming hew your manly looks doth

marre?

“But welcome now, my Lord in wele or woe, Whose presence I have lackt too long a day: And fie on Fortune, mine avowed foe, Whose wrathful wreakes them selves doe now alay; And for these wronges shall treble penaunce pay Of treble good: good growes of evils priefe.” The chearelesse man, whom sorrow did dismay, Had no delight to treaten of his griefe; His long endured famine needed more reliefe.

“Faire Lady,” then said that victorious knight, “The things, that grievous were to doe, or beare, Them to renew, I wote, breeds no delight, Best musicke breeds delight in loathing eare: But th’only good that growes of passed feare Is to be wise, and ware of like agein. This daies ensample hath this lesson deare Deepe written in my heart with yron pen, That blisse may not abide in state of mortall men.

“Henceforth, Sir knight, take to you wonted strength, And maister these mishaps with patient might. Loe! where your foe lies strecht in monstrous length; And loe! that wicked woman in your sight, The roote of all your care and wretched plight, Now in your powre, to let her live, or die.” “To doe her die,” (quoth Una) “were despight, And shame t’avenge so weake an enimy; But spoile her of her scarlot robe, and let her fly.”

So, as she bad, that witch they disaraid, And robd of roiall robes, and purple pall, And ornaments that richly were displaid; Ne spared they to strip her naked all. Then, when they had despoyld her tire and call, Such as she was their eies might her behold, That her misshaped parts did them appall: A loathly, wrinckled hag, ill favoured, old, Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told.

Her crafty head was altogether bald, And, as in hate of honorable eld, Was overgrowne with scurfe and filthy scald; Her teeth out of her rotten gummes were feld, And her sowre breath abhominably smeld; Her dried dugs, lyke bladders lacking wind, Hong downe, and filthy matter from them weld; Her wrizled skin, as rough as maple rind, So scabby was that would have loathd all womankind.

Her neather parts, the shame of all her kind, My chaster Muse for shame doth blush to write; But at her rompe she growing had behind A foxes taile, with dong all fowly dight; And eke her feete most monstrous were in sight; For one of them was like an Eagles claw, With griping talaunts armd to greedy fight; The other like a beares uneven paw. More ugly shape yet never living creature saw.

Which when the knights beheld amazd they were, And wondred at so fowle deformed wight. “Such then,” (said Una,) “as she seemeth here, Such is the face of falshood: such the sight Of fowle Duessa, when her borrowed light Is laid away, and counterfesaunce knowne.” Thus when they had the witch disrobed quight, And all her filthy feature open showne, They let her goe at will, and wander waies unknowne.

Shee, flying fast from heavens hated face, And from the world that her discovered wide, Fled to the wastfull wildernesse apace, From living eies her open shame to hide, And lurkt in rocks and caves, long unespide. But that faire crew of knights, and Una faire, Did in that castle afterwards abide, To rest them selves, and weary powres repaire; Where store they fownd of al that dainty was and rare.

Canto IX

His loves and linage Arthur tells: The Knights knitt friendly hands: Sir Trevisan flies from Despeyre, Whom Redcrosse Knight withstands.

O goodly golden chayne, wherewith yfere The vertues linked are in lovely wize; And noble mindes of yore allyed were, In brave poursuitt of chevalrous emprize, That none did others safety despize, Nor aid envy to him in need that stands; But friendly each did others praise devize, How to advaunce with favourable hands, As this good Prince redeemd the Redcrosse knight from bands.

Who when their powres, empayrd through labor long, With dew repast they had recured well, And that weake captive wight now wexed strong, Them list no lenger

there at leasure dwell, But forward fare as their adventures fell: But, ere they parted, Una faire besought That straunger knight his name and nation tell; Least so great good, as he for her had wrought, Should die unknown, and buried be in thankles thought.

“Faire virgin,” (said the Prince,) “yee me require A thing without the compas of my witt; For both the lignage, and the certein Sire, From which I sprong, from mee are hidden yitt; For all so soone as life did me admitt Into this world, and shewed hevens light, From mothers pap I taken was unfitt, And streight deliver’d to a Fary knight, To be upbrought in gentle thewes and martiall might.

“Unto Old Timon he me brought bylive; Old Timon, who in youthly yeares hath beene In warlike feates th’expertest man alive, And is the wisest now on earth I weene: His dwelling is low in a valley greene, Under the foot of Rauran mossy hore, From whence the river Dee, as silver cleene, His tombling billowes rolls with gentle rore; There all my daies he traind mee up in vertuous lore.

“Thither the great magicien Merlin came, As was his use, ofttimes to visitt mee; For he had charge my discipline to frame, And Tutors nouriture to oversee. Him oft and oft I askt in privity, Of what loines and what lignage I did spring; Whose aunswere bad me still assured bee, That I was sonne and heire unto a king, As time in her just term the truth to light should bring.”

“Well worthy impe,” said then the Lady gent, “And Pupill fitt for such a Tutors hand! But what adventure, or what high intent, Hath brought you hither into Faery land, Aread, Prince Arthure, crowne of Martiall band?” “Full hard it is,” (quoth he) “to read aright The course of heavenly cause, or understand The secret meaning of th’eternall might, That rules mens waies, and rules the thoughts of living wight.

“For whether he, through fatal deepe foresight, Me hither sent for cause to me unghest; Or that fresh bleeding wound, which day and night Whilome doth rancle in my riven brest, With forced fury following his behest, Me hither brought by wayes

yet never found, You to have helpt I hold my selfe yet blest." "Ah! courteous Knight," (quoth she) "what secret wound Could ever find to grieve the gentlest hart on ground?"

"Dear Dame," (quoth he) "you sleeping sparkes awake, Which, troubled once, into huge flames will grow; Ne ever will their fervent fury slake, Till living moysture into smoke do flow, And wasted life doe lye in ashes low: Yet sithens silence lesseneth not my fire, But, told, it flames; and, hidden, it does glow, I will revele what ye so much desire. Ah, Love! lay down thy bow, the whiles I may respyre.

"It was in freshest flowre of youthly yeares, When corage first does creepe in manly chest, Then first the cole of kindly heat appeares To kindle love in every living brest: But me had warnd old Timons wise behest, Those creeping flames by reason to subdew, Before their rage grew to so great unrest, As miserable lovers use to rew, Which still wex old in woe, whiles wo stil wexeth new.

"That ydle name of love, and lovers life, As losse of time, and vertues enimy, I ever scornd, and joyd to stirre up strife, In middest of their mournfull Tragedy; Ay wont to laugh when them I heard to cry, And blow the fire which them to ashes brent: Their God himselfe, grievd at my libertie, Shott many a dart at me with fiers intent; But I them warded all with wary government.

"But all in vaine: no fort can be so strong, Ne fleshly brest can armed be so sownd, But will at last be wonne with battrie long, Or unawares at disavantage fownd. Nothing is sure that growes on earthly grownd; And who most trustes in arme of fleshly might, And boastes in beauties chaine not to be bownd, Doth soonest fall in disaventrous fight, And yeeldes his caytive neck to victours most despight.

"Ensample make of him your haplesse joy, And of my selfe now mated, as ye see; Whose prouder vaunt that proud avenging boy Did soone pluck downe, and curbd my libertee. For on a day, prickt forth with jollitee Of looser life and heat of hardiment, Raunging the forest wide on courser free, The fields, the floods, the

heavens, with one consent, Did seeme to laugh on me, and favour mine intent.

“Forwearied with my sportes, I did alight From loftie steed, and downe to sleepe me layd; The verdant gras my couch did goodly dight, And pillow was my helmett fayre displayd; Whiles every sence the humour sweet embayd, And slombring soft my hart did steale away, Me seemed, by my side a royall Mayd Her daintie limbes full softly down did lay: So fayre a creature yet saw never sunny day.

“Most goodly glee and lovely blandishment She to me made, and badd me love her deare; For dearely sure her love was to me bent, As, when just time expired, should appeare. But whether dreames delude, or true it were, Was never hart so ravisht with delight, Ne living man like wordes did ever heare, As she to me delivered all that night; And at her parting said, She Queene of Faeries hight.

“When I awoke, and found her place devoyd, And nought but pressed gras where she had lyen, I sorrowed all so much as earst I joyd, And washed all her place with watry eyen. From that day forth I lov’d that face divyne; From that day forth I cast in carefull mynd, To seek her out with labor and long tyne, And never vowd to rest till her I fynd: Nyne monethes I seek in vain, yet ni’ll that vow unbynd.”

Thus as he spake, his visage wexed pale, And chaunge of hew great passion did bewray; Yett still he strove to cloke his inward bale, And hide the smoke that did his fire display, Till gentle Una thus to him gan say: “O happy Queene of Faeries! that hast fownd, Mongst many, one that with his prowesse may Defend thine honour, and thy foes confownd. True loves are often sown, but seldom grow on grownd.”

“Thine, O! then,” said the gentle Redcrosse knight, “Next to that Ladies love, shalbe the place, O fayrest virgin! full of heavenly light, Whose wondrous faith, exceeding earthly race, Was firmest fixt in myne extremest case. And you, my Lord, the Patrone of my life, Of that great Queene may well gaine worthie grace, For onely worthie you through prowes priefe, Yf living man mote worthie be to be her liefe.”

So diversly discoursing of their loves, The golden Sunne his glistring head gan

shew, And sad remembraunce now the Prince amoves With fresh desire his voyage to pursew; Als Una earnd her traveill to renew. Then those two knights, fast friendship for to bynd, And love establish each to other trew, Gave goodly gifts, the signes of gratefull mynd, And eke, as pledges firme, right hands together joynd.

Prince Arthur gave a boxe of Diamond sure, Embowd with gold and gorgeous ornament, Wherein were closd few drops of liquor pure, Of wondrous worth, and vertue excellent, That any wownd could heale incontinent. Which to requite, the Redcrosse knight him gave A booke, wherein his Saveours testament Was writt with golden letters rich and brave: A worke of wondrous grace, and hable soules to save.

Thus beene they parted; Arthur on his way To seeke his love, and th'other for to fight With Unaes foe, that all her realme did pray. But she, now weighing the decayed plight, And shrunken synewes of her chosen knight, Would not a while her forward course pursew, Ne bring him forth in face of dreadfull fight, Till he recovered had his former hew; For him to be yet weake and wearie well she knew.

So as they traveild, lo! they gan espy An armed knight towards them gallop fast, That seemed from some feared foe to fly, Or other griesly thing that him aghast. Still as he fledd his eye was backward cast, As if his feare still followed him behynd: Als flew his steed as he his bandes had brast, And with his winged heeles did tread the wynd, As he had beene a fole of Pegasus his kynd.

Nigh as he drew, they might perceive his head To bee unarmd, and curld uncombed heares Upstaring stiffe, dismaid with uncouth dread: Nor drop of blood in all his face appeares, Nor life in limbe; and, to increase his feares, In fowle reproch of knighthoodes fayre degree, About his neck an hempen rope he weares, That with his glistring armes does ill agree; But he of rope or armes has now no memoree.

The Redcrosse knight toward him crossed fast, To weet what mister wight was so dismayd. There him he findes all sencelesse and aghast, That of him selfe he seemd to be afrayd; Whom hardly he from flying forward stayd, Till he these wordes to

him deliver might: “Sir knight, aread who hath ye thus arayd, And eke from whom make ye this hasty flight? For never knight I saw in such misseeming plight.”

He answerd nought at all; but adding new Feare to his first amazment, staring wyde With stony eyes and hartlesse hollow hew, Astonisht stood, as one that had aspyde Infernall furies with their chaines untyde. Him yett againe, and yett againe, bespake The gentle knight; who nought to him replyde; But, trembling every joynt, did inly quake, And foltring tongue, at last, these words seemd forth to shake;

“For Gods deare love, Sir knight, doe me not stay; For loe! he comes, he comes fast after mee.” Eft looking back would faine have runne away; But he him forst to stay, and tellen free The secrete cause of his perplexitie: Yet nathemore by his bold hartie speach Could his blood frosen hart emboldened bee, But through his boldnes rather feare did reach; Yett, forst, at last he made through silence suddein breach.

“And am I now in safetie sure,” (quoth he) “From him that would have forced me to dye? And is the point of death now turnd fro mee, That I may tell this haplesse history?” “Fear nought,” (quoth he) “no daunger now is nye.” “Then shall I you recount a ruefull cace,” (Said he) “the which with this unlucky eye I late beheld; and, had not greater grace Me reft from it, had bene partaker of the place.

“I lately chaunst (Would I had never chaunst!) With a fayre knight to keepen companee, Sir Terwin hight, that well himselfe advaunst In all affayres, and was both bold and free; But not so happy as mote happy bee: He lov’d, as was his lot, a Lady gent, That him againe lov’d in the least degree; For she was proud, and of too high intent, And joyd to see her lover languish and lament:

“From whom retourning sad and comfortlesse, As on the way together we did fare, We met that villen, (God from him me blesse!) That cursed wight, from whom I scapt whyleare, A man of hell that calls himselfe Despayre: Who first us greets, and after fayre areedes Of tydinges straunge, and of adventures rare: So creeping close, as Snake in hidden weedes, Inquireth of our states, and of our knightly deedes.

“Which when he knew, and felt our feeble harts Embost with bale, and bitter byting griefe, Which love had launched with his deadly darts, With wounding words, and termes of foule repriefe, He pluckt from us all hope of dew reliefe, That earst us held in love of lingring life; Then hopelesse, hartlesse, gan the cunning thiefe Perswade us dye, to stint all further strife: To me he lent this rope, to him a rusty knife.

“With which sad instrument of hasty death, That wofull lover, loathing lenger light, A wyde way made to let forth living breath: But I, more fearefull or more lucky wight, Dismayd with that deformed dismall sight, Fledd fast away, halfe dead with dying feare; Ne yet assur’d of life by you, Sir knight, Whose like infirmity like chaunce may beare; But God you never let his charmed speaches heare!”

“How may a man,” (said he) “with idle speach Be wonne to spoyle the Castle of his health?” “I wote,” (quoth he) “whom tryall late did teach, That like would not for all this worldes wealth, His subtile tong like dropping honny mealt’h Into the heart, and searcheth every vaine; That, ere one be aware, by secret stealth His powre is reft, and weaknes doth remaine. O! never, Sir, desire to try his guilefull traine.”

“Certes,” (sayd he) “hence shall I never rest, Till I that treachours art have heard and tryde: And you, Sir knight, whose name mote I request, Of grace do me unto his cabin guyde.” “I, that hight Trevisan,” (quoth he) “will ryde Against my liking backe to doe you grace: But nor for gold nor glee will I abyde By you, when ye arrive in that same place; For lever had I die then see his deadly face.”

Ere long they come where that same wicked wight His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave, Far underneath a craggy cliff ypight, Darke, dolefull, dreary, like a greedy grave, That still for carrion carcases doth crave: On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly Owle, Shrieking his balefull note, which ever drave Far from that haunt all other chearefull fowle; And all about it wandring ghostes did wayle and howle.

And all about old stockes and stubs of trees, Whereon nor fruit nor leafe was ever seene, Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees; On which had many wretches hanged

beene, Whose carcases were scattred on the greene, And throwne about the cliffs. Arrived there, That bare-head knight, for dread and dolefull teene, Would faine have fled, ne durst approchen neare; But th'other forst him staye, and comforted in feare.

That darkesome cave they enter, where they find That cursed man, low sitting on the ground, Musing full sadly in his sullein mind: His griesie lockes, long growen and unbound, Disordred hong about his shoulders round, And hid his face; through which his hollow eyne Lookt deadly dull, and stared as astound; His rawbone cheekes, through penurie and pine, Were shronke into his jawes, as he did never dyne.

His garment, nought but many ragged clouts, With thornes together pind and patched was, The which his naked sides he wrapt abouts; And him beside there lay upon the gras A dreary corse, whose life away did pas, All wallowd in his own yet lukewarme blood, That from his wound yet welled fresh, alas! In which a rusty knife fast fixed stood, And made an open passage for the gushing flood.

Which piteous spectacle, approving trew The wofull tale that Trevisan had told, Whenas the gentle Redcrosse knight did vew, With firie zeale he burnt in courage bold Him to avenge before his blood were cold, And to the villein sayd; "Thou damned wight, The authour of this fact we here behold, What justice can but judge against thee right, With thine owne blood to price his blood, here shed in sight?"

"What franticke fit," (quoth he) "hath thus distraught Thee, foolish man, so rash a doome to give? What justice ever other judgement taught, But he should dye who merites not to live? None els to death this man despayring drive But his owne guiltie mind, deserving death. Is then unjust to each his dew to give? Or let him dye, that loatheth living breath, Or let him die at ease, that liveth here uneath?

"Who travailes by the wearie wandring way, To come unto his wished home in haste, And meetes a flood that doth his passage stay, Is not great grace to helpe him over past, Or free his feet that in the myre sticke fast? Most envious man, that

grieves at neighbours good; And fond, that joyest in the woe thou hast! Why wilt not let him passe, that long hath stood Upon the bancke, yet wilt thy selfe not pas the flood?

“He there does now enjoy eternall rest And happy ease, which thou doest want and crave, And further from it daily wanderest: What if some little payne the passage have, That makes frayle flesh to feare the bitter wave, Is not short payne well borne, that bringes long ease, And layes the soule to sleepe in quiet grave? Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas, Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please.”

The knight much wondred at his suddeine wit, And sayd; “The terme of life is limited, Ne may a man prolong, nor shorten, it: The souldier may not move from watchfull sted, Nor leave his stand untill his Captaine bed.” “Who life did limit by almightie doome,” (Quoth he) “knowes best the termes established; And he, that points the Centonell his roome, Doth license him depart at sound of morning droome.

“Is not his deed, what ever thing is donne In heaven and earth? Did not he all create To die againe? All ends that was begonne: Their times in his eternall booke of fate Are written sure, and have their certein date. Who then can strive with strong necessitie, That holds the world in its still chaunging state, Or shunne the death ordaynd by destinie? When houre of death is come, let none aske whence, nor why.

“The lenger life, I wote, the greater sin; The greater sin, the greater punishment: All those great battels, which thou boasts to win Through strife, and bloodshed, and avengement, Now praysd, hereafter deare thou shalt repent; For life must life, and blood must blood, repay. Is not enough thy evill life forespent? For he that once hath missed the right way, The further he doth goe, the further he doth stray.

“Then doe no further goe, no further stray, But here ly downe, and to thy rest betake, Th’ill to prevent, that life ensewen may; For what hath life that may it loved make, And gives not rather cause it to forsake? Feare, sicknesse, age, losse, labour, sorrow,

strife, Payne, hunger, cold that makes the hart to quake, And ever fickle fortune rageth rife; All which, and thousands mo, do make a loathsome life.

“Thou, wretched man, of death hast greatest need, If in true ballaunce thou wilt weigh thy state; For never knight, that dared warlike deed, More luckless dissaventures did amate: Witnes the dungeon deepe, wherein of late Thy life shutt up for death so oft did call; And though good lucke prolonged hath thy date, Yet death then would the like mishaps forestall, Into the which hereafter thou maist happen fall.

“Why then doest thou, O man of sin! desire To draw thy dayes forth to their last degree? Is not the measure of thy sinfull hire High heaped up with huge iniquitee, Against the day of wrath to burden thee? Is not enough, that to this Lady mild Thou falsed hast thy faith with perjuree, And sold thy selfe to serve Duessa vild, With whom in al abuse thou hast thy selfe defild?

“Is not he just, that all this doth behold From highest heven, and beares an equall eie? Shall he thy sins up in his knowledge fold, And guilty be of thine impietie? Is not his lawe, Let every sinner die; Die shall all flesh? What then must needs be donne, Is it not better to doe willinglie, Then linger till the glas be all out ronne? Death is the end of woes: die soone, O faeries sonne!”

The knight was much enmoved with his speach, That as a swords poynt through his hart did perse, And in his conscience made a secrete breach, Well knowing trew all that he did reherse, And to his fresh remembraunce did reverse The ugly vew of his deformed crimes; That all his manly powres it did disperse, As he were charmed with inchaunted rimes; That oftentimes he quakt, and fainted oftentimes.

In which amazement when the Miscreaunt Perceived him to waver, weake and fraile, Whiles trembling horror did his conscience daunt, And hellish anguish did his soule assaile; To drive him to despaire, and quite to quaile, Hee shewd him, painted in a table plaine, The damned ghosts that doe in torments waile; And thousand

feends that doe them endlesse paine With fire and brimstone, which for ever shall remaine.

The sight whereof so throughly him dismaid, That nought but death before his eies he saw, And ever burning wrath before him laid, By righteous sentence of th'Almighties law. Then gan the villein him to overcraw, And brought unto him swords, ropes, poison, fire, And all that might him to perdition draw; And bad him choose what death he would desire; For death was due to him that had provokt Gods ire.

But, whenas none of them he saw him take, He to him raught a dagger sharpe and keene, And gave it him in hand: his hand did quake And tremble like a leafe of Aspin greene, And troubled blood through his pale face was seene To come and goe with tidings from the heart, As it a ronning messenger had beene. At last, resolv'd to work his finall smart, He lifted up his hand, that backe againe did start.

Which whenas Una saw, through every vaine The crudled cold ran to her well of life, As in a swowne: but, soone reliv'd againe, Out of his hand she snatcht the cursed knife, And threw it to the ground, enraged rife, And to him said; "Fie, fie, faint hearted Knight! What meanest thou by this reprochfull strife? Is this the battaile which thou vauntst to fight With that fire-mouthed Dragon, horrible and bright?

"Come; come away, fraile, feeble, fleshly wight, Ne let vaine words bewitch thy manly hart, Ne divelish thoughts dismay thy constant spright: In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part? Why shouldst thou then despeire, that chosen art? Where justice growes, there grows eke greater grace, The which doth quench the brond of hellish smart, And that accurst hand-writing doth deface. Arise, sir Knight; arise, and leave this cursed place."

So up he rose, and thence amounted streight. Which when the carle beheld, and saw his guest Would safe depart, for all his subtile sleight, He chose an halter from

among the rest, And with it hong him selfe, unbid, unblest. But death he could not worke himselfe thereby; For thousand times he so him selfe had drest, Yet nathelesse it could not doe him die, Till he should die his last, that is, eternally.

Canto X

Her faithfull knight faire Una brings To house of Holinesse; Whre he is taught repentance, and The way to hevenly blesse.

What man is he, that boasts of fleshly might And vaine assuraunce of mortality, Which, all so soone as it doth come to fight Against spirituall foes, yields by and by, Or from the fielde most cowardly doth fly! Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill, That thorough grace hath gained victory: If any strength we have, it is to ill, But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will.

By that which lately hapned Una saw That this her knight was feeble, and too faint; And all his sinewes woxen weake and raw, Through long enprisonment, and hard constraint, Which he endured in his late restraint, That yet he was unfitt for bloody fight. Therefore, to cherish him with diets daint, She cast to bring him where he chearen might, Till he recovered had his late decayed plight.

There was an auncient house nor far away, Renowmd throughout the world for sacred lore And pure unspotted life: so well, they say, It governd was, and guided evermore, Through wisedome of a matrone grave and hore; Whose onely joy was to relieve the needes Of wretched soules, and helpe the helpelesse pore: All night she spent in bidding of her bedes, And all the day in doing good and godly deedes.

Dame Cælia men did her call, as thought From heaven to come, or thither to arise; The mother of three daughters, well upbrought In goodly thewes, and godly exercise: The eldest two, most sober, chast, and wise, Fidelia and Speranza, virgins were; Though spousd, yet wanting wedlocks solemnize; But faire Charissa to a lovely fere Was lincked, and by him had many pledges dere.

Arrived there, the dore they find fast lockt, For it was warely watched night and day, For feare of many foes; but, when they knockt, The Porter opened unto them streight way. He was an aged syre, all hory gray, With lookes full lowly cast, and gate full slow, Wont on a staffe his feeble steps to stay, Hight Humiltá. They passe in, stouping low; For streight and narrow was the way which he did show.

Each goodly thing is hardest to begin; But, entred in, a spatious court they see, Both plaine and pleasaunt to be walked in; Where them does meete a francklin faire and free, And entertaines with comely courteous glee; His name was Zele, that him right well became: For in his speaches and behaveour hee Did labour lively to expresse the same, And gladly did them guide, till to the Hall they came.

There fayrely them receives a gentle Squyre, Of myld demeanure and rare courtesee, Right cleanly clad in comely sad attyre; In word and deede that shewd great modestee, And knew his good to all of each degree, Hight Reverence. He them with speaches meet Does faire entreat; no courting nicetee, But simple, trew, and eke unfained sweet, As might become a Squyre so great persons to greet.

And afterwardes them to his Dame he leades, That aged Dame, the Lady of the place, Who all this while was busy at her beades; Which doen, she up arose with seemely grace, And toward them full matronely did pace. Where, when that fairest Una she beheld, Whom well she knew to spring from hevenly race, Her heart with joy unwonted inly sweld, As feeling wondrous comfort in her weaker eld:

And, her embracing, said; “O happy earth, Whereon thy innocent feet doe ever tread! Most vertuous virgin, borne of hevenly berth, That, to redeeme thy woefull parents head From tyrans rage and ever-dying dread, Hast wandred through the world now long a day, Yett ceassest not thy weary soles to lead; What grace hath thee now hither brought this way? Or doen thy feeble feet unweeting hither stray?

“Straunge thing it is an errant knight to see Here in this place; or any other wight, That hither turnes his steps. So few there bee, That chose the narrow path, or seeke

the right: All keepe the broad high way, and take delight With many rather for to goe astray, And be partakers of their evill plight, Then with a few to walke the rightest way. O foolish men! why hast ye to your own decay?"

"Thy selfe to see, and tyred limbes to rest, O matrone sage," (quoth she) "I hither came; And this good knight his way with me addrest, Ledd with thy prayses, and broad-blazed fame, That up to heven is blowne." The auncient Dame Him goodly greeted in her modest guyse, And enterteynd them both, as best became, With all the court'sies that she could devyse, Ne wanted ought to shew her bounteous or wise.

Thus as they gan of sondrie things devise, Loe! two most goodly virgins came in place, Ylinked arme in arme in lovely wise: With countenance demure, and modest grace, They numbred even steps and equall pace; Of which the eldest, that Fidelia hight, Like sunny beames threw from her Christall face That could have dazd the rash beholders sight, And round about her head did shine like hevens light.

She was araied all in lilly white, And in her right hand bore a cup of gold, With wine and water fild up to the hight, In which a Serpent did himselfe enfold, That horrour made to all that did behold; But she no whitt did chaunge her constant mood: And in her other hand she fast did hold A booke, that was both signd and seald with blood; Wherein darke things were writt, hard to be understood.

Her younger sister, that Speranza hight, Was clad in blew, that her beseemed well; Not all so chearefull seemed she of sight, As was her sister: whether dread did dwell Or anguish in her hart, is hard to tell. Upon her arme a silver anchor lay, Whereon she leaned ever, as befell; And ever up to heven, as she did pray, Her stedfast eyes were bent, ne swarved other way.

They, seeing Una, towardes her gan wend, Who them encounters with like courtesee; Many kind speeches they betweene them spend, And greatly joy each other for to see: Then to the knight with shamefast modestie They turne themselves, at Unaes meeke request, And him salute with well beseeming glee; Who faire them

quites, as him beseemed best, And goodly gan discourse of many a noble gest.

Then Una thus: “But she, your sister deare, The deare Charissa, where is she become? Or wants she health, or busie is elswhere?” “Ah! no,” said they, “but forth she may not come; For she of late is lightned of her wombe, And hath encreast the world with one sonne more, That her to see should be but troublesome.” “Indeed,” (quoth she) “that should her trouble sore; But thankt be God, and her encrease so evermore!”

Then said the aged Cælia, “Deare dame, And you, good Sir, I wote that of your toyle And labors long, through which ye hither came, Ye both forwearied be: therefore, a whyle I read you rest, and to your bowres recoyle.” Then called she a Groome, that forth him ledd Into a goodly lodge, and gan despoile Of puissant armes, and laid in easie bedd. His name was meeke Obedience, rightfully aredd.

Now when their wearie limbes with kindly rest, And bodies were refresht with dew repast, Fayre Una gan Fidelia fayre request, To have her knight into her schoolehous plaste, That of her heavenly learning he might taste, And heare the wisedom of her wordes divine. She graunted; and that knight so much agraste, That she him taught celestiall discipline, And opened his dull eyes, that light mote in them shine.

And that her sacred Booke, with blood ywritt, That none could reade except she did them teach, She unto him disclosed every whitt; And heavenly documents thereout did preach, That weaker witt of man could never reach; Of God; of grace; of justice; of freewill; That wonder was to heare her goodly speach; For she was hable with her wordes to kill, And rayse againe to life the hart that she did thrill.

And, when she list poure out her larger spright, She would commaund the hasty Sunne to stay, Or backward turne his course from hevens hight: Sometimes great hostes of men she could dismay; Dry-shod to passe she parts the flouds in tway; And eke huge mountaines from their native seat She would commaund themselves to beare away, And throw in raging sea with roaring threat. Almightie God her gave

such powre and puissaunce great.

The faithfull knight now grew in little space, By hearing her, and by her sisters lore, To such perfection of all hevenly grace, That wretched world he gan for to abhore, And mortall life gan loath as thing forlore; Greevd with remembrance of his wicked wayes, And prickt with anguish of his sinnes so sore, That he desirde to end his wretched dayes: So much the dart of sinfull guilt the soule dismayes.

But wise Speranza gave him comfort sweet, And taught him how to take assured hold Upon her silver anchor, as was meet; Els had his sinnes, so great and manifold, Made him forget all that Fidelia told. In this distressed doubtfull agony, When him his dearest Una did behold Disdeining life, desiring leave to dye, She found her selfe assayld with great perplexity;

And came to Cælia to declare her smart; Who, well acquainted with that commune plight, Which sinfull horror workes in wounded hart, Her wisely comforted all that she might, With goodly counsell and advisement right; And streightway sent with carefull diligence, To fetch a Leach, the which had great insight In that disease of grieved conscience, And well could cure the same: His name was Patience.

Who, comming to that sowle-diseased knight, Could hardly him intreat to tell his grief: Which knowne, and all that noyd his heavie spright Well searcht, eftsoones he gan apply relief Of salves and med'cines, which had passing prief; And thereto added wordes of wondrous might. By which to ease he him recured brief, And much aswag'd the passion of his plight, That he his paine endur'd, as seeming now more light.

But yet the cause and root of all his ill, Inward corruption and infected sin, Not purg'd nor heald, behind remained still, And festring sore did ranckle yett within, Close creeping twixt the marow and the skin: Which to extirpe, he laid him privily Downe in a darksome lowly place far in, Whereas he meant his corrosives to apply, And with streight diet tame his stubborne malady.

In ashes and sackcloth he did array His daintie corse, proud humors to abate; And dieted with fasting every day, The swelling of his woundes to mitigate; And made him pray both earely and eke late: And ever, as superfluous flesh did rott, Amendment readie still at hand did wayt, To pluck it out with pincers fyrie whott, That soone in him was lefte no one corrupted jott.

And bitter Penaunce, with an yron whip, Was wont him once to disple every day: And sharp Remorse his hart did prick and nip, That drops of blood thence like a well did play: And sad Repentance used to embay His blamefull body in salt water sore, The filthy blottes of sin to wash away. So in short space they did to health restore The man that would not live, but erst lay at deathes dore.

In which his torment often was so great, That like a Lyon he would cry and rore, And rend his flesh, and his owne synewes eat. His owne deare Una, hearing evermore His ruefull shriekes and gronings, often tore Her guiltlesse garments and her golden heare, For pitty of his payne and anguish sore: Yet all with patience wisely she did beare, For well she wist his cryme could els be never cleare.

Whom, thus recover'd by wise Patience And trew Repentaunce, they to Una brought; Who, joyous of his cured conscience, Him dearely kist, and fayrely eke besought Himselfe to chearish, and consuming thought To put away out of his carefull brest. By this Charissa, late in child-bed brought, Was woxen strong, and left her fruitfull nest: To her fayre Una brought this unacquainted guest.

She was a woman in her freshest age, Of wondrous beauty, and of bounty rare, With goodly grace and comely personage, That was on earth not easie to compare; Full of great love, but Cupids wanton snare As hell she hated; chaste in worke and will: Her necke and brests were ever open bare, That ay thereof her babes might sucke their fill; The rest was all in yellow robes arayed still.

A multitude of babes about her hong, Playing their sportes, that joyd her to behold; Whom still she fed whiles they were weake and young, But thrust them forth still as

they wexed old: And on her head she wore a tyre of gold, Adornd with gemmes and owches wondrous fayre, Whose passing price uneath was to be told: And by her syde there sate a gentle payre Of turtle doves, she sitting in an yvory chayre.

The knight and Una entring fayre her greet, And bid her joy of that her happy brood; Who them requites with court'sies seeming meet, And entertaynes with friendly chearefull mood. Then Una her besought, to be so good As in her vertuous rules to schoole her knight, Now after all his torment well withstood In that sad house of Penaunce, where his spright Had past the paines of hell and long-enduring night.

She was right joyous of her just request; And taking by the hand that Faeries sonne, Gan him instruct in everie good behest, Of love, and righteousnes, and well to donne; And wrath and hatred warely to shonne, That drew on men Gods hatred and his wrath, And many soules in dolours had fordonne: In which when him she well instructed hath, From thence to heaven she teacheth him the ready path.

Wherein his weaker wandring steps to guyde, An auncient matrone she to her does call, Whose sober lookes her wisedome well descryde: Her name was Mercy; well knowne over-all To be both gratious and eke liberall: To whom the carefull charge of him she gave, To leade aright, that he should never fall In all his waies through this wide worldes wave; That Mercy in the end his righteous soule might save.

The godly Matrone by the hand him beares Forth from her presence, by a narrow way, Scattred with bushy thornes and ragged breares, Which still before him she remov'd away, That nothing might his ready passage stay: And ever, when his feet encombred were, Or gan to shrinke, or from the right to stray, She held him fast, and firmely did upbeare, As carefull Nourse her child from falling oft does reare.

Eftsoones unto an holy Hospitall, That was foreby the way, she did him bring; In which seven Bead-men, that had vowed all Their life to service of high heavens King, Did spend their daies in doing godly thing. Their gates to all were open evermore, That by the wearie way were traveiling; And one sate wayting ever them

before, To call in commers-by that needy were and pore.

The first of them, that eldest was and best, Of all the house had charge and governement, As Guardian and Steward of the rest. His office was to give entertainement And lodging unto all that came and went; Not unto such as could him feast againe, And double quite for that he on them spent; But such as want of harbour did constraine: Those for Gods sake his dewty was to entertaine.

The second was as Almner of the place: His office was the hungry for to feed, And thristy give to drinke; a worke of grace. He feard not once himselfe to be in need, Ne car'd to hoord for those whom he did breede: The grace of God he layd up still in store, Which as a stocke he left unto his seede. He had enough; what need him care for more? And had he lesse, yet some he would give to the pore.

The third had of their wardrobe custody, In which were not rich tyres, nor garments gay, The plumes of pride, and winges of vanity, But clothes meet to keepe keene cold away, And naked nature seemely to aray; With which bare wretched wights he dayly clad, The images of God in earthly clay; And, if that no spare clothes to give he had, His owne cote he would cut, and it distribute glad.

The fourth appointed by his office was Poore prisoners to relieve with gratious ayd, And captives to redeeme with price of bras From Turkes and Sarazins, which them had stayd: And though they faulty were, yet well he wayd, That God to us forgiveth every howre Much more then that why they in bands were layd; And he, that harrowd hell with heavie stowre, The faulty soules from thence brought to his heavenly bowre.

The fift had charge sick persons to attend, And comfort those in point of death which lay; For them most needeth comfort in the end, When sin, and hell, and death, doe most dismay The feeble soule departing hence away. All is but lost, that living we bestow, If not well ended at our dying day. O man! have mind of that last bitter throw; For as the tree does fall, so lyes it ever low.

The sixt had charge of them now being dead, In seemely sort their corses to engrave, And deck with dainty flowres their brydall bed, That to their heavenly spouse both sweet and brave They might appeare, when he their soules shall save. The wondrous workmanship of Gods owne mould, Whose face he made all beastes to feare, and gave All in his hand, even dead we honour should. Ah, dearest God, me graunt, I dead be not defould!

The seventh, now after death and buriall done, Had charge the tender Orphans of the dead And wydowes ayd, least they should be undone: In face of judgement he their right would plead, Ne ought the powre of mighty men did dread In their defence; nor would for gold or fee Be wonne their rightfull causes downe to tread; And, when they stood in most necessitee, He did supply their want, and gave them ever free.

There when the Elfin knight arrived was, The first and chiefest of the seven, whose care Was guests to welcome, towardes him did pas; Where seeing Mercie, that his steps upbare And alwaies led, to her with reverence rare He humbly louted in meeke lowlinesse, And seemely welcome for her did prepare: For of their order she was Patronesse, Albe Charissa were their chiefest founderesse.

There she awhile him stayes, himselfe to rest, That to the rest more hable he might bee; During which time, in every good behest, And godly worke of Almes and charitee, Shee him instructed with great industree. Shortly therein so perfect he became, That, from the first unto the last degree, His mortall life he learned had to frame In holy righteousnesse, without rebuke or blame.

Thence forward by that painfull way they pas Forth to an hill that was both steepe and hy, On top whereof a sacred chappell was, And eke a litle Hermitage thereby, Wherein an aged holy man did lie, That day and night said his devotion, Ne other worldly busines did apply: His name was hevenly Contemplation; Of God and goodnes was his meditation.

Great grace that old man to him given had; For God he often saw from heavens

hight: All were his earthly eien both blunt and bad, And through great age had lost their kindly sight, Yet wondrous quick and persaunt was his spright, As Eagles eie that can behold the Sunne. That hill they scale with all their powre and might, That his fraile thighes, nigh weary and fordonne, Gan faile; but by her helpe the top at last he wonne.

There they doe finde that godly aged Sire, With snowy lockes adowne his shoulders shed; As hoary frost with spangles doth attire The mossy braunches of an Oke halfe ded. Each bone might through his body well be red And every sinew seene, through his long fast: For nought he car'd his carcas long unfed; His mind was full of spiritual repast, And pyn'd his flesh to keepe his body low and chast.

Who, when these two approching he aspide, At their first presence grew agrieved sore, That forst him lay his hevenly thoughts aside; And had he not that Dame respected more, Whom highly he did reverence and adore, He would not once have moved for the knight. They him saluted, standing far afore, Who, well them greeting, humbly did requight, And asked to what end they clomb that tedious hight?

"What end," (quoth she) "should cause us take such paine, But that same end, which every living wight Should make his marke high heaven to attaine? Is not from hence the way, that leadeth right To that most glorious house, that glistreth bright With burning starres and everliving fire, Whereof the keies are to thy hand behight By wise Fidelia? Shee doth thee require, To shew it to this knight, according his desire."

"Thrise happy man," said then the father grave, "Whose staggering steps thy steady hand doth lead, And shewes the way his sinfull soule to save! Who better can the way to heaven aread Then thou thyselfe, that was both borne and bred In Hevenly throne, where thousand Angels shine? Thou doest the praiers of the righteous sead Present before the majesty divine, And his avenging wrath to clemency incline.

"Yet, since thou bidst, thy pleasure shalbe donne. Then come, thou man of earth, and see the way, That never yet was seene of Faeries sonne; That never leads the

traveiler astray, But after labors long and sad delay, Brings them to joyous rest and endlesse blis. But first thou must a season fast and pray, Till from her bands the spright assoiled is, And have her strength recur'd from fraile infirmitis."

That done, he leads him to the highest Mount; Such one as that same mighty man of God, That blood-red billowes, like a walled front, On either side disparted with his rod, Till that his army dry-foot through them yod, Dwelt forty daies upon; where, writt in stone With bloody letters by the hand of God, The bitter doome of death and balefull mone He did receive, whiles flashing fire about him shone:

Or like that sacred hill, whose head full hie, Adornd with fruitfull Olives all arownd, Is, as it were for endlesse memory Of that deare Lord who oft thereon was fownd, For ever with a flowring girlond crownd: Or like that pleasaunt Mount, that is for ay Through famous Poets verse each where renownd, On which the thrise three learned Ladies play Their hevenly notes, and make full many a lovely lay.

From thence, far off he unto him did shew A little path that was both steepe and long, Which to a goodly Citty led his vew; Whose wals and towres were builded high and strong Of perle and precious stone, that earthly tong Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell; Too high a ditty for my simple song. The Citty of the greate king hight it well, Wherein eternall peace and happinesse doth dwell.

As he thereon stood gazing, he might see The blessed Angels to and fro descend From highest heven in gladsome companee, And with great joy into that Citty wend, As commonly as frend does with his frend. Whereat he wondred much, and gan enquere, What stately building durst so high extend Her lofty towres unto the starry sphere, And what unknowen nation there empeopled were?

"Faire Knight," (quoth he) "Hierusalem that is, The new Hierusalem, that God has built For those to dwell in that are chosen his, His chosen people, purg'd from sinful guilt With pretious blood, which cruelly was spilt On cursed tree, of that unspotted lam, That for the sinnes of al the world was kilt: Now are they Saints all in that Citty

sam, More dear unto their God then younglings to their dam.”

“Till now,” said then the knight, “I weened well, That great Cleopolis, where I have beene, In which that fairest Faery Queene doth dwell, The fairest citty was that might be seene; And that bright towre, all built of christall clene, Panthea, seemd the brightest thing that was; But now by proofe all otherwise I weene, For this great Citty that does far surpas, And this bright Angels towre quite dims that towre of glas.”

“Most trew,” then said the holy aged man; “Yet is Cleopolis, for earthly frame, The fairest peece that eie beholden can; And well beseemes all knights of noble name, That covett in th’immortall booke of fame To be eternized, that same to haunt, And doen their service to that soveraigne Dame, That glory does to them for guerdon graunt: For she is hevenly borne, and heaven may justly vaunt.

“And thou, faire ymp, sprong out from English race, How ever now accompted Elfins sonne, Well worthy doest thy service for her grace, To aide a virgin desolate, foredonne; But when thou famous victory hast wonne, And high emongst all knights hast hong thy shield, Thenceforth the suitt of earthly conquest shonne, And wash thy hands from guilt of bloody field: For blood can nought but sin, and wars but sorrows yield.

“Then seek this path that I to thee presage, Which after all to heaven shall thee send; Then peaceably thy painefull pilgrimage To yonder same Hierusalem doe bend, Where is for thee ordaind a blessed end: For thou, emongst those Saints whom thou doest see, Shalt be a Saint, and thine owne nations frend And Patrone: thou Saint George shalt called bee, Saint George of mery England, the signe of victoree.”

“Unworthy wretch,” (quoth he) “of so great grace, How dare I thinke such glory to attaine?” “These, that have it attaynd, were in like cace, As wretched men, and lived in like paine.” “But deeds of armes must I at last be faine And Ladies love to leave, so dearely bought?” “What need of armes, where peace doth ay remaine,” (Said he)

“and bitter battailes all are fought? As for loose loves, they’are vaine, and vanish into nought.”

“O! let me not,” (quoth he) “then turne againe Backe to the world, whose joyes so fruitlesse are; But let me heare for aye in peace remaine, Or streightway on that last long voiage fare, That nothing may my present hope empare.” “That may not be,” (said he) “ne maist thou yitt Forgoe that royal maides bequeathed care, Who did her cause into thy hand committ, Till from her cursed foe thou have her freely quitt.”

“Then shall I soone,” (quoth he) “so God me grace, Abett that virgins cause disconsolate, And shortly back returne unto this place, To walke this way in Pilgrims poore estate. But now aread, old father, why of late Didst thou behight me borne of English blood, Whom all a Faeries sonne doen nominate?” “That word shall I,” (said he) “avouchen good, Sith to thee is unknowne the cradle of thy brood.

“For, well I wote, thou springst from ancient race Of Saxon kinges, that have with mightie hand, And many bloody battailes fought in face, High reard their royall throne in Britans land, And vanquisht them, unable to withstand: From thence a Faery thee unweeting reft, There as thou slepst in tender swadling band, And her base Elfin brood there for thee left: Such, men do Chaungelings call, so chaung’d by Faeries theft.

“Thence she thee brought into this Faery lond, And in an heaped furrow did thee hyde; Where thee a Ploughman all unweeting fond, As he his toylesome teme that way did guyde, And brought thee up in ploughmans state to byde, Whereof Georgos he thee gave to name; Till prickt with courage, and thy forces pryde, To Faery court thou cam’st to seek for fame, And prove thy puissant armes, as seemes thee best became.”

“O holy Sire!” (quoth he) “how shall I quight, The many favours I with thee have fownd, That hast my name and nation redd aright, And taught the way that does to heaven bownd!” This saide, adowne he looked to the grownd To have returnd; but

dazed were his eyne Through passing brightnes, which did quite confound His feeble sence, and too exceeding shyne. So darke are earthly thinges compar'd to things divine.

At last, whenas himselfe he gan to fynd, To Una back he cast him to retyre, Who him awaited still with pensive mynd. Great thankes, and goodly meed, to that good syre He thens departing gave for his paynes hyre: So came to Una, who him joyd to see; And, after litle rest, gan him desyre Of her adventure myndfull for to bee. So leave they take of Cælia and her daughters three.

Canto XI

The knight with that old Dragon fights Two days incessantly: The third him overthrowes, and gayns Most glorious victory.

High time now gan it wex for Una fayre To thinke of those her captive Parents deare, And their forwasted kingdom to repayre: Whereto whenas they now approched neare, With hartie wordes her knight she gan to cheare, And in her modest maner thus bespake: "Deare knight, as deare as ever knight was deare, That all these sorrowes suffer for my sake, High heven behold the tedious toyle ye for me take!

"Now are we come unto my native soyle, And to the place where all our perilles dwell; Here hauntes that feend, and does his dayly spoyle; Therefore, henceforth, bee at your keeping well, And ever ready for your foeman fell: The sparke of noble corage now awake, And strive your excellent selfe to excell: That shall ye evermore renowmed make Above all knights on earth, that batteill undertake."

And pointing forth, "Lo! yonder is," (said she) "The brasen towre, in which my parents deare For dread of that huge feend emprisond be; Whom I from far see on the walles appeare, Whose sight my feeble soule doth greatly cheare: And on the top of all I do espye The watchman wayting tydings glad to heare; That, (O my Parents!)

might I happily Unto you bring, to ease you of your misery!”

With that they heard a roaring hideous sownd, That all the ayre with terror filled wyde, And seemd uneath to shake the stedfast ground. Eftsoones that dreadful Dragon they espyde, Where stretcht he lay upon the sunny side Of a great hill, himselfe like a great hill: But, all so soone as he from far descryde Those glistring armes that heven with light did fill, He rousd himselfe full blyth, and hastned them untill.

Then badd the knight his Lady yede aloof, And to an hill herselfe withdraw asyde; From whence she might behold that battailles proof, And eke be safe from daunger far descryde. She him obayd, and turnd a little wyde.— Now, O thou sacred Muse! most learned Dame, Fayre ympe of Phœbus and his aged bryde, The Nourse of time and everlasting fame, That warlike handes ennoblest with immortall name;

O! gently come into my feeble brest; Come gently, but not with that mightie rage, Wherewith the martiall troupes thou doest infest, And hartes of great Heroës doest enrage, That nought their kindled corage may aswage: Soone as thy dreadfull trompe begins to sownd, The God of warre with his fiers equipage Thou doest awake, sleepe never he so sownd; And scared nations doest with horror sterne astownd.

Fayre Goddesse, lay that furious fitt asyde, Till I of warres and bloody Mars doe sing, And Bryton fieldes with Sarazin blood be dyde, Twixt that great faery Queene and Paynim king, That with their horror heven and earth did ring; A worke of labour long, and endlesse prayse: But now a while lett downe that haughtie string, And to my tunes thy second tenor rayse, That I this man of God his godly armes may blaze.

By this, the dreadful Beast drew nigh to hand, Halfe flying and halfe footing in his haste, That with his largenesse measured much land, And made wide shadow under his huge waste, As mountaine doth the valley overcaste. Approching nigh, he reared high afore His body monstrous, horrible, and vaste; Which, to increase his wondrous

greatnes more, Was swoln with wrath and poyson, and with bloody gore;

And over all with brasen scales was armd, Like plated cote of steele, so couched neare That nought mote perce; ne might his corse bee harmd With dint of swerd, nor push of pointed speare: Which as an Eagle, seeing pray appeare, His aery plumes doth rouze, full rudely dight; So shaked he, that horror was to heare: For as the clashing of an Armor bright, Such noyse his rouzed scales did send unto the knight.

His flaggy winges, when forth he did display, Were like two sayles, in which the hollow wynd Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way: And eke the pennes, that did his pineons bynd, Were like mayne-yardes with flying canvas lynd; With which whenas him list the ayre to beat, And there by force unwonted passage fynd, The cloudes before him fledd for terror great, And all the hevens stood still amazed with his threat.

His huge long tayle, wownd up in hundred foldes, Does overspred his long bras-scaly back, Whose wreathed boughtes when ever he unfoldes, And thick entangled knots adown does slack, Bespotted as with shieldes of red and blacke, It sweepeth all the land behind him farre, And of three furlongs does but litle lacke; And at the point two stinges in fixed arre, Both deadly sharp, that sharpest steele exceeden farre.

But stinges and sharpest steele did far exceed The sharpnesse of his cruel rending clawes: Dead was it sure, as sure as death in deed, What ever thing does touch his ravenous pawes, Or what within his reach he ever drawes. But his most hideous head my tongue to tell Does tremble; for his deepe devouring jawes Wyde gaped, like the griesly mouth of hell, Through which into his darke abysse all ravin fell.

And, that more wondrous was, in either jaw Three ranckes of yron teeth enraunged were, In which yett trickling blood, and gobbets raw, Of late devoured bodies did appeare, That sight thereof bredd cold congealed feare; Which to increase, and all atonce to kill, A cloud of smoothering smoke, and sulphure seare, Out of his

stinking gorge forth steemed still, That all the ayre about with smoke and stench did fill.

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining shieldes, Did burne with wrath, and sparkled living fyre: As two broad Beacons, sett in open fieldes, Send forth their flames far off to every shyre, And warning give that enimies conspyre With fire and sword the region to invade: So flam’d his eyne with rage and rancorous yre; But far within, as in a hollow glade, Those glaring lampes were sett that made a dreadfull shade.

So dreadfully he towardes him did pas, Forelifting up aloft his speckled brest, And often bounding on the brused gras, As for great joyance of his newcome guest. Eftsoones he gan advance his haughty crest, As chauffed Bore his bristles doth upreare; And shoke his scales to battaile ready drest, That made the Redcrosse knight nigh quake for feare, As bidding bold defyaunce to his foeman neare.

The knight gan fayrely couch his steady speare, And fiersely ran at him with rigorous might: The pointed steele, arriving rudely theare, His harder hyde would nether perce nor bight, But, glauncing by, foorth passed forward right. Yet sore amoved with so puissaunt push, The wrathfull beast about him turned light, And him so rudely, passing by, did brush With his long tayle, that horse and man to ground did rush.

Both horse and man up lightly rose againe, And fresh encounter towardes him addrest; But th’ydle stroke yet backe recoyld in vaine, And found no place his deadly point to rest. Exceeding rage enflam’d the furious Beast, To be avenged of so great despight; For never felt his imperceable brest So wondrous force from hand of living wight; Yet had he prov’d the powre of many a puissant knight.

Then, with his waving wings displayed wyde, Himselfe up high he lifted from the ground, And with strong flight did forcibly divyde The yielding ayre, which nigh too feeble found Her flitting parts, and element unsound, To beare so great a weight: he,

cutting way With his broad sayles, about him soared round; At last, low stouping with unweldy sway, Snatcht up both horse and man, to beare them quite away.

Long he them bore above the subject plaine, So far as Ewghen bow a shaft may send, Till struggling strong did him at last constraine To let them downe before his flightes end: As hagard hauke, presuming to contend With hardy fowle above his hable might, His wearie pounces all in vaine doth spend To trusse the pray too heavy for his flight; Which, comming down to ground, does free it selfe by fight.

He so disseized of his gryping grosse, The knight his thrillant speare againe assayd In his bras-plated body to embosse, And three mens strength unto the stroake he layd; Wherewith the stiffe beame quaked as affrayd, And glauncing from his scaly necke did glyde Close under his left wing, then broad displayd: The percing steele there wrought a wound full wyde, That with the uncouth smart the Monster lowdly cryde.

He cryde, as raging seas are wont to rore When wintry storme his wrathful wreck does threat; The rolling billowes beate the ragged shore, As they the earth would shoulder from her seat; And greedy gulfe does gape, as he would eat His neighbour element in his revenge: Then gin the blustring brethren boldly threat To move the world from off his stedfast henge, And boystrous battaile make, each other to avenge.

The steely head stuck fast still in his flesh, Till with his cruell clawes he snatcht the wood, And quite a sunder broke. Forth flowed fresh A gushing river of blacke gory blood, That drowned all the land whereon he stood; The streame thereof would drive a water-mill: Trebly augmented was his furious mood With bitter sence of his deepe rooted ill, That flames of fire he threw forth from his large nosethril.

His hideous tayle then hurled he about, And therewith all enwrapt the nimble thyes Of his froth-fomy steed, whose courage stout Striving to loose the knott that fast him tyes, Himselfe in streighter bandes too rash implyes, That to the ground he is

perforce constraynd To throw his ryder; who can quickly ryse From off the earth, with durty blood distaynd, For that reprochfull fall right fowly he disdaynd;

And fercely tooke his trenchand blade in hand, With which he stroke so furious and so fell, That nothing seemd the puissaunce could withstand: Upon his crest the hardned yron fell, But his more hardned crest was armd so well, That deeper dint therein it would not make; Yet so extremely did the buffe him quell, That from thenceforth he shund the like to take, But when he saw them come he did them still forsake.

The knight was wroth to see his stroke beguyld, And smot againe with more outrageous might; But backe againe the sparcling steele recoyld, And left not any marke where it did light, As if in Adamant rocke it had beene pight. The beast, impatient of his smarting wound And of so fierce and forcible despight, Thought with his winges to stye above the ground; But his late wounded wing unserviceable found.

Then full of griefe and anguish vehement, He lowdly brayd, that like was never heard; And from his wide devouring oven sent A flake of fire, that flashing in his beard Him all amazd, and almost made afeard: The scorching flame sore swinged all his face, And through his armour all his body seard, That he could not endure so cruell cace, But thought his armes to leave, and helmet to unlace.

Not that great Champion of the antique world, Whom famous Poetes verse so much doth vaunt, And hath for twelve huge labours high extold, So many furies and sharpe fits did haunt, When him the poysoned garment did enchaunt With Centaures blood, and bloody verses charmd; As did this knight twelve thousand dolours daunt, Whom fyrie steele now burnt, that erst him arm’d; That erst him goodly arm’d, now most of all him harm’d.

Faynt, wearie, sore, emboyled, grieved, brent, With heat, toyle, wounds, armes, smart, and inward fire, That never man such mischiefes did torment: Death better

were; death did he oft desire, But death will never come when needes require. Whom so dismayd when that his foe beheld, He cast to suffer him no more respire, But gan his sturdy sterne about to weld, And him so strongly stroke, that to the ground him feld.

It fortuned, (as fayre it then befell) Behynd his backe, unweeting, where he stood, Of auncient time there was a springing well, From which fast trickled forth a silver flood, Full of great vertues, and for med'cine good: Whylome, before that cursed Dragon got That happy land, and all with innocent blood Defyld those sacred waves, it rightly hot The well of life, ne yet his vertues had forgot:

For unto life the dead it could restore, And guilt of sinfull crimes cleane wash away; Those that with sicknesse were infected sore It could recure; and aged long decay Renew, as one were borne that very day. Both Silo this, and Jordan, did excell, And th'English Bath, and eke the German Spau; Ne can Cephise, nor Hebrus, match this well: Into the same the knight back overthrowen fell.

Now gan the golden Phœbus for to steepe His fierie face in billowes of the west, And his faint steedes watred in Ocean deepe, Whiles from their journall labours they did rest; When that infernall Monster, having kest His wearie foe into that living well, Gan high advaunce his broad discoloured brest Above his wonted pitch, with countenance fell, And clapt his yron wings as victor he did dwell.

Which when his pensive Lady saw from farre, Great woe and sorrow did her soule assay, As weening that the sad end of the warre; And gan to highest God entirely pray That feared chaunce from her to turne away: With folded hands, and knees full lowly bent, All night shee watcht, ne once adowne would lay Her dainty limbs in her sad dreriment, But praying still did wake, and waking did lament.

The morrow next gan earely to appeare, That Titan rose to runne his daily race; But earely, ere the morrow next gan reare Out of the sea faire Titans deawy face, Up rose the gentle virgin from her place, And looked all about, if she might spy Her

loved knight to move his manly pace: For she had great doubt of his safety, Since late she saw him fall before his enimy.

At last she saw where he upstarted brave Out of the well, wherein he drenched lay: As Eagle, fresh out of the ocean wave, Where he hath lefte his plumes all hory gray, And deckt himselfe with fethers youthly gay, Like Eyas hauke up mounts unto the skies, His newly-budded pineons to assay, And marveiles at himselfe stil as he flies: So new this newborne knight to battell new did rise.

Whom when the damned feend so fresh did spy, No wonder if he wondred at the sight, And doubted whether his late enimy It were, or other new supplied knight. He now, to prove his late-renewed might, High brandishing his bright deaw-burning blade, Upon his crested scalp so sore did smite, That to the scull a yawning wound it made: The deadly dint his dulled sences all dismaid.

I wote not whether the revenging steele Were hardned with that holy water dew Wherein he fell, or sharper edge did feele, Or his baptized hands now greater grew, Or other secret vertue did ensew; Els never could the force of fleshly arme, Ne molten mettall, in his blood embrew; For till that stownd could never wight him harme By subtilty, nor slight, nor might, nor mighty charme.

The cruell wound enraged him so sore, That loud he yelled for exceeding paine; As hundred ramping Lions seemd to rore, Whom ravenous hunger did thereto constraine: Then gan he tosse aloft his stretched traine, And therewith scourge the buxome aire so sore, That to his force to yielden it was faine; Ne ought his sturdy strokes might stand afore, That high trees overthrew, and rocks in peeces tore.

The same advauncing high above his head, With sharpe intended sting so rude him smott, That to the earth him drove, as stricken dead; Ne living wight would have him life behott: The mortall sting his angry needle shott Quite through his shield, and in his shoulder seasd, Where fast it stucke, ne would thereout be gott: The griefe thereof him wondrous sore diseasd, Ne might his rancling paine with patience be

appeasd.

But yet, more mindfull of his honour deare Then of the grievous smart which him did wring, From loathed soile he can him lightly reare, And strove to loose the far infixed sting: Which when in vaine he tryde with struggeling, Inflam'd with wrath, his raging blade he hefte, And strooke so strongly, that the knotty string Of his huge taile he quite a sonder clefte; Five joints thereof he hewd, and but the stump him lefte.

Hart cannot thinke what outrage and what cries, With fowle enfouldred smoake and flashing fire, The hell-bred beast threw forth unto the skies, That all was covered with darknesse dire: Then, fraught with rancour and engorged yre, He cast at once him to avenge for all; And, gathering up himselfe out of the mire With his uneven wings, did fiercely fall Upon his sunne-bright shield, and grypt it fast withall.

Much was the man encombred with his hold, In feare to lose his weapon in his paw, Ne wist yett how his talaunts to unfold; Nor harder was from Cerberus greedy jaw To plucke a bone, then from his cruell claw To reave by strength the griped gage away: Thrise he assayd it from his foote to draw, And thrise in vaine to draw it did assay; It booted nought to thinke to robbe him of his pray.

Tho, when he saw no power might prevaile, His trusty sword he cald to his last aid, Wherewith he fiersly did his foe assaile, And double blowes about him stoutly laid, That glauncing fire out of the yron plaid, As sparkles from the Andvile use to fly, When heavy hammers on the wedge are swaid: Therewith at last he forst him to unty One of his grasping feete, him to defend thereby.

The other foote, fast fixed on his shield, Whenas no strength nor stroks mote him constraine To loose, ne yet the warlike pledge to yield, He smott thereat with all his might and maine, That nought so wondrous puissaunce might sustaine: Upon the joint the lucky steele did light, And made such way that hewd it quite in twaine; The paw yett missed not his minisht might, But hong still on the shield, as it at first was

pight.

For griefe thereof and divelish despight, From his infernall fournace forth he threw Huge flames that dimmed all the hevens light, Enrold in duskish smoke and brimstone blew: As burning Aetna from his boyling stew Doth belch out flames, and rockes in peeces broke, And ragged ribs of mountaines molten new, Enwrapt in cole-blacke clowds and filthy smoke, That all the land with stench and heven with horror choke.

The heate whereof, and harmefull pestilence, So sore him noyd, that forst him to retire A little backeward for his best defence, To save his body from the scorching fire, Which he from hellish entrailes did expire. It chaunst, (eternall God that chaunce did guide) As he recoiled backeward, in the mire His nigh foreweried feeble feet did slide, And downe he fell, with dread of shame sore terrifide.

There grew a goodly tree him faire beside, Loaden with fruit and apples rosy redd, As they in pure vermilion had been dide, Whereof great vertues over-all were redd; For happy life to all which thereon fedd, And life eke everlasting did befall: Great God it planted in that blessed stedd With his Almighty hand, and did it call The tree of life, the crime of our first fathers fall.

In all the world like was not to be fownd, Save in that soile, where all good things did grow, And freely sprong out of the fruitfull grownd, As incorrupted Nature did them sow, Till that dredd Dragon all did overthrow. Another like faire tree eke grew thereby, Whereof whoso did eat, eftsoones did know Both good and ill. O mournfull memory! That tree through one mans fault hath doen us all to dy.

From that first tree forth flowd, as from a well, A trickling streame of Balme, most soveraine And dainty deare, which on the ground still fell, And overflowed all the fertile plaine, As it had deawed bene with timely raine: Life and long health that gracious ointment gave, And deadly wounds could heale, and reare againe The sencelesse corse appointed for the grave: Into that same he fell, which did from

death him save.

For nigh thereto the ever damned Beast Durst not approch, for he was deadly made, And al that life preserved did detest; Yet he it oft adventur’d to invade. By this the drouping day-light gan to fade, And yield his rowme to sad succeeding night, Who with her sable mantle gan to shade The face of earth and wayes of living wight, And high her burning torch set up in heaven bright.

When gentle Una saw the second fall Of her deare knight, who, weary of long fight And faint through losse of blood, moov’d not at all, But lay, as in a dreame of deepe delight, Besmeard with pretious Balme, whose vertuous might Did heale his woundes, and scorching heat alay; Againe she stricken was with sore affright, And for his safetie gan devoutly pray, And watch the noyous night, and wait for joyous day.

The joyous day gan early to appeare; And fayre Aurora from the deawy bed Of aged Tithone gan herselfe to reare With rosy cheekes, for shame as blushing red: Her golden locks for hast were loosely shed About her eares, when Una her did marke Clymbe to her charet, all with flowers spred, From heven high to chace the chearelesse darke; With mery note her lowd salutes the mounting larke.

Then freshly up arose the doughty knight, All healed of his hurts and woundes wide, And did himselfe to battaile ready dight; Whose early foe awaiting him beside To have devourd, so soone as day he spyde, When now he saw himselfe so freshly reare, As if late fight had nought him damnifyde, He woxe dismaid, and gan his fate to feare: Nathlesse with wonted rage he him advaunced neare.

And in his first encounter, gaping wyde, He thought attonce him to have swallowd quight, And rusht upon him with outragious pryde; Who him rencountring fierce, as hauke in flight, Perforce rebutted backe. The weapon bright, Taking advantage of his open jaw, Ran through his mouth with so importune might, That deepe emperst his darksom hollow maw, And, back retyrd, his life blood forth with all did draw.

So downe he fell, and forth his life did breath, That vanisht into smoke and cloudes swift; So downe he fell, that th'earth him underneath Did grone, as feeble so great load to lift; So downe he fell, as an huge rocky clift, Whose false foundacion waves have washt away, With dreadfull poyse is from the mayneland rift, And rolling downe great Neptune doth dismay: So downe he fell, and like an heaped mountaine lay.

The knight him selfe even trembled at his fall, So huge and horrible a masse it seemd; And his deare Lady, that beheld it all, Durst not approch for dread which she misdeemd; But yet at last, whenas the direfull feend She saw not stirre, off-shaking vaine affright She nigher drew, and saw that joyous end: Then God she praysd, and thankt her faithfull knight, That had atchievde so great a conquest by his might.

Canto XII

Fayre Una to the Redcrosse Knight Betrothed is with joy: Though false Duessa, it to barre, Her false sleightes doe imploy.

Behold! I see the haven nigh at hand To which I meane my wearie course to bend; Vere the maine shete, and beare up with the land, The which afore is fayrly to be kend, And seemeth safe from storms that may offend; There this fayre virgin wearie of her way Must landed bee, now at her journeyes end; There eke my feeble barke a while may stay, Till mery wynd and weather call her thence away.

Scarsely had Phœbus in the glooming East Yett harnessed his fyrie-footed teeme, Ne reard above the earth his flaming creast, When the last deadly smoke aloft did steeme, That signe of last outbreathed life did seeme Unto the watchman on the castle-wall; Who thereby dead that balefull Beast did deeme, And to his Lord and Lady lowd gan call, To tell how he had seene the Dragons fatall fall.

Uprose with hasty joy, and feeble speed, That aged Syre, the lord of all that land, And looked forth, to weet if trew indeed Those tydinges were, as he did understand:

Which whenas trew by tryall he out fond, He badd to open wyde his brasen gate, Which long time had beene shut, and out of hond Proclaymed joy and peace through all his state; For dead now was their foe, which them forrayed late.

Then gan triumphant Trompets sownd on hye, That sent to heven the ecchoed report Of their new joy, and happie victory Gainst him, that had them long opprest with tort, And fast imprisoned in sieged fort. Then all the people, as in solemne feast, To him assembled with one full consort, Rejoycing at the fall of that great beast, From whose eternall bondage now they were releast.

Forth came that auncient Lord, and aged Queene, Arayd in antique robes downe to the grownd, And sad habiliments right well beseene: A noble crew about them waited rownd Of sage and sober peres, all gravely gownd; Whom far before did march a goodly band Of tall young men, all hable armes to sownd; But now they laurell braunches bore in hand, Glad signe of victory and peace in all their land.

Unto that doughtie Conquerour they came, And him before themselves prostrating low, Their Lord and Patrone loud did him proclame, And at his feet their lawrell boughes did throw. Soone after them, all dauncing on a row, The comely virgins came, with girlands dight, As fresh as flowres in medow greene doe grow When morning deaw upon their leaves doth light; And in their handes sweet Timbrels all upheld on hight.

And them before the fry of children yong Their wanton sportes and childish mirth did play, And to the Maydens sownding tymbrels song In well attuned notes a joyous lay, And made delightfull musick all the way, Untill they came where that faire virgin stood: As fayre Diana in fresh sommers day Beholdes her nymphes enraung'd in shady wood, Some wrestle, some do run, some bathe in christall flood.

So she beheld those maydens meriment With chearefull vew; who, when to her they came, Themselves to ground with gracious humblesse bent, And her ador'd by honorable name, Lifting to heven her everlasting fame: Then on her head they sett a

girlond greene, And crowned her twixt earnest and twixt game: Who, in her self-resemblance well beseene, Did seeme, such as she was, a goodly maiden Queene.

And after all the raskall many ran, Heaped together in rude rablement, To see the face of that victorious man, Whom all admired as from heaven sent, And gazd upon with gaping wonderment; But when they came where that dead Dragon lay, Stretcht on the ground in monstrous large extent, The sight with ydle feare did them dismay, Ne durst approch him nigh to touch, or once assay.

Some feard, and fledd; some feard, and well it faynd; One, that would wiser seeme then all the rest, Warnd him not touch, for yet perhaps remaynd Some lingring life within his hollow brest, Or in his wombe might lurke some hidden nest Of many Dragonettes, his fruitfull seede: Another saide, that in his eyes did rest Yet sparckling fyre, and badd thereof take heed; Another said, he saw him move his eyes indeed.

One mother, whenas her foolehardy chyld Did come too neare, and with his talants play, Halfe dead through feare, her litle babe revyld, And to her gossibs gan in counsell say; “How can I tell, but that his talants may Yet scratch my sonne, or rend his tender hand?” So diversly them selves in vaine they fray; Whiles some more bold to measure him nigh stand, To prove how many acres he did spred of land.

Thus flocked all the folke him rownd about; The whiles that hoarie king, with all his traine, Being arrived where that champion stout After his foes defeasaunce did remaine, Him goodly greetes, and fayre does entertayne With princely gifts of yvory and gold, And thousand thankes him yeeldes for all his paine. Then when his daughter deare he does behold, Her dearely doth imbrace, and kisseth manifold.

And after to his Pallace he them bringes, With shaumes, and trompets, and with Clarions sweet; And all the way the joyous people singes, And with their garments strowes the paved street; Whence mounting up, they fynd purveyaunce meet Of all,

that royall Princes court became; And all the floore was underneath their feet Bespredd with costly scarlott of great name, On which they lowly sitt, and fitting purpose frame.

What needes me tell their feast and goodly guize, In which was nothing riotous nor vaine? What needes of dainty dishes to devize, Of comely services, or courtly trayne? My narrow leaves cannot in them contayne The large discourse of roiall Princes state. Yet was their manner then but bare and playne; For th'antique world excesse and pryde did hate: Such proud luxurious pompe is swollen up but late.

Then, when with meates and drinkes of every kinde Their fervent appetites they quenched had, That auncient Lord gan fit occasion finde, Of straunge adventures, and of perils sad Which in his travell him befallen had, For to demaund of his renowmed guest: Who then with utt'rance grave, and count'nance sad, From poynt to poynt, as is before exprest, Discourst his voyage long, according his request.

Great pleasure, mixt with pittifull regard, That godly King and Queene did passionate, Whyles they his pittifull adventures heard; That oft they did lament his lucklesse state, And often blame the too importune fate That heapd on him so many wrathfull wreakes; For never gentle knight, as he of late, So tossed was in fortunes cruell freakes: And all the while salt teares bedeawd the hearers cheaks.

Then sayd that royall Pere in sober wise; "Deare Sonne, great beene the evils which ye bore From first to last in your late enterprise, That I note whether praise or pitty more; For never living man, I weene, so sore In sea of deadly daungers was distrest: But since now safe ye seised have the shore, And well arrived are, (high God be blest!) Let us devize of ease and everlasting rest."

"Ah dearest Lord!" said then that doughty knight, "Of ease or rest I may not yet devize; For by the faith which I to armes have plight, I bownden am streight after this emprize, As that your daughter can ye well advize, Backe to retourne to that great Faery Queene, And her to serve sixe yeares in warlike wize, Gainst that proud

Paynim king that works her teene: Therefore I ought crave pardon, till I there have beene."

"Unhappy falls that hard necessity," (Quoth he) "the troubler of my happy peace, And vowed foe of my felicity; Ne I against the same can justly preace: But since that band ye cannot now release, Nor doen undo, (for vowes may not be vayne) Soone as the terme of those six yeares shall cease, Ye then shall hither backe retourne agayne, The marriage to accomplish vowd betwixt you twayn.

"Which, for my part, I covet to performe In sort as through the world I did proclame, That whoso kild that monster most deforme, And him in hardy battayle overcame, Should have mine onely daughter to his Dame, And of my kingdome heyre apparaunt bee: Therefore, since now to thee perteynes the same By dew desert of noble chevalree, Both daughter and eke kingdome lo! I yield to thee.

Then forth he called that his daughter fayre, The fairest Un', his onely daughter deare, His onely daughter and his only hayre; Who forth proceeding with sad sober cheare, As bright as doth the morning starre appeare Out of the East, with flaming lockes bedight, To tell that dawning day is drawing neare, And to the world does bring long-wished light, So faire and fresh that Lady shewd herselfe in sight.

So faire and fresh, as freshest flowre in May; For she had layd her mournefull stole aside, And widow-like sad wimple throwne away, Wherewith her heavenly beautie she did hide, Whiles on her wearie journey she did ride; And on her now a garment she did weare All lilly white, withoutten spot or pride, That seemd like silke and silver woven neare; But neither silke nor silver therein did appeare.

The blazing brightnesse of her beauties beame, And glorious light of her sunshyny face, To tell were as to strive against the streame: My ragged rimes are all too rude and bace Her heavenly lineaments for to enchace. Ne wonder; for her own deare loved knight, All were she daily with himselfe in place, Did wonder much at her celestial sight: Oft had he seene her faire, but never so faire dight.

So fairely dight when she in presence came, She to her Syre made humble reverence, And bowed low, that her right well became, And added grace unto her excellence: Who with great wisedome and grave eloquence Thus gan to say—But, eare he thus had sayd, With flying speede, and seeming great pretence, Came running in, much like a man dismayd, A messenger with letters, which his message sayd.

All in the open hall amazed stood At suddeinnesse of that unwary sight, And wondred at his breathlesse hasty mood: But he for nought would stay his passage right, Till fast before the king he did alight; Where falling flat great humblesse he did make, And kist the ground whereon his foot was pight; Then to his handes that writt he did betake, Which he disclosing read thus, as the paper spake:

“To thee, most mighty king of Eden fayre, Her greeting sends in these sad lines addrest The wofull daughter and forsaken heyre Of that great Emperour of all the West; And bids thee be advized for the best, Ere thou thy daughter linck in holy band Of wedlocke to that new unknowen guest: For he already plighted his right hand Unto another love, and to another land.

“To me, sad mayd, or rather widow sad, He was affyaunced long time before, And sacred pledges he both gave, and had, False erraunt knight, infamous, and forswore! Witnesse the burning Altars, which he swore, And guilty heavens of his bold perjury; Which though he hath polluted oft of yore, Yet I to them for judgement just doe fly, And them conjure t’avenge this shamefull injury.

“Therefore, since mine he is, or free or bond, Or false or trew, or living or else dead, Withhold, O soverayne Prince! your hasty hond From knitting league with him, I you aread; Ne weene my right with strength adowne to tread, Through weaknesse of my widowhed or woe; For truth is strong her rightfull cause to plead, And shall finde friends, if need requireth soe. So bids thee well to fare, Thy neither friend nor foe, Fidessa.”

When he these bitter byting wordes had red, The tydings straunge did him abashed make, That still he sate long time astonished, As in great muse, ne word to creature spake. At last his solemn silence thus he brake, With doubtfull eyes fast fixed on his guest: “Redoubted knight, that for myne only sake Thy life and honor late adventurest, Let nought be hid from me that ought to be exprest.

“What meane these bloody vowes and idle threats, Throwne out from womanish impatient mynd? What hevens? what altars? what enraged heates, Here heaped up with termes of love unkynd, My conscience cleare with guilty bands would bynd? High God be witnesse that I guiltlesse ame; But if yourselfe, Sir knight, ye faulty fynd, Or wrapped be in loves of former Dame, With cryme doe not it cover, but disclose the same.”

To whom the Redcrosse knight this answere sent: “My Lord, my king, be nought hereat dismayd, Till well ye wote by grave intendiment, What woman, and wherefore, doth me upbrayd With breach of love and loialty betrayd. It was in my mishaps, as hitherward I lately traveild, that unwares I strayd Out of my way, through perils straunge and hard, That day should faile me ere I had them all declard.

“There did I find, or rather I was fownd Of this false woman that Fidessa hight, Fidessa hight the falsest Dame on grownd, Most false Duessa, royall richly dight, That easy was t’inveigle weaker sight: Who by her wicked arts and wylie skill, Too false and strong for earthly skill or might, Unwares me wrought unto her wicked will, And to my foe betrayd when least I feared ill.”

Then stepped forth the goodly royall Mayd, And on the ground herselfe prostrating low, With sober countenance thus to him sayd: “O! pardon me, my soveraine Lord, to sheow The secret treasons, which of late I know To have bene wrought by that false sorceresse: Shee, onely she, it is, that earst did throw This gentle knight into so great distresse, That death him did awaite in daily wretchednesse.

“And now it seemes, that she suborned hath This crafty messenger with letters vaine, To worke new woe and improvided scath, By breaking of the band betwixt us twaine; Wherein she used hath the practicke paine Of this false footman, clokt with simplenesse, Whome if ye please for to discover plaine, Ye shall him Archimago find, I ghesse, The falsest man alive: who tries, shall find no lesse.”

The king was greatly moved at her speach; And, all with suddein indignation fraight, Bad on that Messenger rude hands to reach. Eftsoones the Gard, which on his state did wait, Attacht that faytor false, and bound him strait, Who seeming sorely chauffed at his band, As chained beare whom cruell dogs doe bait, With ydle force did faine them to withstand, And often semblaunce made to scape out of their hand.

But they him layd full low in dungeon deepe, And bound him hand and foote with yron chains; And with continual watch did warely keepe. Who then would thinke that by his subtile trains He could escape fowle death or deadly pains? Thus, when that Princes wrath was pacifide, He gan renew the late forbidden bains, And to the knight his daughter deare he tyde With sacred rites and vowes for ever to abyde.

His owne two hands the holy knotts did knitt, That none but death for ever can divide; His owne two hands, for such a turne most fitt, The housling fire did kindle and provide, And holy water thereon sprinckled wide; At which the bushy Teade a groome did light, And sacred lamp in secret chamber hide, Where it should not be quenched day nor night, For feare of evil fates, but burnen ever bright.

Then gan they sprinckle all the posts with wine, And made great feast to solemnize that day: They all perfumde with frankincense divine, And precious odours fetcht from far away, That all the house did sweat with great aray: And all the while sweete Musicke did apply Her curious skill the warbling notes to play, To drive away the dull Melancholy; The whiles one sung a song of love and jollity.

During the which there was an heavenly noise Heard sownd through all the Pallace pleasantly, Like as it had bene many an Angels voice Singing before th’eternall

majesty, In their trinall triplicities on hye: Yett wist no creature whence that hevenly sweet Proceeded, yet each one felt secretly Himselfe thereby refte of his sences meet, And ravished with rare impression in his sprite.

Great joy was made that day of young and old, And solemne feast proclaymd throughout the land, That their exceeding merth may not be told: Suffice it heare by signes to understand The usuall joyes at knitting of loves band. Thrise happy man the knight himselfe did hold, Possessed of his Ladies hart and hand; And ever, when his eie did her behold, His heart did seeme to melt in pleasures manifold.

Her joyous presence and sweet company In full content he there did long enjoy; Ne wicked envy, ne vile gealosy, His deare delights were hable to annoy: Yet, swimming in that sea of blisfull joy, He nought forgott how he whilome had sworne, In case he could that monstrous beast destroy, Unto his Faery Queene backe to retourne; The which he shortly did, and Una left to mourne.

Now, strike your sailes, yee jolly Mariners, For we be come unto a quiet rode, Where we must land some of our passengers, And light this weary vessell of her lode: Here she a while may make her safe abode, Till she repaired have her tackles spent, And wants supplide; And then againe abroad On the long voiage whereto she is bent: Well may she speede, and fairely finish her intent!

Book II

The Legend of Sir Guyon, or of Temperance

Right well I wote, most mighty Soveraine, That all this famous antique history Of some th’aboundance of an ydle braine Will judged be, and painted forgery, Rather then matter of just memory, Sith none that breatheth living aire does know Where is that happy land of Faery, Which I so much doe vaunt, yet no where show, But vouch antiquities, which no body can know.

But let that man with better sence advize, That of the world least part to us is red;

And daily how, through hardy enterprize, Many great Regions are discovered, Which to late age were never mentioned. Who ever heard of th'Indian Peru? Or who in venturous vessell measured The Amazon huge river, now found trew? Or fruitfullest Virginia who did ever vew?

Yet all these were, when no man did them know, Yet have from wisest ages hidden beene; And later times thinges more unknowne shall show. Why then should witlesse man so much misweene, That nothing is but that which he hath seene? What if within the Moones fayre shining spheare, What if in every other starre unseene Of other worldes he happily should heare, He wonder would much more; yet such to some appeare.

Of Faery lond yet if he more inquyre, By certein signes, here sett in sondrie place, He may it fynd; ne let him then admyre, But yield his sence to bee too blunt and bace, That no'te without an hound fine footing trace. And thou, O fayrest Princesse under sky! In this fayre mirrhour maist behold thy face, And thine owne realmes in lond of Faery, And in this antique ymage thy great auncestry.

The which O! pardon me thus to enfold In covert vele, and wrap in shadowes light, That feeble eyes your glory may behold, Which ells could not endure those beames bright, But would bee dazled with exceeding light. O! pardon, and vouchsafe with patient eare The brave adventures of this faery knight, The good Sir Guyon, gratiously to heare; In whom great rule of Temp'raunce goodly doth appeare.

Canto I

Guyon, by Archimage abusd, The Redcrosse knight awaytes; Findes mordant and Amavia slaine With Pleasures poisoned baytes.

That conning Architect of cancred guyle, Whom Princes late displeasure left in bands, For falsed letters, and suborned wyle, Soone as the Redcrosse knight he understands To beene departed out of Eden landes, To serve againe his soveraine

Elfin Queene, His artes he moves, and out of caytives handes Himselfe he frees by secret meanes unseene; His shackles emptie lefte, himselfe escaped cleene.

And forth he fares, full of malicious mynd, To worken mischiefe, and avenging woe, Where ever he that godly knight may fynd, His onely hart-sore, and his onely foe; Sith Una now he algates must forgoe, Whom his victorious handes did earst restore To native crowne and kingdom late ygoe; Where she enjoyes sure peace for evermore, As wetherbeaten ship arryv'd on happie shore.

Him therefore now the object of his spight And deadly food he makes: him to offend, By forged treason or by open fight, He seekes, of all his drifte the aymed end: Thereto his subtile engins he does bend, His practick witt and his fayre fyled tonge, With thousand other sleightes; for well he kend His credit now in doubtfull ballaunce hong: For hardly could bee hurt who was already stong.

Still as he went he craftie stales did lay, With cunning traynes him to entrap unwares, And privy spyals plast in all his way, To weete what course he takes, and how he fares, To ketch him at a vauntage in his snares. But now so wise and wary was the knight By tryall of his former harmes and cares, That he descryde and shonned still his slight: The fish that once was caught new bait wil hardly byte.

Nath'lesse th'Enchaunter would not spare his payne, In hope to win occasion to his will; Which when he long awaited had in vayne, He chaungd his mynd from one to other ill; For to all good he enimy was still. Upon the way him fortuned to meete, Fayre marching underneath a shady hill, A goodly knight, all armd in harnesse meete, That from his head no place appeared to his feete.

His carriage was full comely and upright; His countenance demure and temperate; But yett so sterne and terrible in sight, That cheard his friendes, and did his foes amate: He was an Elfin borne of noble state And mickle worship in his native land; Well could he tourney, and in lists debate, And knighthood tooke of good Sir Huons hand, When with king Oberon he came to Faery land.

Him als accompanyd upon the way A comely Palmer, clad in black attyre, Of rypest yeares, and heares all hoarie gray, That with a staffe his feeble steps did stire, Least his long way his aged limbes should tire: And, if by lookes one may the mind aread, He seemd to be a sage and sober syre; And ever with slow pace the knight did lead, Who taught his trampling steed with equall steps to tread.

Such whenas Archimago them did view, He weened well to worke some uncouth wyle: Eftsoones untwisting his deceiptfull clew, He gan to weave a web of wicked guyle, And, with faire countenance and flattring style To them approching, thus the knight bespake; “Fayre sonne of Mars, that seeke with warlike spoyle, And great atchiev’ments, great your selfe to make, Vouchsafe to stay your steed for humble misers sake.”

He stayd his steed for humble misers sake, And badd tell on the tenor of his playnt: Who feigning then in every limb to quake Through inward feare, and seeming pale and faynt, With piteous mone his percing speach gan paynt: “Deare Lady! how shall I declare thy cace, Whom late I left in languorous constraynt? Would God! thy selfe now present were in place To tell this ruefull tale: thy sight could win thee grace.

“Or rather would, O! would it so had chaunst, That you, most noble Sir, had present beene When that lewd rybauld, with vyle lust advaunst, Laid first his filthie hands on virgin cleene, To spoyle her dainty corps, so faire and sheene As on the earth, great mother of us all, With living eye more fayre was never seene Of chastity and honour virginall: Witnes, ye heavens, whom she in vaine to help did call.

“How may it be,” sayd then the knight halfe wroth, “That knight should knighthood ever so have shent?” “None but that saw,” (quoth he) “would weene for troth, How shamefully that Mayd he did torment: Her looser golden lockes he rudely rent, And drew her on the ground; and his sharpe sword Against her snowy brest he fiercely bent, And threatned death with many a bloodie word Tounge hates to tell the rest that eye to see abhord.”

Therewith amoved from his sober mood, “And lives he yet,” (said he) “that wrought this act? And doen the heavens afford him vitall food?” “He lives,” (quoth he) “and boasteth of the fact, Ne yet hath any knight his courage crackt.” “Where may that treachour then,” (sayd he) “be found, Or by what meanes may I his footing tract?” “That shall I shew,” (sayd he) “as sure as hound The stricken Deare doth chalenge by the bleeding wound.”

He stayd not lenger talke, but with fierce yre And zealous haste away is quickly gone To seeke that knight, where him that crafty Squyre Supposd to be. They do arrive anone Where sate a gentle Lady all alone, With garments rent, and heare discheveled, Wringing her handes, and making piteous mone: Her swollen eyes were much disfigured, And her faire face with teares was fowly blubbered.

The knight, approching nigh, thus to her said: “Fayre Lady, through fowle sorrow ill bedight, Great pitty is to see you thus dismayd, And marre the blossom of your beauty bright: Forthy appease your griefe and heavy plight, And tell the cause of your conceived payne; For, if he live that hath you doen despight, He shall you doe dew recompence agayne, Or els his wrong with greater puissance maintaine.”

Which when she heard, as in despightfull wise She wilfully her sorrow did augment, And offred hope of comfort did despise: Her golden lockes most cruelly she rent, And scratcht her face with ghastly dreriment; Ne would she speake, ne see, ne yet be seene, But hid her visage, and her head downe bent, Either for grievous shame, or for great teene, As if her hart with sorrow had transfixed beene:

Till her that Squyre bespake: “Madame, my liefe, For Gods deare love be not so wilfull bent, But doe vouchsafe now to receive reliefe, The which good fortune doth to you present. For what bootes it to weepe and to wayment When ill is chaunst, but doth the ill increase, And the weake minde with double woe torment?” When she her Squyre heard speake, she gan appease Her voluntarie paine, and feele some secret ease.

Eftsoone she said; “Ah! gentle trustie Squyre, What comfort can I, wofull wretch, conceave? Or why should ever I henceforth desyre To see faire heavens face, and life not leave, Sith that false Traytour did my honour reave?” “False traytour certes,” (saide the Faerie knight) “I read the man, that ever would deceave A gentle Lady, or her wrong through might: Death were too litle paine for such a fowle despight.

“But now, fayre Lady, comfort to you make, And read who hath ye wrought this shamefull plight, That short revenge the man may overtake, Whereso he be, and soone upon him light.” “Certes,” (saide she) “I wote not how he hight, But under him a gray steede he did wield, Whose sides with dapled circles weren dight; Upright he rode, and in his silver shield He bore a bloodie Crosse that quartred all the field.”

“Now by my head,” (saide Guyon) “much I muse, How that same knight should doe so fowle amis, Or ever gentle Damzell so abuse: For, may I boldly say, he surely is A right good knight, and trew of word ywis: I present was, and can it witnesse well, When armes he swore, and streight did enterpris Th’adventure of the Errant damozell; In which he hath great glory wonne, as I heare tell.

“Nathlesse he shortly shall againe be tryde, And fairely quit him of th’imputed blame; Els, be ye sure, he dearely shall abyde, Or make you good amendment for the same: All wrongs have mendes, but no amendes of shame. Now therefore, Lady, rise out of your paine, And see the salving of your blotted name.” Full loth she seemd thereto, but yet did faine, For she was inly glad her purpose so to gaine.

Her purpose was not such as she did faine, Ne yet her person such as it was seene; But under simple shew, and semblant plaine, Lurkt false Duessa secretly unseene, As a chaste Virgin that had wronged beene: So had false Archimago her disguysd, To cloke her guile with sorrow and sad teene; And eke himselfe had craftily devisd To be her Squire, and do her service well aguisd.

Her, late forlorne and naked, he had found Where she did wander in waste

wildernesse, Lurking in rockes and caves far under ground, And with greene mosse cov'ring her nakednesse To hide her shame and loathly filthinesse, Sith her Prince Arthur of proud ornaments And borrowd beauty spoyld. Her nathelesse Th'enchaunter finding fit for his intents Did thus revest, and deckt with dew habiliments.

For all he did was to deceive good knights, And draw them from pursuit of praise and fame To slug in slouth and sensuall delights, And end their daies with irrenowmed shame. And now exceeding griefe him overcame, To see the Redcrosse thus advaunced hye; Therefore this craftie engine he did frame, Against his praise to stirre up enmitye Of such, as vertues like mote unto him allye.

So now he Guyon guydes an uncouth way Through woods and mountaines, till they came at last Into a pleasant dale that lowly lay Betwixt two hils, whose high heads overplast The valley did with coole shade overcast: Through midst thereof a little river rold, By which there sate a knight with helme unlaste, Himselfe refreshing with the liquid cold, After his travell long and labours manifold.

"Lo! yonder he," cryde Archimage alowd, "That wrought the shamefull fact which I did shew; And now he doth himselfe in secret shrowd, To fly the vengeaunce for his outrage dew: But vaine; for ye shall dearely do him rew, So God ye speed and send you good successe, Which we far off will here abide to vew." So they him left inflam'd with wrathfulnesse, That streight against that knight his speare he did addresse.

Who, seeing him from far so fierce to pricke, His warlike armes about him gan embrace, And in the rest his ready speare did sticke: Tho, when as still he saw him towards pace, He gan rencounter him in equall race. They bene ymett, both ready to affrap, When suddeinly that warriour gan abace His threatned speare, as if some new mishap, Had him betide, or hidden danger did entrap;

And cryde, "Mercie, Sir knight! and mercie, Lord, For mine offence and heedelesse

hardiment, That had almost committed crime abhord, And with reprochfull shame mine honour shent, Whiles cursed steele against that badge I bent, The sacred badge of my Redeemers death, Which on your shield is set for ornament!" But his fierce foe his steed could stay uneath, Who, prickt with courage kene, did cruell battell breath.

But, when he heard him speake, streight way he knew His errour; and, himselfe inclyning, sayd: "Ah! deare Sir Guyon, well becommeth you, But me behoveth rather to upbrayd, Whose hastie hand so far from reason strayd, That almost it did haynous violence On that fayre ymage of that heavenly Mayd, That decks and armes your shield with faire defence: Your court'sie takes on you anothers dew offence."

So beene they both at one, and doen upreare Their bevers bright each other for to greet; Goodly comportaunce each to other beare, And entertaine themselves with court'sies meet. Then said the Redcrosse knight; "Now mote I weet, Sir Guyon, why with so fierce saliaunce, And fell intent, ye did at earst me meet; For sith I know your goodly governaunce, Great cause, I weene, you guided, or some uncouth chaunce."

"Certes," (said he) "well mote I shame to tell The fond encheason that me hither led. A false infamous faitour late befell Me for to meet, that seemed ill bested, And playnd of grievous outrage, which he red A knight had wrought against a Ladie gent; Which to avenge he to this place me led, Where you he made the marke of his intent, And now is fled: foule shame him follow wher he went!"

So can he turne his earnest unto game, Through goodly handling and wise temperaunce. By this his aged Guide in presence came; Who, soone as on that knight his eye did glaunce, Eftsoones of him had perfect cognizaunce, Sith him in Faery court he late avizd; And sayd; "Fayre sonne, God give you happy chaunce, And that deare Crosse uppon your shield devizd, Wherewith above all knights ye goodly seeme aguizd!

“Joy may you have, and everlasting fame, Of late most hard atchiev’ment by you donne, For which enrolled is your glorious name In heavenly Regesters above the Sunne, Where you a Saint with Saints your seat have wonne: But wretched we, where ye have left your marke, Must now anew begin like race to ronne. God guide thee, Guyon, well to end thy warke, And to the wished haven bring thy weary barke!”

“Palmer,” him answered the Redcrosse knight, “His be the praise that this atchiev’ment wrought, Who made my hand the organ of his might: More then goodwill to me attribute nought; For all I did, I did but as I ought. But you, faire Sir, whose pageant next ensewes, Well mote yee thee, as well can wish your thought, That home ye may report thrise happy newes; For well ye worthy bene for worth and gentle thewes.”

So courteous conge both did give and take, With right hands plighted, pledges of good will. Then Guyon forward gan his voyage make With his blacke Palmer, that him guided still: Still he him guided over dale and hill, And with his steedy staffe did point his way; His race with reason, and with words his will, From fowle intemperaunce he ofte did stay, And suffred not in wrath his hasty steps to stray.

In this faire wize they traveild long yfere, Through many hard assayes which did betide; Of which he honour still away did beare, And spred his glory through all countryes wide. At last, as chaunst them by a forest side To passe, for succour from the scorching ray, They heard a ruefull voice, that dearnly cride With percing shriekes and many a dolefull lay; Which to attend awhile their forward steps they stay.

“But if that carelesse hevens,” (quoth she) “despise The doome of just revenge, and take delight To see sad pageaunts of mens miseries, As bownd by them to live in lives despight; Yet can they not warne death from wretched wight. Come, then; come soone; come sweetest death, to me, And take away this long lent loathed light:

Sharpe be thy wounds, but sweete the medicines be, That long captived soules from weary thraldome free.

“But thou, sweete Babe, whom frowning froward fate Hath made sad witnesse of thy fathers fall, Sith heven thee deignes to hold in living state, Long maist thou live, and better thrive withall Then to thy lucklesse parents did befall. Live thou; and to thy mother dead attest That cleare she dide from blemish criminall: Thy litle hands embrewd in bleeding brest Loe! I for pledges leave. So give me leave to rest.”

With that a deadly shrieke she forth did throw That through the wood re-echoed againe; And after gave a grone so deepe and low That seemd her tender heart was rent in twaine, Or thrild with point of thorough-piercing paine: As gentle Hynd, whose sides with cruell steele Through launched, forth her bleeding life does raine, Whiles the sad pang approching shee does feele, Braies out her latest breath, and up her eies doth seele.

Which when that warriour heard, dismounting straict From his tall steed, he rusht into the thick, And soone arrived where that sad pourtraict Of death and dolour lay, halfe dead, halfe quick; In whose white alabaster brest did stick A cruell knife that made a griesly wownd, From which forth gusht a stream of gore blood thick, That all her goodly garments staind arownd, And into a deepe sanguine dide the grassy grownd.

Pitifull spectacle of deadly smart, Beside a bubling fountaine low she lay, Which shee increased with her bleeding hart, And the cleane waves with purple gore did ray: Als in her lap a lovely babe did play His cruell sport, in stead of sorrow dew; For in her streaming blood he did embay His litle hands, and tender joints embrew: Pitifull spectacle, as ever eie did vew!

Besides them both, upon the soiled gras The dead corse of an armed knight was spred, Whose armour all with blood besprincled was; His ruddy lips did smyle, and rosy red Did paint his chearefull cheekes, yett being ded; Seemd to have beene a

goodly personage, Now in his freshest flowre of lustyhed, Fitt to inflame faire Lady with loves rage, But that fiers fate did crop the blossome of his age.

Whom when the good Sir Guyon did behold, His hart gan wexe as starke as marble stone, And his fresh blood did frieze with fearefull cold, That all his sences seemd berefte attone: At last his mighty ghost gan deepe to grone, As Lion, grudging in his great disdaine, Mournes inwardly, and makes to him selfe mone; Til ruth and fraile affection did constraine His stout courage to stoupe, and shew his inward paine.

Out of her gored wound the cruell steel He lightly snatcht, and did the floodgate stop With his faire garment; then gan softly feel Her feeble pulse, to prove if any drop Of living blood yet in her veynes did hop: Which when he felt to move, he hoped faire To call backe life to her forsaken shop. So well he did her deadly wounds repaire, That at the last shee gan to breath out living aire.

Which he perceiving greatly gan rejoice, And goodly counsell, that for wounded hart Is meetest med'cine, tempred with sweete voice: "Ay me! deare Lady, which the ymage art Of ruefull pitty and impatient smart, What direfull chaunce, armd with avenging fate, Or cursed hand, hath plaid this cruell part, Thus fowle to hasten your untimely date? Speake, O dear Lady, speake! help never comes too late."

Therewith her dim eielids she up gan reare, On which the drery death did sitt as sad As lump of lead, and made darke clouds appeare: But when as him, all in bright armour clad, Before her standing she espied had, As one out of a deadly dreame affright, She weakely started, yet she nothing drad: Streight downe againe herselfe, in great despight, She groveling threw to ground, as hating life and light.

The gentle knight her soone with carefull paine Uplifted light, and softly did uphold: Thrise he her reard, and thrise she sunck againe, Till he his armes about her sides gan fold, And to her said: "Yet, if the stony cold Have not all seized on your frozen hart, Let one word fall that may your grief unfold, And tell the secrete of your mortall smart: He oft finds present helpe who does his griefe impart."

Then, casting up a deadly looke, full low Shee sight from bottome of her wounded brest; And after, many bitter throbs did throw, With lips full pale and foltring tong opprest, These words she breathed forth from riven chest: “Leave, ah! leave off, whatever wight thou bee, To lett a weary wretch from her dew rest, And trouble dying soules tranquilitee; Take not away, now got, which none would give to me.”

“Ah! far be it,” (said he) “Deare dame, fro mee, To hinder soule from her desired rest, Or hold sad life in long captivitee; For all I seeke is but to have redrest The bitter pangs that doth your heart infest. Tell then, O Lady! tell what fatall priefe Hath with so huge misfortune you opprest; That I may cast to compas your reliefe, Or die with you in sorrow, and partake your griefe.”

With feeble hands then stretched forth on hye, As heven accusing guilty of her death, And with dry drops congealed in her eye, In these sad wordes she spent her utmost breath: “Heare then, O man! the sorrowes that uneath My tong can tell, so far all sence they pas. Loe! this dead corpse, that lies here underneath, The gentlest knight, that ever on greene gras Gay steed with spurs did pricke, the good Sir Mortdant was:

“Was, (ay the while, that he is not so now!) My Lord, my love, my deare Lord, my deare love! So long as hevens just with equall brow Vouchsafed to behold us from above. One day, when him high corage did emmove, As wont ye knightes to seeke adventures wilde, He pricked forth his puissant force to prove. Me then he left enwombed of this childe, This luckles childe, whom thus ye see with blood defild.

“Him fortuned (hard fortune ye may ghesse) To come, where vile Acrasia does wonne; Acrasia, a false enchaunteresse, That many errant knightes hath fowle fordonne; Within a wandring Island, that doth ronne And stray in perilous gulfe, her dwelling is. Fayre Sir, if ever there ye travell, shonne The cursed land where many wend amis, And know it by the name: it hight the Bowre of blis.

“Her blis is all in pleasure, and delight, Wherewith she makes her lovers dronken

mad; And then with words, and weedes, of wondrous might, On them she workes her will to uses bad: My liefest Lord she thus beguiled had; For he was flesh: (all flesh doth frayltie breed) Whom when I heard to beene so ill bestad, Weake wretch, I wrapt myselfe in Palmers weed, And cast to seek him forth through danger and great dreed.

“Now had fayre Cynthia by even tournes Full measured three quarters of her yeare, And thrise three tymes had fild her crooked hornes, Whenas my wombe her burdein would forbeare, And bad me call Lucina to me neare. Lucina came; a manchild forth I brought: The woods, the nymphes, my bowres, my midwives, weare: Hard help at need! So deare thee, babe, I bought; Yet nought too dear I deemd, while so my deare I sought.

“Him so I sought; and so at last I fownd, Where him that witch had thralled to her will, In chaines of lust and lewde desyres ybownd, And so transformed from his former skill, That me he knew not, nether his owne ill; Till, through wise handling and faire governaunce, I him recured to a better will, Purged from drugs of fowle intemperaunce: Then meanes I gan devise for his deliveraunce.

“Which when the vile Enchaunteresse perceiv’d, How that my Lord from her I would reprive, With cup thus charmd him parting she deceivd; ‘Sad verse, give death to him that death does give, And losse of love to her that loves to live, So soone as Bacchus with the Nymphe does lincke!’ So parted we, and on our journey drive; Till, coming to this well, he stoupt to drincke: The charme fulfild, dead suddeinly he downe did sincke.

“Which when I, wretch”—Not one word more she sayd, But breaking off the end for want of breath, And slyding soft, as downe to sleepe her layd, And ended all her woe in quiet death. That seeing, good Sir Guyon could uneath From teares abstayne; for griefe his hart did grate, And from so heavie sight his head did wreath, Accusing fortune, and too cruell fate, Which plonged had faire Lady in so wretched state.

Then turning to his Palmer said; “Old syre, Behold the ymage of mortalitie, And feeble nature cloth’d with fleshly tyre. When raging passion with fierce tyranny Robs reason of her dew regalitie, And makes it servaunt to her basest part, The strong it weakens with infirmitie, And with bold furie armes the weakest hart: The strong through pleasure soonest falles, the weake through smart.”

“But temperaunce” (said he) “with golden squire Betwixt them both can measure out a meane; Nether to melt in pleasures whott desyre, Nor frye in hartlesse griefe and dolefull tene: Thrise happy man, who fares them both atweene! But sith this wretched woman overcome Of anguish, rather then of crime, hath bene, Reserve her cause to her eternall doome; And, in the meane, vouchsafe her honorable toombe.”

“Palmer,” quoth he, “death is an equall doome To good and bad, the common In of rest; But after death the tryall is to come, When best shall bee to them that lived best; But both alike, when death hath both suppresst, Religious reverence doth buriall teene; Which whoso wants, wants so much of his rest: For all so great shame after death I weene, As selfe to dyen bad, unburied bad to beene.”

So both agree their bodies to engrave: The great earthes wombe they open to the sky, And with sad Cypresse seemely it embrave; Then, covering with a clod their closed eye, They lay therein their corses tenderly, And bid them sleepe in everlasting peace. But, ere they did their utmost obsequy, Sir Guyon, more affection to increace, Bynempt a sacred vow, which none should ay releace.

The dead knights sword out of his sheath he drew, With which he cutt a lock of all their heare, Which medling with their blood and earth he threw Into the grave, and gan devoutly sweare; “Such and such evil God on Guyon reare, And worse and worse, young Orphane, be thy payne, If I, or thou, dew vengeaunce doe forbeare, Till guiltie blood her guerdon doe obtayne!” So shedding many teares they closd the earth agayne.

Canto II

Babes bloudie handes may not be clensd: The face of golden Meane Her sisters, two Extremities, Strive her to banish cleane.

Thus when Sir Guyon with his faithful guyde Had with dew rites and dolorous lament The end of their sad Tragedie uptyde, The litle babe up in his armes he hent; Who with sweet pleasaunce, and bold blandishment, Gan smyle on them, that rather ought to weepe, As carelesse of his woe, or innocent Of that was doen; that ruth emperced deepe In that knightes hart, and wordes with bitter teares did steepe:

“Ah! lucklesse babe, borne under cruell starre, And in dead parents balefull ashes bred, Full little weenest thou what sorrowes are Left thee for porcion of thy livelyhed; Poore Orphane! in the wild world scattered, As budding braunch rent from the native tree, And throwen forth, till it be withered. Such is the state of men: Thus enter we Into this life with woe, and end with miseree!”

Then, soft himselfe inclyning on his knee Downe to that well, did in the water weene (So love does loath disdainefull nicitee) His guiltie handes from bloody gore to cleene. He washt them oft and oft, yet nought they beene For all his washing cleaner. Still he strove; Yet still the litle hands were bloody seene: The which him into great amaz’ment drove, And into diverse doubt his wavering wonder clove.

He wist not whether blott of fowle offence Might not be purgd with water nor with bath; Or that high God, in lieu of innocence, Imprinted had that token of his wrath, To shew how sore bloodguiltinesse he hat’th; Or that the charme and veneme which they dronck, Their blood with secret filth infected hath, Being diffused through the senceless tronck, That through the great contagion direful deadly stonck.

Whom thus at gaze the Palmer gan to bord With goodly reason, and thus fayre bespake; “Ye bene right hard amated, gratious Lord, And of your ignorance great merveill make, Whiles cause not well conceived ye mistake: But know, that secret vertues are infusd In every fountaine, and in everie lake, Which who hath skill them

rightly to have chusd, To proofe of passing wonders hath full often usd:

“Of those, some were so from their sourse indewd By great Dame Nature, from whose fruitfull pap Their welheads spring, and are with moisture deawd; Which feedes each living plant with liquid sap, And filles with flowres fayre Floraes painted lap: But other some, by guifte of later grace, Or by good prayers, or by other hap, Had vertue pourd into their waters bace, And thenceforth were renowmd, and sought from place to place.

“Such is this well, wrought by occasion straunge, Which to her Nymph befell. Upon a day, As she the woodes with bow and shaftes did raunge, The hartlesse Hynd and Robucke to dismay, Dan Faunus chaunst to meet her by the way, And, kindling fire at her faire-burning eye, Inflamed was to follow beauties pray, And chaced her that fast from him did fly; As hynd from her, so she fled from her enimy.

“At last, when fayling breath began to faint, And saw no meanes to scape, of shame affrayd, She set her downe to weepe for sore constraint; And to Diana calling lowd for ayde, Her deare besought to let her die a mayd. The goddesse heard; and suddeine, where she sate Welling out streames of teares, and quite dismayd With stony teare of that rude rustick mate, Transformd her to a stone from stedfast virgins state.

“Lo! now she is that stone; from whose two heads, As from two weeping eyes, fresh streames do flow, Yet colde through feare and old conceived dreads; And yet the stone her semblance seemes to show, Shapt like a maide, that such ye may her know: And yet her vertues in her water byde, For it is chaste and pure as purest snow, Ne lets her waves with any filth be dyde; But ever, like herselfe, unstayned hath beene tryde.

“From thence it comes, that this babes bloody hand May not be clensd with water of this well: Ne certes, Sir, strive you it to withstand, But let them still be bloody, as befell, That they his mothers innocence may tell, As she bequeathd in her last

testament; That, as a sacred Symbole, it may dwell In her sonnes flesh, to mind revengement, And be for all chaste Dames an endlesse moniment."

He hearkned to his reason, and the childe Uptaking, to the Palmer gave to beare; But his sad fathers armes with blood defilde, An heavie load, himselfe did lightly reare; And turning to that place, in which whyleare He left his loftie steed with golden sell And goodly gorgeous barbes, him found not theare: By other accident, that earst befell, He is convaide; but how, or where, here fits not tell.

Which when Sir Guyon saw, all were he wroth, Yet algates mote he soft himselfe appease, And fairely fare on foot, how ever loth: His double burden did him sore disease. So long they traveiled with litle ease, Till that at last they to a Castle came, Built on a rocke adjoyning to the seas: It was an auncient worke of antique fame, And wondrous strong by nature, and by skilfull frame.

Therein three sisters dwelt of sundry sort, The children of one syre by mothers three; Who dying whylome did divide this fort To them by equall shares in equall fee: But stryfull mind and diverse qualitee Drew them in partes, and each made others foe: Still did they strive and daily disagree; The eldest did against the youngest goe, And both against the middest meant to worken woe.

Where when the knight arriv'd, he was right well Receiv'd, as knight of so much worth became, Of second sister, who did far excell The other two: Medina was her name, A sober sad and comely courteous Dame; Who rich arayd, and yet in modest guize, In goodly garments that her well became, Fayre marching forth in honorable wize, Him at the threshold mett, and well did enterprize.

She led him up into a goodly bowre, And comely, courted with meet modestie; Ne in her speach, ne in her haviour, Was lightnesse seene or looser vanitie, But gratious womanhood, and gravitie, Above the reason of her youthly yeares. Her golden lockes she roundly did uptye In breaded tramels, that no looser heares Did out of order stray about her daintie eares.

Whilest she her selfe thus busily did frame Seemely to entertaine her newcome guest, Newes hereof to her other sisters came, Who all this while were at their wanton rest, Accourting each her frend with lavish fest: They were two knights of perelesse puissaunce, And famous far abroad for warlike gest, Which to these Ladies love did countenaunce, And to his mistresse each himselfe strove to advaunce.

He that made love unto the eldest Dame, Was hight Sir Huddibras, an hardy man; Yet not so good of deedes as great of name, Which he by many rash adventures wan, Since errant armes to sew he first began: More huge in strength then wise in workes he was, And reason with foole-hardize over ran; Sterne melancholy did his courage pas, And was, for terrour more, all armd in shyning bras.

But he that lov'd the youngest was Sansloy; He, that faire Una late fowle outraged, The most unruly and the boldest boy That ever warlike weapons menaged, And all to lawlesse lust encouraged Through strong opinion of his matchlesse might; Ne ought he car'd whom he endamaged By tortious wrong, or whom bereav'd of right: He, now this Ladies Champion, chose for love to fight.

These two gay knights, vowd to so diverse loves, Each other does envy with deadly hate, And daily warre against his foeman moves, In hope to win more favour with his mate, And th'others pleasing service to abate, To magnifie his owne. But when they heard How in that place straunge knight arrived late, Both knightes and ladies forth right angry far'd, And fercely unto battell sterne themselves prepar'd.

But, ere they could proceede unto the place Where he abode, themselves at discord fell, And cruell combat joynd in middle space: With horrible assault, and fury fell, They heapt huge strokes the scorned life to quell, That all on uprore from her settled seat The house was raysd, and all that in did dwell; Seemd that lowde thunder with amazement great Did rend the ratling skyes with flames of fouldring heat.

The noyse thereof cal'd forth that straunger knight, To weet what dreadfull thing was there in hond; Where whenas two brave knightes in bloody fight With deadly

rancour he enraunged fond, His sunbroad shield about his wrest he bond, And shyning blade unsheathd, with which he ran Unto that stead, their strife to understond; And at his first arrivall them began With goodly meanes to pacifie, well as he can.

But they, him spying, both with greedy forse Attonce upon him ran, and him beset With strokes of mortall steele without remorse, And on his shield like yron sledges bet: As when a Beare and Tygre, being met In cruell fight on Lybicke Ocean wide, Espye a traveiler with feet surbet, Whom they in equall pray hope to divide, They stint their strife and him assayle on everie side.

But he, not like a weary traveilere, Their sharp assault right boldly did rebut, And suffred not their blowes to byte him nere, But with redoubled buffes them backe did put: Whose grieved mindes, which choler did englut, Against themselves turning their wrathfull spight, Gan with new rage their shieldes to hew and cut; But still, when Guyon came to part their fight, With heavie load on him they freshly gan to smight.

As a tall ship tossed in troublous seas, Whom raging windes, threatning to make the pray Of the rough rockes, doe diversly disease, Meetes two contrarie billowes by the way, That her on either side doe sore assay, And boast to swallow her in greedy grave; Shee, scorning both their spights, does make wide way, And with her brest breaking the fomy wave, Does ride on both their backs, and faire her self doth save.

So boldly he him beares, and rusheth forth Betweene them both by conduct of his blade. Wondrous great prowesse and heroick worth He shewd that day, and rare ensample made, When two so mighty warriours he dismade. Attonce he wards and strikes; he takes and paies; Now forst to yield, now forcing to invade; Before, behind, and round about him laies; So double was his paines, so double be his praise.

Straunge sort of fight, three valiaunt knights to see Three combates joine in one, and

to darraine A triple warre with triple enmitee, All for their Ladies froward love to gaine, Which gotten was but hate. So love does raine In stoutest minds, and maketh monstrous warre; He maketh warre, he maketh peace againe, And yett his peace is but continual jarre: O miserable men, that to him subject arre!

Whilst thus they mingled were in furious armes, The faire Medina, with her tresses torne And naked brest, in pitty of their harmes, Emongst them ran; and, falling them beforne, Besought them by the womb which them had born, And by the loves which were to them most deare, And by the knighthood which they sure had sworn, Their deadly cruell discord to forbeare, And to her just conditions of faire peace to heare.

But her two other sisters, standing by, Her lowd gainsaid, and both their champions bad Pursew the end of their strong enmity, As ever of their loves they would be glad. Yet she with pitthy words, and counsell sad, Still strove their stubborne rages to revoke; That at the last, suppressing fury mad, They gan abstaine from dint of direfull stroke, And hearken to the sober speaches which she spoke.

“Ah, puissaunt Lords! what cursed evil Spright, Or fell Erinnys, in your noble harts Her hellish brond hath kindled with despight, And stird you up to worke your wilfull smarts? Is this the joy of armes? be these the parts Of glorious knighthood, after blood to thrust, And not regard dew right and just desarts? Vaine is the vaunt, and victory unjust, That more to mighty hands then rightfull cause doth trust.

“And were there rightfull cause of difference, Yet were not better fayre it to accord Then with bloodguiltinesse to heape offence, And mortal vengeaunce joyne to crime abhord? O! fly from wrath; fly, O my liefest Lord! Sad be the sights, and bitter fruites of warre, And thousand furies wait on wrathfull sword; Ne ought the praise of prowesse more doth marre Then fowle revenging rage, and base contentious jarre.

“But lovely concord, and most sacred peace, Doth nourish vertue, and fast friendship breeds, Weake she makes strong, and strong thing does increace, Till it the pitch of highest praise exceeds: Brave be her warres, and honorable deeds, By

which she triumphes over yre and pride, And winnes an Olive girlond for her meeds. Be, therefore, O my deare Lords! pacifide, And this misseeming discord meekely lay aside.”

Her gracious words their rancour did appall, And suncke so deepe into their boyling brests, That downe they lett their cruell weapons fall, And lowly did abase their lofty crests To her faire presence and discrete behests. Then she began a treaty to procure, And stablish terms betwixt both their requests, That as a law for ever should endure; Which to observe in word of knights they did assure.

Which to confirme, and fast to bind their league, After their weary sweat and bloody toile, She them besought, during their quiet treague, Into her lodging to repaire awhile, To rest themselves, and grace to reconcile. They soone consent: so forth with her they fare; Where they are well receivd, and made to spoile Themselves of soiled armes, and to prepare Their minds to pleasure, and their mouths to dainty fare.

And those two froward sisters, their faire loves, Came with them eke, all were they wondrous loth, And fained cheare, as for the time behoves, But could not colour yet so well the troth, But that their natures bad appeard in both; For both did at their second sister grutch And inly grieve, as doth an hidden moth The inner garment frett, not th’utter touch: One thought her cheare too litle, th’other thought too mutch.

Elissa (so the eldest hight) did deeme Such entertainment base, ne ought would eat, Ne ought would speake, but evermore did seeme As discontent for want of merth or meat: No solace could her Paramour intreat Her once to show, ne court, nor dalliaunce; But with bent lowring browes, as she would threat, She scould, and frownd with froward countenaunce; Unworthy of faire Ladies comely governaunce.

But young Perissa was of other mynd, Full of disport, still laughing, loosely light, And quite contrary to her sisters kynd; No measure in her mood, no rule of right, But poured out in pleasure and delight: In wine and meats she flowd above the banck,

And in excesse exceeded her owne might; In sumptuous tire she joyd her selfe to pranck, But of her love too lavish: (litle have she thanck!)

Fast by her side did sitt the bold Sansloy, Fitt mate for such a mincing mineon, Who in her loosenesse tooke exceeding joy; Might not be found a francker franion, Of her leawd parts to make companion: But Huddibras, more like a Malecontent, Did see and grieve at his bold fashion; Hardly could he endure his hardiment, Yett still he satt, and inly did him selfe torment.

Betwixt them both the faire Medina sate With sober grace and goodly carriage: With equall measure she did moderate The strong extremities of their outrage. That forward paire she ever would asswage, When they would strive dew reason to exceed, But that same froward twaine would accorage, And of her plenty adde unto their need: So kept she them in order, and her selfe in heed.

Thus fairely shee attempered her feast, And pleas'd them all with meete satiety. At last, when lust of meat and drinke was ceast, She Guyon deare besought of curtesie To tell from whence he came through jeopardy, And whither now on new adventure bownd: Who with bold grace, and comely gravity, Drawing to him the eies of all arownd, From lofty siege began these words aloud to sownd.

"This thy demaund, O Lady! doth revive Fresh memory in me of that great Queene, Great and most glorious virgin Queene alive, That with her soveraine power, and scepter shene, All Faery lond does peaceably sustene. In widest Ocean she her throne does reare, That over all the earth it may be seene; As morning Sunne her beames dispredden cleare, And in her face faire peace and mercy doth appeare.

In her the richesse of all heavenly grace In chiefe degree are heaped up on hye: And all, that els this worlds enclosure bace Hath great or glorious in mortall eye, Adornes the person of her Majestye; That men, beholding so great excellence And rare perfection in mortalitye, Doe her adore with sacred reverence, As th'Idole of her makers great magnificence.

“To her I homage and my service owe, In number of the noblest knightes on ground; Mongst whom on me she deigned to bestowe Order of Maydenhead, the most renownd That may this day in all the world be found. An yearely solemne feast she wontes to hold, The day that first doth lead the yeare around, To which all knights of worth and courage bold Resort, to heare of straunge adventures to be told.

“There this old Palmer shewd himselfe that day, And to that mighty Princesse did complaine Of grievous mischiefes which a wicked Fay Had wrought, and many whelmd in deadly paine; Whereof he crav’d redresse. My Soveraine, Whose glory is in gracious deeds, and joyes Throughout the world her mercy to maintaine, Eftsoones devisd redresse for such annoyes: Me, all unfitt for so great purpose, she employes.

“Now hath faire Phebe with her silver face Thrise seene the shadowes of the neather world, Sith last I left that honorable place, In which her roiall presence is enrold; Ne ever shall I rest in house nor hold, Till I that false Acrasia have wonne; Of whose fowle deedes, too hideous to bee told, I witnesse am, and this their wretched sonne, Whose wofull parents she hath wickedly fordonne.”

“Tell on, fayre Sir,” said she, “that dolefull tale, From which sad ruth does seeme you to restraine, That we may pitty such unhappie bale, And learne from pleasures poyson to abstaine: Ill by ensample good doth often gayne.” Then forward he his purpose gan pursew, And told the story of the mortall payne, Which Mordant and Amavia did rew, As with lamenting eyes him selfe did lately vew.

Night was far spent; and now in Ocean deep Orion, flying fast from hissing snake, His flaming head did hasten for to steep, When of his pitteous tale he end did make: Whilst with delight of that he wisely spake Those guestes, beguyled, did beguyle their eyes Of kindly sleepe that did them overtake. At last, when they had markt the chaunged skyes, They wist their houre was spent; then each to rest him hyes.

Canto III

Vaine Braggadocchio getting Guyons Horse, is made the scorne Of knighthood trew, and is of fayre Belphoebe fowle forlorne.

Soone as the morrow fayre with purple beames Disperst the shadowes of the misty night, And Titan, playing on the eastern streames, Gan cleare the deawy ayre with springing light, Sir Guyon, mindfull of his vow yplight, Uprose from drowsie couch, and him addrest Unto the journey which he had behight: His puissant armes about his noble brest, And many-folded shield he bound about his wrest.

Then, taking Congé of that virgin pure, The bloody-handed babe unto her truth Did earnestly committ, and her conjure In vertuous lore to traine his tender youth, And all that gentle noriture ensu'th; And that, so soone as ryper yeares he raught, He might, for memory of that dayes ruth, Be called Ruddymane; and thereby taught T'avenge his Parents death on them that had it wrought.

So forth he far'd, as now befell, on foot, Sith his good steed is lately from him gone; Patience perforce: helplesse what may it boot To frett for anger, or for griefe to mone? His Palmer now shall foot no more alone. So fortune wrought, as under greene woodes syde He lately heard that dying Lady grone, He left his steed without, and speare besyde, And rushed in on foot to ayd her ere she dyde.

The whyles a losell wandring by the way, One that to bountie never cast his mynd, Ne thought of honour ever did assay His baser brest, but in his kestrell kynd A pleasing vaine of glory he did fynd, To which his flowing toung and troublous spright Gave him great ayd, and made him more inclynd: He, that brave steed there finding ready dight, Purloynd both steed and speare, and ran away full light.

Now gan his hart all swell in jollity, And of him selfe great hope and help conceiv'd, That puffed up with smoke of vanity, And with selfe-loved personage deceiv'd, He gan to hope of men to be receiv'd For such as he him thought, or faine would bee: But for in court gay portaunce he perceiv'd, And gallant shew to be in greatest gree,

Eftsoones to court he cast t'advaunce his first degree.

And by the way he chaunced to espy One sitting ydle on a sunny banck, To him avaunting in great bravery, As Peacocke that his painted plumes doth pranck, He smote his courser in the trembling flanck, And to him threatned his hart-thrilling speare: The seely man, seeing him ryde so ranck, And ayme at him, fell flatt to ground for feare, And crying, "Mercy!" loud, his pitious handes gan reare.

Thereat the Scarcrow wexed wondrous prowd, Through fortune of his first adventure fayre, And with big thundring voice revyld him lowd: "Vile Caytive, vassall of dread and despayre, Unworthie of the commune breathed ayre, Why livest thou, dead dog, a lenger day, And doest not unto death thyselfe prepayre? Dy, or thyselfe my captive yield for ay. Great favour I thee graunt for aunswere thus to stay."

"Hold, O deare Lord! hold your dead-doing hand," Then loud he cryde; "I am your humble thrall." "Ay wretch," (quoth he) "thy destinies withstand My wrathfull will, and doe for mercy call. I give thee life: therefore prostrated fall, And kisse my stirrup; that thy homage bee." The Miser threw him selfe, as an Offall, Streight at his foot in base humilitee, And cleeped him his liege, to hold of him in fee.

So happy peace they made and faire accord. Eftsoones this liegeman gan to wexe more bold, And when he felt the folly of his Lord, In his owne kind he gan him selfe unfold; For he was wylie witted, and growne old In cunning sleightes and practick knavery. From that day forth he cast for to uphold His ydle humour with fine flattery, And blow the bellowes to his swelling vanity.

Trompart, fitt man for Braggadochio, To serve at court in view of vaunting eye; Vaine-glorious man, when fluttring wind does blow In his light winges, is lifted up to skye; The scorne of knighthood and trew chevalrye, To thinke, without desert of gentle deed And noble worth, to be advaunced hye: Such prayse is shame; but honour, vertues meed, Doth beare the fayrest flowre in honourable seed.

So forth they pas, a well consorted payre, Till that at length with Archimage they meet: Who seeing one, that shone in armour fayre, On goodly courser thondring with his feet, Eftsoones supposed him a person meet Of his revenge to make the instrument; For since the Redcrosse knight he erst did weet To been with Guyon knitt in one consent, The ill, which earst to him, he now to Guyon ment.

And coming close to Trompart gan inquere Of him, what mightie warriour that mote bee, That rode in golden sell with single spere, But wanted sword to wreake his enmitee? “He is a great adventurer,” (said he) “That hath his sword through hard assay forgone, And now hath vowd, till he avenged bee Of that despight, never to wearen none: That speare is him enough to doen a thousand grone.”

Th’enchaunter greatly joyed in the vaunt, And weened well ere long his will to win, And both his foen with equall foyle to daunt. Tho to him louting lowly did begin To plaine of wronges, which had committed bin By Guyon, and by that false Redcrosse knight; Which two, through treason and deceiptfull gin, Had slayne Sir Mordant and his Lady bright: That mote him honour win to wreak so foule despight.

Therewith all suddeinly he seemd enraged, And threatned death with dreadfull countenaunce, As if their lives had in his hand beene gaged; And with stiffe force shaking his mortall launce, To let him weet his doughtie valiaunce, Thus said: “Old man, great sure shal be thy meed, If, where those knights for feare of dew vengeaunce Doe lurke, thou certainly to mee areed, That I may wreake on them their hainous hatefull deed.”

“Certes, my Lord,” (said he) “that shall I soone, And give you eke good helpe to their decay. But mote I wisely you advise to doon, Give no ods to your foes, but doe purvay Your selfe of sword before that bloody day; For they be two the prowest knights on grownd, And oft approv’d in many hard assay; And eke of surest steele that may be fownd, Do arme your self against that day, them to confownd.”

“Dotard,” (said he) “let be thy deepe advise: Seemes that through many yeares thy

wits thee faile, And that weake eld hath left thee nothing wise; Els never should thy judgement be so frayle To measure manhood by the sword or mayle. Is not enough fowre quarters of a man, Withouten sword or shield, an hoste to quayle? Thou litle wotest what this right-hand can: Speake they which have beheld the battailes which it wan."

The man was much abashed at his boast; Yet well he wist that whoso would contend With either of those knightes on even coast, Should neede of all his armes him to defend, Yet feared least his boldnesse should offend. When Braggadocchio saide; "Once I did sweare, When with one sword seven knightes I brought to end, Thenceforth in battaile never sword to beare, But it were that which noblest knight on earth doth weare."

"Perdy, Sir knight," saide then th'enchaunter blive, "That shall I shortly purchase to your hond; For now the best and noblest knight alive Prince Arthur is, that wonnes in Faerie lond: He hath a sword that flames like burning brond. The same by my device I undertake Shall by to morrow by thy side be fond." At which bold word that boaster gan to quake, And wondred in his minde what mote that Monster make.

He stay'd not for more bidding, but away Was suddein vanished out of his sight: The Northerne winde his wings did broad display At his commaund, and reared him up light From off the earth to take his aerie flight. They look't about, but nowhere could espye Tract of his foot: then dead through great affright They both nigh were, and each bad other flye: Both fled attonce, ne ever backe retourned eye;

Till that they come unto a forrest greene, In which they shrowd themselves from causeles feare; Yet feare them followes still where so they beene: Each trembling leafe and whistling wind they heare, As ghastly bug, does greatly them affeare: Yet both doe strive their fearefulnesse to faine. At last they heard a horne that shrilled cleare Throughout the wood that ecchoed againe, And made the forrest ring, as it would rive in twaine.

Eft through the thicke they heard one rudely rush, With noyse whereof he from his loftie steed Downe fell to ground, and crept into a bush, To hide his coward head from dying dreed: But Trompart stoutly stayd to taken heed Of what might hap. Eftsoone there stepped foorth A goodly Ladie clad in hunters weed, That seemd to be a woman of great worth, And by her stately portance borne of heavenly birth.

Her face so faire as flesh it seemed not, But hevenly pourtraict of bright Angels hew, Cleare as the skye, withouten blame or blot, Through goodly mixture of complexions dew; And in her cheekes the vermeill red did shew Like roses in a bed of lillies shed, The which ambrosiall odours from them threw, And gazers sence with double pleasure fed, Hable to heale the sicke, and to revive the ded.

In her faire eyes two living lamps did flame, Kindled above at th'hevenly makers light, And darted fyrie beames out of the same, So passing persant, and so wondrous bright, That quite bereav'd the rash beholders sight: In them the blinded god his lustfull fyre To kindle oft assayd, but had no might; For, with dredd Majestie and awfull yre, She broke his wanton darts, and quenched bace desyre.

Her yvorie forhead, full of bountie brave, Like a broad table did it selfe dispred; For Love his loftie triumphes to engrave, And write the battailes of his great godhed: All good and honour might therein be red, For there their dwelling was. And, when she spake, Sweete wordes like dropping honny she did shed; And twixt the perles and rubins softly brake A silver sound, that heavenly musicke seemd to make.

Upon her eyelids many Graces sate, Under the shadow of her even browes, Working belgardes and amorous retrate; And everie one her with a grace endowes, And everie one with meekenesse to her bowes. So glorious mirrhour of celestiall grace, And soveraine moniment of mortall vowes, How shall frayle pen descrive her heavenly face, For feare, through want of skill, her beauty to disgrace?

So faire, and thousand thousand times more faire, She seemd, when she presented was to sight; And was yclad, for heat of scorching aire, All in a silken Camus lilly

whight, Purfled upon with many a folded plight, Which all above besprinckled was throughout With golden aygulets, that glistred bright Like twinckling starres; and all the skirt about Was hemd with golden fringe.

Below her ham her weed did somewhat trayne, And her streight legs most bravely were embayld In gilden buskins of costly Cordwayne, All bard with golden bendes, which were entayld With curious antickes, and full fayre aumayld: Before, they fastned were under her knee In a rich jewel, and therein entrayld The ends of all the knots, that none might see How they within their fouldings close enwrapped bee:

Like two faire marble pillours they were seene, Which doe the temple of the Gods support, Whom all the people decke with girlands greene, And honour in their festivall resort; Those same with stately grace and princely port She taught to tread, when she herselfe would grace; But with the woody Nymphes when she did play, Or when the flying Libbard she did chace, She could them nimbly move, and after fly apace.

And in her hand a sharpe bore-speare she held, And at her backe a bow and quiver gay, Stuft with steeleheaded dartes, wherewith she queld The salvage beastes in her victorious play, Knit with a golden bauldricke, which forelay Athwart her snowy brest, and did divide Her daintie paps; which, like young fruit in May, Now little gan to swell, and being tide Through her thin weed their places only signifide.

Her yellow lockes, crisped like golden wyre, About her shoulders weren loosely shed, And, when the winde emongst them did inspyre, They waved like a penon wyde dispred, And low behinde her backe were scattered: And, whether art it were or heedlesse hap, As through the flouring forrest rash she fled, In her rude heares sweet flowres themselves did lap, And flourishing fresh leaves and blossoms did enwrap.

Such as Diana by the sandy shore Of swift Eurotas, or on Cynthus greene, Where all the Nymphes have her unwares forlore, Wandreth alone with bow and arrowes

keene, To seeke her game: Or as that famous Queene Of Amazons, whom Pyrrhus did destroy, The day that first of Priame she was seene, Did shew her selfe in great triumphant joy, To succour the weake state of sad afflicted Troy.

Such when as hartlesse Trompart her did vew, He was dismayed in his coward minde, And doubted whether he himselfe should shew, Or fly away, or bide alone behinde; Both feare and hope he in her face did finde: When she at last him spying thus bespake: “Hayle, Groome! didst not thou see a bleeding Hynde, Whose right haunch earst my stedfast arrow strake? If thou didst, tell me, that I may her overtake.”

Wherewith reviv’d, this answere forth he threw: “O Goddesse, (for such I thee take to bee) For nether doth thy face terrestriall shew, Nor voyce sound mortall; I avow to thee, Such wounded beast as that I did not see, Sith earst into this forrest wild I came. But mote thy goodlyhed forgive it mee, To weete which of the gods I shall thee name, That unto thee dew worship I may rightly frame.”

To whom she thus—but ere her words ensewd, Unto the bush her eye did suddein glaunce, In which vaine Braggadocchio was mewd, And saw it stirre: she lefte her percing launce, And towards gan a deadly shafte advaunce, In mind to marke the beast. At which sad stowre Trompart forth stept to stay the mortall chaunce, Out crying; “O! what ever hevenly powre, Or earthly wight thou be, withhold this deadly howre.

“O! stay thy hand; for yonder is no game For thy fiers arrowes, them to exercize; But loe! my Lord, my liege, whose warlike name Is far renowmd through many bold emprize; And now in shade he shrowded yonder lies.” She staid: with that he crauld out of his nest, Forth creeping on his caitive hands and thies; And, standing stoutly up, his lofty crest Did fiercely shake, and rowze as comming late from rest.

As fearfull fowle, that long in secret cave For dread of soring hauke her selfe hath hid, Nor caring how, her silly life to save, She her gay painted plumes disorderid;

Seeing at last her selfe from daunger rid, Peepes forth, and soone renews her native pride: She gins her feathers fowle disfigured Prowdly to prune, and sett on every side; She shakes off shame, ne thinks how erst she did her hide.

So when her goodly visage he beheld, He gan himselfe to vaunt: but, when he vewd Those deadly tooles which in her hand she held, Soone into other fitts he was transmewd, Till she to him her gracious speach renewd: “All haile, Sir knight! and well may thee befall, As all the like, which honor have pursewd Through deeds of armes and prowesse martiall. All vertue merits praise, but such the most of all.”

To whom he thus: “O fairest under skie! Trew be thy words, and worthie of thy praise, That warlike feats doest highest glorifie. Therein I have spent all my youthly daies, And many battailes fought and many fraies Throughout the world, wher-so they might be found, Endevoring my dreaded name to raise Above the Moone, that fame may it resound In her eternall tromp, with laurell girlond cround.

“But what art thou, O Lady! which doest raunge In this wilde forest, where no pleasure is, And doest not it for joyous court exchaunge, Emongst thine equall peres, where happy blis And all delight does raigne, much more then this? There thou maist love, and dearly loved be, And swim in pleasure, which thou here doest mis: There maist thou best be seene, and best maist see: The wood is fit for beasts, the court is fitt for thee.”

“Whoso in pompe of prowd estate” (quoth she) “Does swim, and bathes him selfe in courtly blis, Does waste his dayes in darke obscuritee, And in oblivion ever buried is; Where ease abownds yt’s eath to doe amis: But who his limbs with labours, and his mynd Behaves with cares, cannot so easy mis. Abroad in armes, at home in studious kynd, Who seekes with painfull toile shall honor soonest find:

“In woods, in waves, in warres, she wonts to dwell, And wil be found with perill and with paine; Ne can the man that moulds in ydle cell Unto her happy mansion attaine: Before her gate high God did Sweate ordaine, And wakefull watches ever to abide;

But easy is the way and passage plaine To pleasures pallace: it may soone be spide, And day and night her dores to all stand open wide.

"In Princes court"—The rest she would have sayd, But that the foolish man, fild with delight Or her sweete words that all his sence dismayd, And with her wondrous beauty ravisht quight, Gan burne in filthy lust; and, leaping light, Thought in his bastard armes her to embrace. With that she, swarving backe, her Javelin bright Against him bent, and fiercely did menace: So turned her about, and fled away apace.

Which when the Pesaunt saw, amazd he stood, And grieved at her flight; yet durst he nott Pursew her steps through wild unknowen wood: Besides he feard her wrath, and threatned shott, Whiles in the bush he lay, not yett forgott: Ne car'd he greatly for her presence vayne, But turning said to Trompart; "What fowle blott Is this to knight, that Lady should agayne Depart to woods untoucht, and leave so proud disdayne."

"Perdy," (said Trompart) "lett her pas at will, Least by her presence daunger mote befall; For who can tell (and sure I feare it ill) But that shee is some powre celestiall? For whiles she spake her great words did appall My feeble corage, and my heart oppresse, That yet I quake and tremble over-all." "And I," (said Braggadocchio) "thought no lesse, When first I heard her horn sound with such ghastlinesse,

"For from my mothers wombe this grace I have Me given by eternall destiny, That earthly thing may not my corage brave Dismay with feare, or cause one foot to flye, But either hellish feends, or powres on hye: Which was the cause, when earst that horne I heard, Weening it had beene thunder in the skye, I hid my selfe from it, as one affeard; But, when I other knew, my self I boldly reard.

"But now, for feare of worse that may betide, Let us soone hence depart." They soone agree: So to his steed he gott, and gan to ride As one unfitt therefore, that all

might see He had not trayned bene in chevalree. Which well that valiaunt courser did discerne; For he despisd to tread in dew degree, But chaufd and fom'd with corage fiers and sterne, And to be easd of that base burden still did erne.

Canto IV

Guyon does Furor bind in chaines And stops Occasion: Delivers Phedon, and therefore By Strife is rayled upon.

In brave poursuitt of honorable deed, There is I know not (what) great difference Betweene the vulgar and the noble seed, Which unto things of valorous pretence Seemes to be borne by native influence; As feates of armes, and love to entertaine: But chiefly skill to ride seemes a science Proper to gentle blood: some others faine To menage steeds, as did this vaunter, but in vaine.

But he, the rightfull owner of that steede, Who well could menage and subdew his pride, The whiles on foot was forced for to yeed With that blacke Palmer, his most trusty guide, Who suffred not his wandring feete to slide; But when strong passion, or weake fleshlinesse, Would from the right way seeke to draw him wide, He would, through temperaunce and stedfastnesse, Teach him the weak to strengthen, and the strong suppresse.

It fortuned, forth faring on his way, He saw from far, or seemed for to see, Some troublous uprore or contentious fray, Whereto he drew in hast it to agree. A mad man, or that feigned mad to bee, Drew by the heare along upon the grownd A handsom stripling with great crueltee, Whom sore he bett, and gor'd with many a wownd, That cheekes with teares, and sydes with blood, did all abownd.

And him behynd a wicked Hag did stalke, In ragged robes and filthy disaray; Her other leg was lame, that she no'te walke, But on a staffe her feeble steps did stay: Her lockes, that loathly were and hoarie gray, Grew all afore, and loosely hong unrold; Bat all behinde was bald, and worne away, That none thereof could ever

taken hold; And eke her face ill-favourd, full of wrinckles old.

And ever as she went her toung did walke In fowle reproch, and termes of vile despight, Provoking him, by her outrageous talke, To heape more vengeance on that wretched wight: Sometimes she raught him stones, wherwith to smite, Sometimes her staffe, though it her one leg were, Withouten which she could not goe upright; Ne any evill meanes she did forbeare, That might him move to wrath, and indignation reare.

The noble Guyon, mov'd with great remorse, Approching, first the Hag did thrust away; And after, adding more impetuous forse, His mighty hands did on the madman lay, And pluckt him backe; who, all on fire streight way, Against him turning all his fell intent, With beastly brutish rage gan him assay, And smott, and bitt, and kickt, and scratcht, and rent, And did he wist not what in his avengement.

And sure he was a man of mickle might, Had he had governaunce it well to guyde; But, when the frantick fitt inflamd his spright, His force was vaine, and strooke more often wyde, Then at the aymed marke which he had eyde: And oft himselfe he chaunst to hurt unwares, Whylest reason, blent through passion, nought descryde; But, as a blindfold Bull, at randon fares, And where he hits nought knowes, and whom he hurts nought cares.

His rude assault and rugged handeling Straunge seemed to the knight, that aye with foe In fayre defence and goodly menaging Of armes was wont to fight; yet nathemoe Was he abashed now, not fighting so; But more enfierced through his currish play, Him sternly grypt, and hailing to and fro, To overthrow him strongly did assay, But overthrew himselfe unwares, and lower lay:

And being downe the villein sore did beate And bruze with clownish fistes his manly face; And eke the Hag, with many a bitter threat, Still cal'd upon to kill him in the place. With whose reproch, and odious menace, The knight emboyling in his haughtie hart Knitt all his forces, and gan soone unbrace His grasping hold: so

lightly did upstart, And drew his deadly weapon to maintaine his part.

Which when the Palmer saw, he loudly cryde, “Not so, O Guyon! never thinke that so That Monster can be maistred or destroyd: He is not, ah! he is not such a foe, As steele can wound, or strength can overthroe. That same is Furor, cursed cruel wight, That unto knighthood workes much shame and woe; And that same Hag, his aged mother, hight Occasion; the roote of all wrath and despight.

“With her, whoso will raging Furor tame, Must first begin, and well her amenage: First her restraine from her reprochfull blame And evill meanes, with which she doth enrage Her frantick sonne, and kindles his corage; Then, when she is withdrawne or strong withstood, It’s eath his ydle fury to aswage, And calme the tempest of his passion wood: The bankes are overflowne when stopped is the flood.”

Therewith Sir Guyon left his first emprise, And, turning to that woman, fast her hent By the hoare lockes that hong before her eyes, And to the ground her threw: yet n’ould she stent Her bitter rayling and foule revilement, But still provokt her sonne to wreake her wrong; But nathelesse he did her still torment, And, catching hold of her ungratious tonge Thereon an yron lock did fasten firme and strong.

Then, whenas use of speach was from her reft, With her two crooked handes she signes did make, And beckned him, the last help she had left; But he that last left helpe away did take, And both her handes fast bound unto a stake, That she note stirre. Then gan her sonne to flye Full fast away, and did her quite forsake; But Guyon after him in hast did hye, And soone him overtooke in sad perplexitye.

In his strong armes he stifly him embraste, Who him gainstriving nought at all prevaild; For all his power was utterly defaste, And furious fitts at earst quite weren quaild: Oft he re’nforst, and oft his forces fayld, Yet yield he would not, nor his rancor slack. Then him to ground he cast, and rudely hayld, And both his hands fast bound behind his backe, And both his feet in fetters to an yron racke.

With hundred yron chaines he did him bind, And hundred knots, that did him sore

constraine; Yet his great yron teeth he still did grind And grimly gnash, threatning revenge in vaine: His burning eyen, whom bloody strakes did staine, Stared full wide, and threw forth sparkes of fyre; And more for ranck despight then for great paine, Shakt his long locks colourd like copper-wyre, And bitt his tawny beard to shew his raging yre.

Thus when as Guyon Furor had captivd, Turning about he saw that wretched Squyre, Whom that mad man of life nigh late deprivd, Lying on ground, all soild with blood and myre: Whom whenas he perceived to respyre, He gan to comfort, and his woundes to dresse. Being at last recured, he gan inquyre What hard mishap him brought to such distresse, And made that caytives thrall, the thrall of wretchednesse.

With hart then throbbing, and with watry eyes, “Fayre Sir” (quoth he) “what man can shun the hap, That hidden lyes unwares him to surpryse? Misfortune waites advantage to entrap The man most wary in her whelming lap: So me weake wretch, of many weakest one, Unweeting and unware of such mishap, She brought to mischiefe through Occasion, Where this same wicked villein did me light upon.

“It was a faithlesse Squire, that was the sourse Of all my sorrow and of these sad teares, With whom from tender dug of commune nourse Attonce I was upbrought; and eft, when yeares More rype us reason lent to chose our Peares, Our selves in league of vowed love wee knitt; In which we long time, without gealous feares Or faultie thoughts, contynewd as was fitt; And for my part, I vow, dissembled not a whitt.

“It was my fortune, commune to that age, To love a Lady fayre of great degree, The which was borne of noble parentage, And set in highest seat of dignitee, Yet seemd no lesse to love then lov’d to bee: Long I her serv’d, and found her faithfull still, Ne ever thing could cause us disagree. Love, that two harts makes one, makes eke one will; Each strove to please, and others pleasure to fulfill.

“My friend, hight Philemon, I did partake Of all my love and all my privitie; Who greatly joyous seemed for my sake, And gratious to that Lady as to mee; Ne ever wight that mote so welcome bee As he to her, withouten blott or blame; Ne ever thing that she could think or see, But unto him she would impart the same. O wretched man, that would abuse so gentle Dame!

“At last such grace I found, and meanes I wrought, That I that Lady to my spouse had wonne; Accord of friendes, consent of Parents sought, Affyaunce made, my happinesse begonne, There wanted nought but few rites to be donne, Which mariage make: that day too farre did seeme. Most joyous man, on whom the shining Sunne Did shew his face, my selfe I did esteeme, And that my falser friend did no less joyous deeme.

“But ear that wished day his beame disclosd, He, either envying my toward good, Or of him selfe to treason ill disposd, One day unto me came in friendly mood, And told for secret, how he understood That Lady, whom I had to me assynd, Had both distaind her honorable blood, And eke the faith which she to me did bynd; And therefore wisht me stay till I more truth should fynd.

“The gnawing anguish, and sharp gelosy, Which his sad speach infixed in my brest, Ranckled so sore, and festred inwardly, That my engreeved mind could find no rest, Till that the truth thereof I did out wrest; And him besought, by that same sacred band Betwixt us both, to counsell me the best: He then with solemne oath and plighted hand Assurd, ere long the truth to let me understand.

“Ere long with like againe he boorded mee, Saying, he now had boulted all the floure, And that it was a groome of base degree, Which of my love was partener Paramoure: Who used in a darkesome inner bowre Her oft to meete: which better to approve, He promised to bring me at that howre, When I should see that would me nearer move, And drive me to withdraw my blind abused love.

“This gracelesse man, for furtherance of his guile, Did court the handmayd of my

Lady deare, Who, glad t'embosome his affection vile, Did all she might more pleasing to appeare. One day, to worke her to his will more neare, He woo'd her thus: Pryene, (so she hight,) What great despight doth fortune to thee beare, Thus lowly to abase thy beautie bright, That it should not deface all others lesser light?

"But if she had her least helpe to thee lent, T'adorne thy forme according thy desart, Their blazing pride thou wouldest soone have blent, And staynd their prayses with thy least good part; Ne should faire Claribell with all her art, Tho'she thy Lady be, approch thee neare: For proofe thereof, this evening, as thou art, Aray thyselfe in her most gorgeous geare, That I may more delight in thy embracement deare.

"The Mayden, proud through praise and mad through love, Him hearkned to, and soone herselfe aray'd, The whiles to me the treachour did remove His craftie engin; and, as he had sayd, Me leading, in a secret corner layd, The sad spectatour of my Tragedie: Where left, he went, and his owne false part playd, Disguised like that groome of base degree, Whom he had feignd th'abuser of my love to bee.

"Eftsoones he came unto th'appointed place, And with him brought Pryene, rich arayd, In Claribellaes clothes. Her proper face I not descerned in that darkesome shade, But weend it was my love with whom he playd. Ah God! what horrour and tormenting griefe My hart, my handes, mine eies, and all assayd! Me liefer were ten thousand deathes priefe Then wounde of gealous worme, and shame of such repriefe.

"I home retourning, fraught with fowle despight, And chawing vengeaunce all the way I went, Soone as my loathed love appeard in sight, With wrathfull hand I slew her innocent. That after soone I dearely did lament; For, when the cause of that outrageous deede Demaunded, I made plaine and evident, Her faultie Handmayd, which that bale did breede, Confest how Philemon her wrought to chaunge her weede.

"Which when I heard, with horrible affright And hellish fury all enragd, I sought

Upon myselfe that vengeable despight To punish: yet it better first I thought To wreake my wrath on him that first it wrought: To Philemon, false faytour Philemon, I cast to pay that I so dearely bought. Of deadly drugs I gave him drink anon, And washt away his guilt with guilty potion.

“Thus heaping crime on crime, and griefe on griefe, To losse of love adjoyning losse of frend, I meant to purge both with a third mischiefe, And in my woes beginner it to end: That was Pryene; she did first offend, She last should smart: with which cruell intent, When I at her my murdrous blade did bend, She fled away with ghastly dreriment, And I, poursewing my fell purpose, after went.

“Feare gave her winges, and rage enforst my flight; Through woods and plaines so long I did her chace, Till this mad man, whom your victorious might Hath now fast bound, me met in middle space. As I her, so he me poursewd apace, And shortly overtooke: I, breathing yre, Sore chauffed at my stay in such a cace, And with my heat kindled his cruell fyre; Which kindled once, his mother did more rage inspyre.

“Betwixt them both they have me doen to dye, Through wounds, and strokes, and stubborne handeling, That death were better then such agony As griefe and fury unto me did bring; Of which in me yet stickes the mortall sting, That during life will never be appeasd!” When he thus ended had his sorrowing, Said Guyon; “Squyre, sore have ye beene diseasd, But all your hurts may soone through temperance be easd.”

Then gan the Palmer thus; “Most wretched man, That to affections does the bridle lend! In their beginning they are weake and wan, But soone through suff’rance growe to fearefull end: Whiles they are weake, betimes with them contend; For, when they once to perfect strength do grow, Strong warres they make, and cruell battry bend Gainst fort of Reason, it to overthrow: Wrath, gelosy, griefe, love, this Squyre have laide thus low.

“Wrath, gealosie, griefe, love, do thus expell: Wrath is a fire; and gealosie a weede;

Griefe is a flood; and love a monster fell; The fire of sparkes, the weede of little seede, The flood of drops, the Monster filth did breede: But sparks, seed, drops, and filth, do thus delay; The sparks soone quench, the springing seed outweed, The drops dry up, and filth wipe cleane away: So shall wrath, gealosy, griefe, love, die and decay."

"Unlucky Squire," (saide Guyon) "sith thou hast Falne into mischiefe through intemperaunce, Henceforth take heede of that thou now hast past, And guyde thy waies with warie governaunce, Least worse betide thee by some later chaunce. But read how art thou nam'd, and of what kin?" "Phaon I hight," (quoth he) "and do advaunce Mine auncestry from famous Coradin, Who first to rayse our house to honour did begin."

Thus as he spake, lo! far away they spyde A varlet ronning towardes hastily, Whose flying feet so fast their way applyde, That round about a cloud of dust did fly, Which, mingled all with sweate, did dim his eye. He soone approched, panting, breathlesse, whot, And all so soyld that none could him descry: His countenaunce was bold, and bashed not For Guyons lookes, but scornefull eyeglaunce at him shot.

Behind his backe he bore a brasen shield, On which was drawen faire, in colours fit, A flaming fire in midst of bloody field, And round about the wreath this word was writ, Burnt I doe burne. Right well beseemed it To be the shield of some redoubted knight; And in his hand two dartes, exceeding flit And deadly sharp, he held, whose heads were dight In poyson and in blood of malice and despight.

When he in presence came, to Guyon first He boldly spake; "Sir knight, if knight thou bee, Abandon this forestalled place at erst, For feare of further harme, I counsell thee; Or bide the chaunce at thine own jeopardee." The knight at his great boldnesse wondered; And, though he scornd his ydle vanitee, Yet mildly him to purpose answered; For not to grow of nought he it conjectured.

"Varlet, this place most dew to me I deeme, Yielded by him that held it forcibly: But

whence should come that harme, which thou dost seeme To threat to him that mindes his chaunce t'abye?" "Perdy," (sayd he) "here comes, and is hard by, A knight of wondrous powre and great assay, That never yet encountred enemy But did him deadly daunt, or fowle dismay; Ne thou for better hope, if thou his presence stay."

"How hight he then," (sayd Guyon) "and from whence?" "Pyrochles is his name, renowmed farre For his bold feates and hardy confidence, Full oft approvd in many a cruell warre; The brother of Cymochles, both which arre The sonnes of old Acrates and Despight; Acrates, sonne of Phlegeton and Jarre; But Phlegeton is sonne of Herebus and Night; But Herebus sonne of Aeternitie is hight.

"So from immortall race he does proceede, That mortall hands may not withstand his might, Drad for his derring doe and bloody deed; For all in blood and spoile is his delight. His am I Atin, his in wrong and right, That matter make for him to worke upon, And stirre him up to strife and cruell fight. Fly therefore, fly this fearefull stead anon, Least thy foolhardize worke thy sad confusion."

"His be that care, whom most it doth concerne," (Sayd he) "but whither with such hasty flight Art thou now bownd? for well mote I discerne Great cause, that carries thee so swifte and light." "My Lord," (quoth he) "me sent, and streight behight To seeke Occasion, where so she bee: For he is all disposd to bloody fight, And breathes out wrath and hainous crueltee: Hard is his hap that first fals in his jeopardee."

"Mad man," (said then the Palmer) "that does seeke Occasion to wrath, and cause of strife: Shee comes unsought, and shonned followes eke. Happy! who can abstaine, when Rancor rife Kindles Revenge, and threats his rusty knife. Woe never wants where every cause is caught; And rash Occasion makes unquiet life!" "Then loe! wher bound she sits, whom thou hast sought," Said Guyon: "let that message to thy Lord be brought."

That when the varlett heard and saw, streight way He wexed wondrous wroth, and said; “Vile knight, That knights and knighthood doest with shame upbray, And shewst th’ensample of thy childishe might, With silly weake old woman that did fight! Great glory and gay spoile, sure hast thou gott, And stoutly prov’d thy puissance here in sight. That shall Pyrochles well requite, I wott, And with thy blood abolish so reprochfull blott.”

With that one of his thrillant darts he threw, Headed with yre, and vengeable despight. The quivering steele his aymed end wel knew, And to his brest it selfe intended right. But he was wary, and, ere it empight In the meant marke, advaunst his shield atweene, On which it seizing no way enter might, But backe rebownding left the forckhead keene: Eftsoones he fled away, and might no where be seene.

Canto V

Pyrrhochles does with Guyon fight, And Furors chayne unbinds, Of whom sore hurt; for his revenge Atin Cymochles finds.

Who ever doth to temperaunce apply His stedfast life, and all his actions frame, Trust me, shal find no greater enimy Then stubborne perturbation to the same. To which right wel the wise doe give that name, For it the goodly peace of staied mindes Does overthrow, and troublous warre proclame: His owne woes author, who so bound it findes, As did Pyrochles, and it wilfully unbindes.

After that varlets flight, it was not long Ere on the plaine fast pricking Guyon spide One in bright armes embatteiled full strong, That, as the Sunny beames do glaunce and glide Upon the trembling wave, so shined bright, And round about him threw forth sparkling fire, That seemd him to enflame on every side: His steed was bloody red, and fomed yre, When with the maistring spur he did him roughly stire.

Approching nigh, he never staid to greete, Ne chaffar words, prowd corage to provoke, But prickt so fiers, that underneath his feete The smouldring dust did

rownd about him smoke, Both horse and man nigh able for to choke; And fayrly couching his steeleheaded speare, Him first saluted with a sturdy stroke: It booted nought Sir Guyon, comming neare, To thincke such hideous puissaunce on foot to beare;

But lightly shunned it; and, passing by, With his bright blade did smite at him so fell, That the sharpe steele, arriving forcibly On his broad shield, bitt not, but glauncing fell On his horse necke before the quilted sell, And from the head the body sundred quight. So him dismounted low he did compell On foot with him to matchen equall fight: The truncked beast fast bleeding did him fowly dight.

Sore bruzed with the fall he slow uprose, And all enraged thus him loudly shent; “Disleall Knight, whose coward corage chose To wreake it selfe on beast all innocent, And shund the marke at which it should be ment; Therby thine armes seem strong, but manhood frayl: So hast thou oft with guile thine honor blent; But litle may such guile thee now avayl, If wonted force and fortune doe me not much fayl.”

With that he drew his flaming sword, and strooke At him so fiercely, that the upper marge Of his sevenfolded shield away it tooke, And, glauncing on his helmet, made a large And open gash therein: were not his targe That broke the violence of his intent, The weary sowle from thence it would discharge; Nathelesse so sore a buff to him it lent, That made him reele, and to his brest his bever bent.

Exceeding wroth was Guyon at that blow, And much asham’d that stroke of living arme Should him dismay, and make him stoup so low, Though otherwise it did him litle harme: Tho, hurling high his yron braced arme, He smote so manly on his shoulder plate, That all his left side it did quite disarme; Yet there the steel stayd not, but inly bate Deepe in his flesh, and opened wide a red floodgate.

Deadly dismayd with horror of that dint Pyrochles was, and grieved eke entyre; Yet nathemore did it his fury stint, But added flame unto his former fire, That wel nigh molt his hart in raging yre: Ne thenceforth his approved skill, to ward, Or strike, or

hurtle rownd in warlike gyre, Remembred he, ne car'd for his saufgard, But rudely rag'd, and like a cruell tygre far'd.

He hewd, and lasht, and foynd, and thondred blowes, And every way did seeke into his life; Ne plate, ne male, could ward so mighty throwes, But yeilded passage to his cruell knife. But Guyon, in the heat of all his strife, Was wary wise, and closely did awayt Avauntage, whilest his foe did rage most rife: Sometimes athwart, sometimes he strook him strayt, And falsed oft his blowes t'illude him with such bayt.

Like as a Lyon, whose imperiall powre A prowd rebellious Unicorn defyes, T'avoide the rash assault and wrathful stowre Of his fiers foe, him to a tree applyes, And when him ronning in full course he spyes, He slips aside; the whiles that furious beast His precious home, sought of his enimyes, Strikes in the stocke, ne thence can be releast, But to the mighty victor yields a bounteous feast.

With such faire sleight him Guyon often fayld, Till at the last all breathlesse, weary, faint, Him spying, with fresh onsett he assayld, And kindling new his corage seeming queint, Strooke him so hugely, that through great constraint He made him stoup perforce unto his knee, And doe unwilling worship to the Saint, That on his shield depainted he did see: Such homage till that instant never learned hee.

Whom Guyon seeing stoup, poursewed fast The present offer of faire victory, And soone his dreadfull blade about he cast, Wherewith he smote his haughty crest so hye, That streight on grownd made him full low to lye; Then on his brest his victor foote he thrust: With that he cryde; "Mercy! doe me not dye, Ne deeme thy force by fortunes doome unjust, That hath (maugre her spight) thus low me laid in dust."

Eftsoones his cruel hand Sir Guyon stayd, Tempring the passion with advizement slow, And maistring might on enimy dismayd; For th'equall die of warre he well did know: Then to him said; "Live, and alleagaunce owe To him that gives thee life and liberty; And henceforth by this daies ensample trow, That hasty wroth, and heedlesse hazardry, Doe breede repentaunce late, and lasting infamy."

So up he let him rise; who, with grim looke And count'naunce sterne, upstanding, gan to grind His grated teeth for great disdeigne, and shooke His sandy lockes, long hanging downe behind, Knotted in blood and dust, for grief of mind That he in ods of armes was conquered: Yet in himselfe some comfort he did find, That him so noble knight had maystered; Whose bounty more then might, yet both, he wondered.

Which Guyon marking said; "Be nought agriev'd, Sir knight, that thus ye now subdewed arre: Was never man, who most conquestes atchiev'd, But sometimes had the worse, and lost by warre, Yet shortly gaynd that losse exceeded farre. Losse is no shame, nor to bee lesse then foe; But to bee lesser then himselfe doth marre Both loosers lot, and victours prayse alsoe: Vaine others ovcrthrowes who selfe doth overthrow.

"Fly, O Pyrochles! fly the dreadfull warre That in thy selfe thy lesser partes do move; Outrageous anger, and woe-working jarre, Direfull impatience, and hart-murdring love: Those, those thy foes, those warriours far remove, Which thee to endlesse bale captived lead. But sith in might thou didst my mercy prove, Of courtesie to mee the cause aread That thee against me drew with so impetuous dread.

"Dreadlesse," (said he) "that shall I soone declare. It was complaind that thou hadst done great tort Unto an aged woman, poore and bare, And thralled her in chaines with strong effort, Voide of all succour and needfull comfort; That ill beseemes thee, such as I thee see, To worke such shame. Therefore, I thee exhort To chaunge thy will, and set Occasion free, And to her captive sonne yield his first libertee.

Thereat Sir Guyon smylde; "And is that all," (Said he) "that thee so sore displeased hath? Great mercy, sure, for to enlarge a thrall, Whose freedom shall thee turne to greatest scath! Nath'lesse now quench thy whott emboyling wrath: Loe! there they bee; to thee I yield them free." Thereat he, wondrous glad, out of the path Did lightly leape, where he them bound did see, And gan to breake the bands of their

captivitee.

Soone as Occasion felt her selfe untyde, Before her sonne could well assoyled bee, She to her use returnd, and streight defyde Both Guyon and Pyrochles; th'one (said shee) Bycause he wonne; the other, because hee Was wonne. So matter did she make of nought, To stirre up strife, and garre them disagree: But, soone as Furor was enlargd, she sought To kindle his quencht fyre, and thousand causes wrought.

It was not long ere she inflam'd him so, That he would algates with Pyrochles fight, And his redeemer chalengd for his foe, Because he had not well mainteind his right, But yielded had to that same straunger knight. Now gan Pyrochles wex as wood as hee, And him affronted with impatient might: So both together fiers engrasped bee, Whyles Guyon standing by their uncouth strife does see.

Him all that while Occasion did provoke Against Pyrochles, and new matter fram'd Upon the old, him stirring to bee wroke Of his late wronges, in which she oft him blam'd For suffering such abuse as knighthood sham'd, And him dishabled quyte. But he was wise, Ne would with vaine occasions be inflam'd; Yet others she more urgent did devise; Yet nothing could him to impatience entise.

Their fell contention still increased more, And more thereby increased Furors might, That he his foe has hurt and wounded sore, And him in blood and durt deformed quight. His mother eke, more to augment his spight, Now brought to him a flaming fyer brond, Which she in Stygian lake, ay burning bright, Had kindled: that she gave into his hond, That armd with fire more hardly he mote him withstond.

Tho gan that villein wex so fiers and strong, That nothing might sustaine his furious forse: He cast him downe to ground, and all along Drew him through durt and myre without remorse, And fowly battered his comely corse, That Guyon much disdeigned so loathly sight. At last he was compeld to cry perforse, "Help, O Sir Guyon! helpe, most noble knight, To ridd a wretched man from handes of hellish wight!"

The knight was greatly moved at his playnt, And gan him dight to succour his distresse, Till that the Palmer, by his grave restraynt, Him stayd from yielding pitifull redresse, And said; “Deare sonne, thy causelesse ruth represse, Ne let thy stout hart melt in pitty vayne: He that his sorrow sought through wilfulnesse, And his foe fettred would release agayne, Deserves to taste his follies fruit, repented payne.”

Guyon obayd: So him away he drew From needlesse trouble of renewing fight Already fought, his voyage to poursew. But rash Pyrochles varlett, Atin hight, When late he saw his Lord in heavie plight Under Sir Guyons puissaunt stroke to fall, Him deeming dead, as then he seemd in sight, Fledd fast away to tell his funerall Unto his brother, whom Cymochles men did call.

He was a man of rare redoubted might, Famous throughout the world for warlike prayse, And glorious spoiles, purchast in perilous fight: Full many doughtie knightes he in his dayes Had doen to death, subdewde in equall frayes, Whose carkases, for terrour of his name, Of fowles and beastes he made the piteous prayes, And hong their conquerd armes, for more defame, On gallow trees, in honour of his dearest Dame.

His dearest Dame is that Enchaunteresse, The vyle Acrasia, that with vaine delightes, And ydle pleasures in her Bowre of Blisse, Does charme her lovers, and the feeble sprightes Can call out of the bodies of fraile wightes; Whom then she does transforme to monstrous hewes, And horribly misshapes with ugly sightes, Captiv’d eternally in yron mewes And darksom dens, where Titan his face never shewes.

There Atin fownd Cymochles sojourning, To serve his Lemans love: for he by kynd Was given all to lust and loose living, When ever his fiers handes he free mote fynd: And now he has pourd out his ydle mynd In daintie delices, and lavish joyes, Having his warlike weapons cast behynd, And flowes in pleasures and vaine pleasing toyes, Mingled emongst loose Ladies and lascivious boyes.

And over him art, stryving to compayre With nature, did an Arber greene dispred, Framed of wanton Yvie, flouring fayre, Through which the fragrant Eglantine did spred His prickling armes, entrayld with roses red, Which daintie odours round about them threw: And all within with flowres was garnished, That, when myld Zephyrus emongst them blew, Did breath out bounteous smels, and painted colors shew.

And fast beside there trickled softly downe A gentle streame, whose murmuring wave did play Emongst the puny stones, and made a sowne, To lull him soft asleepe that by it lay: The wearie Traveiler, wandring that way, Therein did often quench his thristy heat, And then by it his wearie limbes display, Whiles creeping slomber made him to forget His former payne, and wypt away his toilsom sweat.

And on the other syde a pleasaunt grove Was shott up high, full of the stately tree That dedicated is t'Olympick Jove, And to his sonne Alcides, whenas hee In Nemus gayned goodly victoree: Therein the mery birdes of every sorte Chaunted alowd their chearefull harmonee, And made emongst them selves a sweete consort, That quickned the dull spright with musicall comfort.

There he him found all carelesly displaid, In secrete shadow from the sunny ray, On a sweet bed of lillies softly laid, Amidst a flock of Damzelles fresh and gay, That rownd about him dissolute did play Their wanton follies and light meriments: Every of which did loosely disaray Her upper partes of meet habiliments, And shewd them naked, deckt with many ornaments.

And every of them strove with most delights Him to aggrate, and greatest pleasures shew: Some framd faire lookes, glancing like evening lights; Others sweet wordes, dropping like honny dew; Some bathed kisses, and did soft embrew The sugred licour through his melting lips: One boastes her beautie, and does yield to vew Her dainty limbes above her tender hips; Another her out boastes, and all for tryall strips.

He, like an Adder lurking in the weedes, His wandring thought in deepe desire does

steepe, And his frayle eye with spoyle of beauty feedes: Sometimes he falsely faines himselfe to sleepe, Whiles through their lids his wanton eies do peepe To steale a snatch of amorous conceipt, Whereby close fire into his heart does creepe: So he them deceives, deceivd in his deceipt, Made dronke with drugs of deare voluptuous receipt.

Atin, arriving there, when him he spyde Thus in still waves of deepe delight to wade, Fiercely approching to him lowdly cryde, “Cymochles; oh! no, but Cymochles shade, In which that manly person late did fade. What is become of great Acrates sonne? Or where hath he hong up his mortall blade, That hath so many haughty conquests wonne? Is all his force forlorne, and all his glory donne?”

Then, pricking him with his sharp-pointed dart, He saide; “Up, up! thou womanish weake knight, That here in Ladies lap entombed art, Unmindfull of thy praise and prowest might, And weetlesse eke of lately wrought despight, Whiles sad Pyrochles lies on sencelesse ground, And groneth out his utmost grudging spright Through many a stroke and many a streaming wound, Calling thy help in vaine that here in joyes art dround.”

Suddeinly out of his delightfull dreame The man awoke, and would have questiond more; But he would not endure that wofull theame For to dilate at large, but urged sore, With percing wordes and pittifull implore, Him hasty to arise. As one affright With hellish feends, or Furies made uprore, He then uprose, inflamd with fell despight, And called for his armes, for he would algates fight:

They bene ybrought; he quickly does him dight, And lightly mounted passeth on his way; Ne Ladies loves, ne sweete entreaties, might Appease his heat, or hastie passage stay; For he has vowd to beene avengd that day (That day it selfe him seemed all too long) On him, that did Pyrochles deare dismay: So proudly pricketh on his courser strong, And Atin ay him pricks with spurs of shame and wrong.

Canto VI

Guyon is of immodest Merth Led into loose Desire, Fights with Cymochles, whiles his bro— Ther burnes in furious fire.

A harder lesson to learne Continence In joyous pleasure then in grievous paine; For sweetnesse doth allure the weaker sence So strongly, that uneathes it can refraine From that which feeble nature covets faine: But griefe and wrath, that be her enemies And foes of life, she better can abstaine: Yet vertue vauntes in both her victories, And Guyon in them all shewes goodly maysteries.

Whom bold Cymochles traveiling to finde, With cruell purpose bent to wreake on him The wrath which Atin kindled in his mind, Came to a river, by whose utmost brim Wayting to passe, he saw whereas did swim Along the shore, as swift as glaunce of eye, A litle Gondelay, bedecked trim With boughes and arbours woven cunningly, That like a litle forrest seemed outwardly.

And therein sate a Lady fresh and fayre, Making sweet solace to herselfe alone: Sometimes she song as lowd as larke in ayre, Sometimes she laught, as merry as Pope Jone; Yet was there not with her else any one, That to her might move cause of meriment: Matter of merth enough, though there were none, She could devise; and thousand waies invent To feede her foolish humour and vaine jolliment.

Which when far off Cymochles heard and saw, He lowdly cald to such as were abord The little barke unto the shore to draw, And him to ferry over that deepe ford. The merry mariner unto his word Soone hearkned, and her painted bote streightway Turnd to the shore, where that same warlike Lord She in receiv’d; but Atin by no way She would admit, albe the knight her much did pray.

Eftsoones her shallow ship away did slide, More swift then swallow sheres the liquid skye, Withouten oare or Pilot it to guide, Or winged canvas with the wind to fly: Onely she turnd a pin, and by and by It cut away upon the yielding wave, Ne cared she her course for to apply; For it was taught the way which she would have,

And both from rocks and flats it selfe could wisely save.

And all the way the wanton Damsell found New merth her passenger to entertaine; For she in pleasaunt purpose did abound, And greatly joyed merry tales to faine, Of which a store-house did with her remaine: Yet seemed, nothing well they her became; For all her wordes she drownd with laughter vaine, And wanted grace in utt'ring of the same, That turned all her pleasaunce to a scoffing game.

And other whiles vaine toyes she would devize, As her fantasticke wit did most delight: Sometimes her head she fondly would aguize With gaudy girlonds, or fresh flowrets dight About her necke, or rings of rushes plight: Sometimes, to do him laugh, she would assay To laugh at shaking of the leaves light, Or to behold the water worke and play About her little frigot, therein making way.

Her light behaviour and loose dalliaunce Gave wondrous great contentment to the knight, That of his way he had no sovenaunce, Nor care of vow'd revenge and cruell fight, But to weake wench did yield his martiall might: So easie was to quench his flamed minde With one sweete drop of sensuall delight. So easie is t'appease the stormy winde Of malice in the calme of pleasaunt womankind.

Diverse discourses in their way they spent; Mongst which Cymochles of her questioned Both what she was, and what that usage ment, Which in her cott she daily practized? "Vaine man," (saide she) "that wouldest be reckoned A straunger in thy home, and ignoraunt Of Phædria, (for so my name is red) Of Phædria, thine owne fellow servaunt; For thou to serve Acrasia thy selfe doest vaunt.

"In this wide Inland sea, that hight by name The Idle lake, my wandring ship I row, That knowes her port, and thither sayles by ayme, Ne care, ne feare I how the wind do blow, Or whether swift I wend, or whether slow: Both slow and swift alike do serve my tourne; Ne swelling Neptune ne lowd thundring Jove Can chaunge my cheare, or make me ever mourne: My little boat can safely passe this perilous bourne."

Whiles thus she talked, and whiles thus she toyd, They were far past the passage which he spake, And come unto an Island waste and voyd, That floted in the midst of that great lake; There her small Gondelay her port did make, And that gay payre, issewing on the shore, Disburdned her. Their way they forward take Into the land that lay them faire before, Whose pleasaunce she him shewd, and plentifull great store.

It was a chosen plott of fertile land, Emongst wide waves sett, like a litle nest, As if it had by Natures cunning hand Bene choycely picked out from all the rest, And laid forth for ensample of the best: No daintie flowre or herbe that growes on grownd, No arborett with painted blossomes drest And smelling sweete, but there it might be fownd To bud out faire, and throwe her sweete smels al arownd.

No tree whose braunches did not bravely spring; No braunch whereon a fine bird did not sitt; No bird but did her shrill notes sweetely sing; No song but did containe a lovely ditt. Trees, braunches, birds, and songs, were framed fitt For to allure fraile mind to carelesse ease: Carelesse the man soone woxe, and his weake witt Was overcome of thing that did him please; So pleased did his wrathfull purpose faire appease.

Thus when shee had his eyes and sences fed With false delights, and fild with pleasures vayn, Into a shady dale she soft him led, And layd him downe upon a grassy playn; And her sweete selfe without dread or disdayn She sett beside, laying his head disarmd In her loose lap, it softly to sustayn, Where soone he slumbred fearing not be harmd: The whiles with a love lay she thus him sweetly charmd.

“Behold, O man! that toilesome paines doest take, The flowrs, the fields, and all that pleasaunt growes, How they them selves doe thine ensample make, Whiles nothing envious nature them forth throwes Out of her fruitfull lap; how no man knowes, They spring, they bud, they blossome fresh and faire, And decke the world with their rich pompous showes; Yet no man for them taketh paines or care, Yet no man

to them can his carefull paines compare.

“The lilly, Lady of the flowring field, The flowre-deluce, her lovely Paramoure, Bid thee to them thy fruitlesse labors yield, And soone leave off this toylsome weary stoure: Loe, loe! how brave she decks her bounteous boure, With silkin curtens and gold coverletts, Therein to shrowd her sumptuous Belamoure; Yet nether spinnes nor cards, ne cares nor fretts, But to her mother Nature all her care she letts.

“Why then doest thou, O man! that of them all Art Lord, and eke of nature Soveraine, Wilfully make thyselfe a wretched thrall, And waste thy joyous howres in needelesse paine, Seeking for daunger and adventures vaine? What bootes it al to have, and nothing use? Who shall him rew that swimming in the maine Will die for thrist, and water doth refuse? Refuse such fruitlesse toile, and present pleasures chuse.”

By this she had him lulled fast asleepe, That of no worldly thing he care did take: Then she with liquors strong his eies did steepe, That nothing should him hastily awake. So she him lefte, and did her selfe betake Unto her boat again, with which she clefte The slouthfull wave of that great griesy lake: Soone shee that Island far behind her lefte, And now is come to that same place where first she wefte.

By this time was the worthy Guyon brought Unto the other side of that wide strond Where she was rowing, and for passage sought. Him needed not long call; shee soone to hond Her ferry brought, where him she byding fond With his sad guide: him selfe she tooke aboord, But the Blacke Palmer suffred still to stond, Ne would for price or prayers once affoord To ferry that old man over the perlous foord.

Guyon was loath to leave his guide behind, Yet being entred might not backe retyre; For the flitt barke, obaying to her mind, Forth launched quickly as she did desire, Ne gave him leave to bid that aged sire Adieu; but nimbly ran her wonted course Through the dull billowes thicke as troubled mire, Whom nether wind out of their seat could forse, Nor timely tides did drive out of their sluggish sourse.

And by the way, as was her wonted guize, Her mery fitt shee freshly gan to reare, And did of joy and jollity devize, Her selfe to cherish, and her guest to cheare. The knight was courteous, and did not forbeare Her honest merth and pleasaunce to partake; But when he saw her toy, and gibe, and geare, And passe the bonds of modest merimake, Her dalliaunce he despis'd, and follies did forsake.

Yet she still followed her former style, And said and did all that mote him delight, Till they arrived in that pleasaunt Ile, Where sleeping late she lefte her other knight. But whenas Guyon of that land had sight, He wist him selfe amisse, and angry said; "Ah, Dame! perdy ye have not doen me right, Thus to mislead mee, whiles I you obaid: Me litle needed from my right way to have straid."

"Faire Sir," (quoth she) "be not displeasd at all. Who fares on sea may not commaund his way, Ne wind and weather at his pleasure call: The sea is wide, and easy for to stray; The wind unstable, and doth never stay. But here a while ye may in safety rest, Till season serve new passage to assay: Better safe port then be in seas distrest." Therewith she laught, and did her earnest end in jest,

But he, halfe discontent, mote nathelesse Himselfe appease, and issewd forth on shore; The joyes whereof and happy fruitfulnesse, Such as he saw she gan him lay before, And all, though pleasaunt, yet she made much more: The fields did laugh, the flowres did freshly spring, The trees did bud, and early blossomes bore; And all the quire of birds did sweetly sing, And told that gardins pleasures in their caroling.

And she, more sweete then any bird on bough, Would oftentimes emongst them beare a part, And strive to passe (as she could well enough) Their native musicke by her skilful art: So did she all that might his constant hart Withdraw from thought of warlike enterprize, And drowne in dissolute delights apart, Where noise of armes, or vew of martiall guize, Might not revive desire of knightly exercize.

But he was wise, and wary of her will, And ever held his hand upon his hart; Yet would not seeme so rude, and thewed ill, As to despise so curteous seeming part

That gentle Lady did to him impart: But, fairly tempring, fond desire subdewd, And ever her desired to depart. She list not heare, but her disports poursewd, And ever bad him stay till time the tide renewd.

And now by this Cymochles howre was spent, That he awoke out of his ydle dreme; And, shaking off his drowsy dreriment, Gan him avize, howe ill did him beseme In slouthfull sleepe his molten hart to steme, And quench the brond of his conceived yre: Tho up he started, stird with shame extreme, Ne staied for his Damsell to inquire, But marched to the Strond there passage to require.

And in the way he with Sir Guyon mett, Accompanyde with Phædria the faire: Eftsoones he gan to rage, and inly frett, Crying; “Let be that Lady debonaire, Thou recreaunt knight, and soone thyselfe prepaire To batteile, if thou meane her love to gayn. Loe, loe! already how the fowles in aire Doe flocke, awaiting shortly to obtayn Thy carcas for their pray, the guerdon of thy payn.”

And therewithall he fiersly at him flew, And with importune outrage him assayld; Who, soone prepard to field, his sword forth drew, And him with equall valew countervayld: Their mightie strokes their haberjeons dismayld, And naked made each others manly spalles; The mortall steele despiteously entayld Deepe in their flesh, quite through the yron walles, That a large purple streame adowne their giambeux falles.

Cymochles, that had never mett before So puissant foe, with envious despight His prowd presumed force increased more, Disdeigning to bee held so long in fight. Sir Guyon, grudging not so much his might As those unknightly raylinges which he spoke, With wrathfull fire his corage kindled bright, Thereof devising shortly to be wroke, And doubling all his powres redoubled every stroke.

Both of them high attonce their handes enhaunst, And both attonce their huge blowes down did sway. Cymochles sword on Guyons shield yglaunst, And thereof nigh one quarter sheard away; But Guyons angry blade so fiers did play On th’others

helmett, which as Titan shone, That quite it clove his plumed crest in tway, And bared all his head unto the bone; Wherewith astonisht, still he stood as sencelesse stone.

Still as he stood, fayre Phædria, that beheld That deadly daunger, soone atweene them ran; And at their feet her selfe most humbly feld, Crying with pitteous voyce, and count'nance wan, "Ah, well away! most noble Lords, how can Your cruell eyes endure so pitteous sight, To shed your lives on ground? Wo worth the man, That first did teach the cursed steele to bight In his owne flesh, and make way to the living spright!

"If ever love of Lady did empierce Your yron brestes, or pittie could find place, Withhold your bloody handes from battaill fierce; And, sith for me ye fight, to me this grace Both yield, to stay your deadly stryfe a space." They stayd a while, and forth she gan proceede: "Most wretched woman and of wicked race, That am the authour of this hainous deed, And cause of death betweene two doughtie knights do breed!

"But, if for me ye fight, or me will serve, Not this rude kynd of battaill, nor these armes Are meet, the which doe men in bale to sterve, And doolefull sorrow heape with deadly harmes: Such cruell game my scarmoges disarmes. Another warre, and other weapons, I Doe love, where love does give his sweet Alarmes Without bloodshed, and where the enimy Does yield unto his foe a pleasaunt victory.

"Debatefull strife, and cruell enmity, The famous name of knighthood fowly shend; But lovely peace, and gentle amity, And in Amours the passing howres to spend, The mightie martiall handes doe most commend: Of love they ever greater glory bore Then of their armes; Mars is Cupidoes frend, And is for Venus loves renowmed more Then all his wars and spoiles, the which he did of yore."

Therewith she sweetly smyld. They, though full bent To prove extremities of bloody fight, Yet at her speach their rages gan relent, And calme the sea of their

tempestuous spight. Such powre have pleasing wordes: such is the might Of courteous clemency in gentle hart. Now after all was ceast, the Faery knight Besought that Damzell suffer him depart, And yield him ready passage to that other part.

She no lesse glad then he desirous was Of his departure thence; for of her joy And vaine delight she saw he light did pas, A foe of folly and immodest toy, Still solemne sad, or still disdainfull coy; Delighting all in armes and cruell warre, That her sweet peace and pleasures did annoy, Troubled with terrour and unquiet jarre, That she well pleased was thence to amove him farre.

Tho him she brought abord, and her swift bote Forthwith directed to that further strand; The which on the dull waves did lightly flote, And soone arrived on the shallow sand, Where gladsome Guyon salied forth to land, And to that Damsell thankes gave for reward. Upon that shore he spyed Atin stand, There by his maister left, when late he far'd In Phædrias flitt barck over that perlous shard.

Well could he him remember, sith of late He with Pyrochles sharp debatement made: Streight gan he him revyle, and bitter rate, As Shepheardes curre, that in darke eveninges shade Hath tracted forth some salvage beastes trade: "Vile Miscreaunt," (said he) "whither dost thou flye The shame and death, which will thee soone invade? What coward hand shall doe thee next to dye, That art thus fowly fledd from famous enimy?"

With that he stifly shooke his steelhead dart: But sober Guyon, hearing him so rayle, Though somewhat moved in his mightie hart, Yet with strong reason maistred passion fraile, And passed fayrely forth. He, turning taile, Back to the strond retyrd, and there still stayd, Awaiting passage which him late did faile; The whiles Cymochles with that wanton mayd The hasty heat of his avowd revenge delayd.

Whylest there the varlet stood, he saw from farre An armed knight that towardes him fast ran; He ran on foot, as if in lucklesse warre His forlorne steed from him the

victour wan: He seemed breathlesse, hartlesse, faint, and wan; And all his armour sprinckled was with blood, And soyld with durtie gore, that no man can Discerne the hew thereof. He never stood, But bent his hastie course towardes the ydle flood.

The varlett saw, when to the flood he came, How without stop or stay he fiersly lept, And deepe him selfe beducked in the same, That in the lake his loftie crest was stept, Ne of his safetie seemed care he kept; But with his raging armes he rudely flasht The waves about, and all his armour swept, That all the blood and filth away was washt; Yet still he bet the water, and the billowes dasht.

Atin drew nigh to weet what it mote bee, For much he wondred at that uncouth sight: Whom should he but his owne deare Lord there see, His owne deare Lord Pyrochles in sad plight, Ready to drowne him selfe for fell despight: “Harrow now out, and well away!” he cryde, “What dismall day hath lent this cursed light, To see my Lord so deadly damnifyde? Pyrochles, O Pyrochles! what is thee betyde?”

“I burne, I burne, I burne!” then lowd he cryde, “O! how I burne with implacable fyre; Yet nought can quench mine inly flaming syde, Nor sea of licour cold, nor lake of myre: Nothing but death can doe me to respyre.” “Ah! be it,” (said he) “from Pyrochles farre After pursewing death once to requyre, Or think, that ought those puissant hands may marre: Death is for wretches borne under unhappy starre.”

“Perdye, then is it fitt for me,” (said he) “That am, I weene, most wretched man alive; Burning in flames, yet no flames can I see, And dying dayly, dayly yet revive. O Atin! helpe to me last death to give.” The varlet at his plaint was grieved so sore, That his deepe wounded hart in two did rive; And, his owne health remembring now no more, Did follow that ensample which he blam’d afore.

Into the lake he lept his Lord to ayd, (So Love the dread of daunger doth despise) And of him catching hold him strongly stayd From drowning. But more happy he then wise, Of that seas nature did him not avise: The waves thereof so slow and sluggish were, Engrost with mud which did them fowle agrise, That every weighty

thing they did upbeare, Ne ought mote ever sinck downe to the bottom there.

Whiles thus they strugled in that ydle wave, And strove in vaine, the one him selfe to drowne, The other both from drowning for to save, Lo! to that shore one in an auncient gowne, Whose hoary locks great gravitie did crowne, Holding in hand a goodly arming sword, By fortune came, ledd with the troublous sowne: Where drenched deepe he fownd in that dull ford The carefull servaunt stryving with his raging Lord.

Him Atin spying knew right well of yore, And lowdly cald; “Help, helpe! O Archimage! To save my Lord in wretched plight forlore; Helpe with thy hand, or with thy counsell sage: Weake handes, but counsell is most strong in age.” Him when the old man saw, he wondred sore To see Pyrochles there so rudely rage; Yet sithens helpe, he saw, he needed more Then pitty, he in hast approched to the shore,

And cald; “Pyrochles! what is this I see? What hellish fury hath at earst thee hent? Furious ever I thee knew to bee, Yet never in this straunge astonishment.” “These flames, these flames” (he cryde) “doe me torment.” “What flames,” (quoth he) “when I thee present see In daunger rather to be drent then brent?” “Harrow! the flames which me consume,” (said hee) “Ne can be quencht, within my secret bowelles bee.”

“That cursed man, that cruel feend of hell, Furor, oh! Furor hath me thus bedight: His deadly woundes within my liver swell, And his whott fyre burnes in mine entralles bright, Kindled through his infernall brond of spight, Sith late with him I batteill vaine would boste; That now, I weene, Joves dreaded thunder light Does scorch not halfe so sore, nor damned ghoste In flaming Phlegeton does not so felly roste.”

Which when as Archimago heard, his griefe He knew right well, and him attonce disarm’d; Then searcht his secret woundes, and made a priefe Of every place that was with bruzing harmd, Or with the hidden fire too inly warmd. Which doen, he

balmes and herbes thereto applyde, And evermore with mightie spels them charmd; That in short space he has them qualifyde, And him restor’d to helth that would have algates dyde.

Canto VII

Guyon findes Mamon in a delve, Sunning his threasure hore: Is by him tempted, and led down, To see his secrete store.

As pilot well expert in perilous wave, That to a stedfast starre his course hath bent, When foggy mistes or cloudy tempests have The faithfull light of that faire lampe yblent, And cover’d heaven with hideous dreriment, Upon his card and compas firmes his eye, The maysters of his long experiment, And to them does the steddy helme apply, Bidding his winged vessell fairely forward fly:

So Guyon having lost his trustie guyde, Late left beyond that Ydle lake, proceedes Yet on his way, of none accompanyde; And evermore himselfe with comfort feedes Of his own vertues and praise-worthie deedes. So, long he yode, yet no adventure found, Which fame of her shrill trompet worthy reedes; For still he traveild through wide wastfull ground, That nought but desert wildernesse shewed all around.

At last he came unto a gloomy glade, Cover’d with boughes and shrubs from heavens light, Whereas he sitting found in secret shade An uncouth, salvage, and uncivile wight, Of griesly hew and fowle ill favour’d sight; His face with smoke was tand, and eies were bleard, His head and beard with sout were ill bedight, His cole-blacke hands did seeme to have ben seard In smythes fire-spitting forge, and nayles like clawes appeard.

His yron cote, all overgrowne with rust, Was underneath enveloped with gold; Whose glistring glosse, darkned with filthy dust, Well yet appeared to have beene of old A worke of rich entayle and curious mould, Woven with antickes and wyld ymagery; And in his lap a masse of coyne he told, And turned upside downe, to

feede his eye And covetous desire with his huge threasury.

And round about him lay on every side Great heapes of gold that never could be spent; Of which some were rude owre, not purifide Of Mulcibers devouring element; Some others were new driven, and distent Into great Ingowes and to wedges square; Some in round plates withouten moniment; But most were stampt, and in their metal bare The antique shapes of kings and kesars straunge and rare.

Soone as he Guyon saw, in great affright And haste he rose for to remove aside Those pretious hils from straungers envious sight, And downe them poured through an hole full wide Into the hollow earth, them there to hide. But Guyon, lightly to him leaping, stayd His hand that trembled as one terrifyde; And though himselfe were at the sight dismayd, Yet him perforce restraynd, and to him doubtfull sayd:

“What art thou, man, (if man at all thou art) That here in desert hast thine habitaunce, And these rich hils of welth doest hide apart From the worldes eye, and from her right usaunce?” Thereat, with staring eyes fixed askaunce, In great disdaine he answerd: “Hardy Elfe, That darest view my direfull countenaunce, I read thee rash and heedlesse of thy selfe, To trouble my still seate, and heapes of pretious pelfe.

“God of the world and worldlings I me call, Great Mammon, greatest god below the skye, That of my plenty poure out unto all, And unto none my graces do envye: Riches, renowme, and principality, Honour, estate, and all this worldes good, For which men swinck and sweat incessantly, Fro me do flow into an ample flood, And in the hollow earth have their eternall brood.

“Wherefore, if me thou deigne to serve and sew, At thy commaund lo! all these mountaines bee: Or if to thy great mind, or greedy vew, All these may not suffise, there shall to thee Ten times so much be nombred francke and free.” “Mammon,” (said he) “thy godheads vaunt is vaine, And idle offers of thy golden fee; To them that covet such eye-glutting gaine Proffer thy giftes, and fitter servaunts entertaine.

“Me ill besits, that in der-doing armes And honours suit my vowed daies do spend, Unto thy bounteous baytes and pleasing charmes, With which weake men thou witchest, to attend; Regard of worldly mucke doth fowly blend, And low abase the high heroicke spright, That joyes for crownes and kingdomes to contend: Faire shields, gay steedes, bright armes be my delight; Those be the riches fit for an advent’rous knight.”

“Vaine glorious Elfe,” (saide he) “doest not thou weet That money can thy wantes at will supply? Sheilds, steeds, and armes, and all things for thee meet, It can purvay in twinckling of an eye; And crownes and kingdomes to thee multiply. Do not I kings create, and throw the crowne Sometimes to him that low in dust doth ly, And him that raignd into his rowme thrust downe, And whom I lust do heape with glory and renowne?”

“All otherwise” (saide he) “I riches read, And deeme them roote of all disquietnesse; First got with guile, and then preserv’d with dread, And after spent with pride and lavishnesse, Leaving behind them griefe and heavinesse: Infinite mischiefes of them doe arize, Strife and debate, bloodshed and bitternesse, Outrageous wrong, and hellish covetize, That noble heart as great dishonour doth despize.

“Ne thine be kingdomes, ne the scepters thine; But realmes and rulers thou doest both confound, And loyall truth to treason doest incline: Witnesse the guiltlesse blood pourd oft on ground, The crowned often slaine, the slayer cround; The sacred Diademe in peeces rent, And purple robe gored with many a wound, Castles surprizd, great cities sackt and brent: So mak’st thou kings, and gaynest wrongfull government.

“Long were to tell the troublous stormes that tosse The private state, and make the life unsweet: Who swelling sayles in Caspian sea doth crosse, And in frayle wood on Adrian gulf doth fleet, Doth not, I weene, so many evils meet.” Then Mammon wexing wroth; “And why then,” sayd, “Are mortall men so fond and undiscreet So

evill thing to seeke unto their ayd, And having not complaine, and having it upbrayd?”

“Indeede,” (quoth he) “through fowle intemperaunce, Frayle men are oft captiv’d to covetise; But would they thinke with how small allowaunce Untroubled Nature doth her selfe suffise, Such superfluities they would despise, Which with sad cares empeach our native joyes. At the wellhead the purest streames arise; But mucky filth his braunching armes annoyes, And with uncomely weedes the gentle wave accloyes.

“The antique world, in his first flowring youth, Fownd no defect in his Creators grace; But with glad thankes, and unreproved truth, The guifts of soveraine bounty did embrace: Like Angels life was then mens happy cace; But later ages pride, like corn-fed steed, Abusd her plenty and fat swolne encreace To all licentious lust, and gan exceed The measure of her meane and naturall first need.

“Then gan a cursed hand the quiet wombe Of his great Grandmother with steele to wound, And the hid treasures in her sacred tombe With Sacriledge to dig. Therein he fownd Fountaines of gold and silver to abownd, Of which the matter of his huge desire And pompous pride eftsoones he did compownd; Then avarice gan through his veines inspire His greedy flames, and kindled life-devouring fire.”

“Sonne,” (said he then) “lett be thy bitter scorne, And leave the rudenesse of that antique age To them that liv’d therin in state forlorne: Thou, that doest live in later times, must wage Thy workes for wealth, and life for gold engage. If then thee list my offred grace to use, Take what thou please of all this surplusage; If thee list not, leave have thou to refuse: But thing refused doe not afterward accuse.”

“Me list not” (said the Elfin knight) “receave Thing offred, till I know it well be gott; Ne wote I but thou didst these goods bereave From rightfull owner by unrighteous lott, Or that bloodguiltinesse or guile them blott.” “Perdy,” (quoth he) “yet never eie did vew, Ne tong did tell, ne hand these handled not; But safe I have

them kept in secret mew From hevens sight, and powre of al which them poursew.”

“What secret place” (quoth he) “can safely hold So huge a masse, and hide from heavens eie? Or where hast thou thy wonne, that so much gold Thou canst preserve from wrong and robbery?” “Come thou,” (quoth he) “and see.” So by and by Through that thick covert he him led, and fownd A darkesome way, which no man could descry, That deep descended through the hollow grownd, And was with dread and horror compassed arownd.

At length they came into a larger space, That stretcht itselfe into an ample playne; Through which a beaten broad high way did trace, That streight did lead to Plutoes griesly rayne. By that wayes side there sate internall Payne, And fast beside him sat tumultuous Strife: The one in hand an yron whip did strayne, The other brandished a bloody knife; And both did gnash their teeth, and both did threten life.

On thother side in one consort there sate Cruell Revenge, and rancorous Despight, Disloyall Treason, and hart-burning Hate; But gnawing Gealosy, out of their sight Sitting alone, his bitter lips did bight; And trembling Feare still to and fro did fly, And found no place wher safe he shroud him might: Lamenting Sorrow did in darknes lye, And shame his ugly face did hide from living eye.

And over them sad horror with grim hew Did alwaies sore, beating his yron wings; And after him Owles and Night-ravens flew, The hatefull messengers of heavy things, Of death and dolor telling sad tidings; Whiles sad Celeno, sitting on a clifte, A song of bale and bitter sorrow sings, That hart of flint asonder could have rifte; Which having ended after him she flyeth swifte.

All these before the gates of Pluto lay, By whom they passing spake unto them nought; But th’Elfin knight with wonder all the way Did feed his eyes, and fild his inner thought. At last him to a litle dore he brought, That to the gate of Hell, which gaped wide, Was next adjoyning, ne them parted ought: Betwixt them both was but a litle stride, That did the house of Richesse from hell-mouth divide.

Before the dore sat selfe-consuming Care, Day and night keeping wary watch and ward, For feare least Force or Fraud should unaware Breake in, and spoile the treasure there in gard: Ne would he suffer Sleepe once thitherward Approch, albe his drowsy den were next; For next to death is Sleepe to be compard; Therefore his house is unto his annext: Here Sleep, ther Richesse, and Hel-gate them both betwext.

So soon as Mammon there arrivd, the dore To him did open and affoorded way: Him followed eke Sir Guyon evermore, Ne darkenesse him, ne daunger might dismay. Soone as he entred was, the dore streight way Did shutt, and from behind it forth there lept An ugly feend, more fowle then dismall day, The which with monstrous stalke behind him stept, And ever as he went dew watch upon him kept.

Well hoped hee, ere long that hardy guest, If ever covetous hand, or lustfull eye, Or lips he layd on thing that likte him best, Or ever sleepe his eie-strings did untye, Should be his pray. And therefore still on hye He over him did hold his cruell clawes, Threatning with greedy gripe to doe him dye, And rend in peeces with his ravenous pawes, If ever he transgrest the fatall Stygian lawes.

That houses forme within was rude and strong, Lyke an huge cave hewne out of rocky clifte, From whose rough vaut the ragged breaches hong Embost with massy gold of glorious guifte, And with rich metall loaded every rifte, That heavy ruine they did seeme to threatt; And over them Arachne high did lifte Her cunning web, and spred her subtile nett, Enwrapped in fowle smoke and clouds more black then Jett.

Both roofe, and floore, and walls, were all of gold, But overgrowne with dust and old decay, And hid in darkenes, that none could behold The hew thereof; for vew of cherefull day Did never in that house it selfe display, But a faint shadow of uncertein light: Such as a lamp, whose life does fade away, Or as the Moone, cloathed with clowdy night, Does show to him that walkes in feare and sad affright.

In all that rowme was nothing to be seene But huge great yron chests, and coffers

strong, All bard with double bends, that none could weene Them to efforce by violence or wrong: On every side they placed were along; But all the grownd with sculs was scattered, And dead mens bones, which round about were flong; Whose lives, it seemed, whilome there were shed, And their vile carcases now left unburied.

They forward passe; ne Guyon yet spoke word, Till that they came unto an yron dore, Which to them opened of his owne accord, And shewd of richesse such exceeding store, As eie of man did never see before, Ne ever could within one place be fownd, Though all the wealth which is, or was of yore, Could gathered be through all the world arownd, And that above were added to that under grownd.

The charge thereof unto a covetous Spright Commaunded was, who thereby did attend, And warily awaited day and night, From other covetous feends it to defend, Who it to rob and ransacke did intend. Then Mammon, turning to that warriour, said; “Loe! here the worldes blis: loe! here the end, To which al men doe ayme, rich to be made: Such grace now to be happy is before thee laid.”

“Certes,” (sayd he) “I n’ill thine offred grace, Ne to be made so happy doe intend: Another blis before mine eyes I place, Another happines, another end. To them that list these base regardes I lend; But I in armes, and in atchievements brave, Do rather choose my flitting houres to spend, And to be Lord of those that riches have, Then them to have my selfe, and be their servile sclave.”

Thereat the feend his gnashing teeth did grate, And griev’d so long to lacke his greedie pray; For well he weened that so glorious bayte Would tempt his guest to take thereof assay; Had he so doen, he had him snatcht away, More light then Culver in the Faulcons fist. Eternall God thee save from such decay! But, whenas Mammon saw his purpose mist, Him to entrap unwares another way he wist.

Thence forward he him ledd, and shortly brought Unto another rowme, whose dore forthright To him did open, as it had beene taught. Therein an hundred raunges weren pight, And hundred fournaces all burning bright: By every fournace many

feendes did byde, Deformed creatures, horrible in sight; And every feend his busie paines applyde To melt the golden metall, ready to be tryde.

One with great bellowes gathered filling ayre, And with forst wind the fewell did inflame; Another did the dying bronds repayre With yron tongs, and sprinckled ofte the same With liquid waves, fiers Vulcans rage to tame, Who, maystring them, renewd his former heat: Some scumd the drosse that from the metall came; Some stird the molten owre with ladles great; And every one did swincke, and every one did sweat.

But, when an earthly wight they present saw Glistring in armes and battailous aray, From their whot work they did themselves withdraw To wonder at the sight; for till that day They never creature saw that cam that way: Their staring eyes sparckling with fervent fyre And ugly shapes did nigh the man dismay, That, were it not for shame, he would retyre; Till that him thus bespake their soveraine Lord and syre;

“Behold, thou Faeries sonne, with mortall eye, That living eye before did never see. The thing, that thou didst crave so earnestly, To weet whence all the wealth late shewd by mee Proceeded, lo! now is reveald to thee. Here is the fountaine of the worldes good: Now, therefore, if thou wilt enriched bee, Avise thee well, and chaunge thy wilfull mood, Least thou perhaps hereafter wish, and be withstood.”

“Suffise it then, thou Money God,” (quoth hee) “That all thine ydle offers I refuse. All that I need I have: what needeth mee To covet more then I have cause to use? With such vaine shewes thy worldlinges vyle abuse; But give me leave to follow mine emprise.” Mammon was much displeasd, yet no’te he chuse But beare the rigour of his bold mesprise; And thence him forward ledd him further to entise.

He brought him, through a darksom narrow strayt, To a broad gate all built of beaten gold: The gate was open; but therein did wayt A sturdie villein, stryding stiffe and bold, As if the highest God defy he would: In his right hand an yron club he held, But he himselfe was all of golden mould, Yet had both life and sence, and well

could weld That cursed weapon, when his cruell foes he queld.

Disdayne he called was, and did disdayne To be so cald, and who so did him call: Sterne was his looke, and full of stomacke vayne; His portaunce terrible, and stature tall, Far passing th'hight of men terrestriall, Like an huge Gyant of the Titans race; That made him scorne all creatures great and small, And with his pride all others powre deface: More fitt emongst black fiendes then men to have his place.

Soone as those glitterand armes he did espye, That with their brightnesse made that darknes light, His harmefull club he gan to hurtle hye, And threaten batteill to the Faery knight; Who likewise gan himselfe to batteill dight, Till Mammon did his hasty hand withhold, And counseld him abstaine from perilous fight; For nothing might abash the villein bold, Ne mortall steele emperce his miscreated mould.

So having him with reason pacifyde, And that fiers Carle commaunding to forbeare, He brought him in. The rowme was large and wyde, As it some Gyeld or solemne Temple weare. Many great golden pillours did upbeare The massy roofe, and riches huge sustayne; And every pillour decked was full deare With crownes, and Diademes, and titles vaine, Which mortall Princes wore whiles they on earth did rayne.

A route of people there assembled were, Of every sort and nation under skye, Which with great uprore preaced to draw nere To th'upper part, where was advaunced hye A stately siege of soveraine majestye; And thereon satt a woman, gorgeous gay, And richly cladd in robes of royaltye, That never earthly Prince in such aray His glory did enhaunce, and pompous pryde display.

Her face right wondrous faire did seeme to bee, That her broad beauties beam great brightnes threw Through the dim shade, that all men might it see: Yet was not that same her owne native hew, But wrought by art and counterfetted shew, Thereby more lovers unto her to call: Nath'lesse most hevenly faire in deed and vew She by creation was, till she did fall; Thenceforth she sought for helps to cloke her crime

withall.

There, as in glistring glory she did sitt, She held a great gold chaine ylincked well, Whose upper end to highest heven was knitt, And lower part did reach to lowest Hell; And all that preace did rownd about her swell To catchen hold of that long chaine, thereby To climbe aloft, and others to excell: That was Ambition, rash desire to sty, And every linck thereof a step of dignity.

Some thought to raise themselves to high degree By riches and unrighteous reward; Some by close shouldring; some by flatteree; Others through friendes; others for base regard, And all by wrong waies for themselves prepard: Those that were up themselves kept others low; Those that were low themselves held others hard, Ne suffred them to ryse or greater grow; But every one did strive his fellow downe to throw.

Which whenas Guyon saw, he gan inquire, What meant that preace about that Ladies throne, And what she was that did so high aspyre? Him Mammon answered; "That goodly one, Whom all that folke with such contention Doe flock about, my deare, my daughter is: Honour and dignitie from her alone Derived are, and all this worldes blis, For which ye men doe strive; few gett, but many mis:

"And fayre Philotime she rightly hight, The fairest wight that wonneth under skie, But that this darksom neather world her light Doth dim with horror and deformity; Worthie of heven and hye felicitie, From whence the gods have her for envy thrust: But, sith thou hast found favour in mine eye, Thy spouse I will her make, if that thou lust, That she may thee advance for works and merits just."

"Gramercy, Mammon," (said the gentle knight) "For so great grace and offred high estate; But I, that am fraile flesh and earthly wight, Unworthy match for such immortall mate My selfe well wote, and mine unequall fate: And were I not, yet is my trouth yplight, And love avowd to other Lady late, That to remove the same I have no might: To chaunge love causelesse is reproch to warlike knight."

Mammon emmoved was with inward wrath; Yet, forcing it to fayne, him forth thence ledd, Through griesly shadowes by a beaten path, Into a gardin goodly garnished With hearbs and fruits, whose kinds mote not be redd: Not such as earth out of her fruitfull woomb Throwes forth to men, sweet and well savored, But direfull deadly black, both leafe and bloom, Fitt to adorne the dead, and deck the drery toombe.

There mournfull Cypresse grew in greatest store, And trees of bitter Gall, and Heben sad; Dead sleeping Poppy, and black Hellebore; Cold Coloquintida, and Tetra mad; Mortall Samnitis, and Cicuta bad, With which th'unjust Atheniens made to dy Wise Socrates; who, thereof quaffing glad, Pourd out his life and last Philosophy To the fayre Critias, his dearest Belamy!

The Gardin of Proserpina this hight; And in the midst thereof a silver seat, With a thick Arber goodly overdight, In which she often usd from open heat Her selfe to shroud, and pleasures to entreat: Next thereunto did grow a goodly tree, With braunches broad dispredd and body great, Clothed with leaves, that none the wood mote see, And loaden all with fruit as thick as it might bee.

Their fruit were golden apples glistring bright, That goodly was their glory to behold; On earth like never grew, ne living wight Like ever saw, but they from hence were sold; For those which Hercules, with conquest bold Got from great Atlas daughters, hence began, And planted there did bring forth fruit of gold; And those with which th'Eubœan young man wan Swift Atalanta, when through craft he her out ran.

Here also sprong that goodly golden fruit, With which Acontius got his lover trew, Whom he had long time sought with fruitlesse suit: Here eke that famous golden Apple grew, The which emongst the gods false Ate threw; For which th'Idæan Ladies disagreed, Till partiall Paris dempt it Venus dew, And had of her fayre Helen for his meed, That many noble Greekes and Trojans made to bleed.

The warlike Elfe much wondred at this tree, So fayre and great that shadowed all the ground, And his broad braunches, laden with rich fee, Did stretch themselves without the utmost bound Of this great gardin, compast with a mound; Which over-hanging, they themselves did steepe In a blacke flood, which flow'd about it round. That is the river of Cocytus deepe, In which full many soules do endlesse wayle and weepe.

Which to behold he clomb up to the bancke, And looking downe saw many damned wightes In those sad waves, which direfull deadly stancke, Plonged continually of cruell Sprightes, That with their piteous cryes, and yelling shrightes, They made the further shore resounden wide. Emongst the rest of those same ruefull sightes, One cursed creature he by chaunce espide, That drenched lay full deepe under the Garden side.

Deepe was he drenched to the upmost chin, Yet gaped still as coveting to drinke Of the cold liquor which he waded in; And stretching forth his hand did often thinke To reach the fruit which grew upon the brincke; But both the fruit from hand, and flood from mouth, Did fly abacke, and made him vainely swincke; The whiles he sterv'd with hunger, and with drouth, He daily dyde, yet never throughly dyen couth.

The knight, him seeing labour so in vaine, Ask't who he was, and what he ment thereby? Who, groning deepe, thus answerd him againe; "Most cursed of all creatures under skye, Lo! Tantalus, I here tormented lye: Of whom high Jove wont whylome feasted bee; Lo! here I now for want of food doe dye: But, if that thou be such as I thee see, Of grace I pray thee, give to eat and drinke to mee!"

"Nay, nay, thou greedy Tantalus," (quoth he) "Abide the fortune of thy present fate; And unto all that live in high degree, Ensample be of mind intemperate, To teach them how to use their present state." Then gan the cursed wretch alowd to cry, Accusing highest Jove and gods ingrate; And eke blaspheming heaven bitterly, As author of unjustice, there to let him dye.

He lookt a litle further, and espyde Another wretch, whose carcas deepe was drent Within the river, which the same did hyde; But both his handes, most filthy feculent, Above the water were on high extent, And faynd to wash themselves incessantly, Yet nothing cleaner were for such intent, But rather fowler seemed to the eye; So lost his labour vaine and ydle industry.

The knight him calling asked who he was? Who, lifting up his head, him answerd thus; “I Pilate am, the falsest Judge, alas! And most unjust; that, by unrighteous And wicked doome, to Jewes despiteous Delivered up the Lord of life to dye, And did acquite a murdrer felonous; The whiles my handes I washt in purity, The whiles my soule was soyld with fowle iniquity.”

Infinite moe tormented in like paine He there beheld, too long here to be told: Ne Mammon would there let him long remayne, For terrour of the tortures manifold, In which the damned soules he did behold, But roughly him bespake: “Thou fearefull foole, Why takest not of that same fruite of gold? Ne sittest downe on that same silver stoole, To rest thy weary person in the shadow coole?”

All which he did to do him deadly fall In frayle intemperaunce through sinfull bayt; To which if he inclyned had at all, That dreadfull feend, which did behinde him wayt, Would him have rent in thousand peeces strayt: But he was wary wise in all his way, And well perceived his deceiptfull sleight, Ne suffred lust his safety to betray. So goodly did beguile the Guyler of his pray.

And now he has so long remained theare, That vitall powres gan wexe both weake and wan For want of food and sleepe, which two upbeare, Like mightie pillours, this frayle life of man, That none without the same enduren can: For now three dayes of men were full outwrought, Since he this hardy enterprize began: Forthy great Mammon fayrely he besought Into the world to guyde him backe, as he him brought.

The God, though loth, yet was constraynd t’obay; For lenger time then that no living wight Below the earth might suffred be to stay: So backe againe him brought to

living light. But all so soone as his enfeebled spright Gan sucke this vitall ayre into his brest, As overcome with too exceeding might, The life did flit away out of her nest, And all his sences were with deadly fit opprest.

Canto VIII

Sir Guyon, laid in swowne, is by Acrates sonnes despoyld, Whom Arthur soone hath reskewed And Paynim brethren foyld.

And is there care in heaven? And is there love In heavenly spirits to these creatures bace, That may compassion of their evilles move? There is: else much more wretched were the cace Of men then beasts. But O! th'exceeding grace Of highest God that loves his creatures so, And all his workes with mercy doth embrace, That blessed Angels he sends to and fro, To serve to wicked man, to serve his wicked foe.

How oft do they their silver bowers leave, To come to succour us that succour want! How oft do they with golden pineons cleave The flitting skyes, like flying Pursuivant, Against fowle feendes to ayd us militant! They for us fight, they watch and dewly ward, And their bright Squadrons round about us plant; And all for love, and nothing for reward. O! why should hevenly God to men have such regard?

During the while that Guyon did abide Mamons house, the Palmer, whom whyleare That wanton Mayd of passage had denide, By further search had passage found elsewhere; And, being on his way, approched neare Where Guyon lay in traunce; when suddeinly He heard a voyce that called lowd and cleare, "Come hither! hither! O, come hastily!" That all the fields resounded with the ruefull cry.

The Palmer lent his eare unto the noyce, To weet who called so importunely: Againe he heard a more efforced voyce, That bad him come in haste. He by and by His feeble feet directed to the cry; Which to that shady delve him brought at last, Where Mammon earst did sunne his threasury; There the good Guyon he found slumbring fast In senceles dreame; which sight at first him sore aghast.

Beside his head there satt a faire young man, Of wondrous beauty and of freshest yeares, Whose tender bud to blossome new began, And florish faire above his equall peares: His snowy front, curled with golden heares, Like Phœbus face adornd with sunny rayes, Divinely shone; and two sharpe winged sheares, Decked with diverse plumes, like painted Jayes, Were fixed at his backe to cut his ayery wayes.

Like as Cupido on Idæan hill, When having laid his cruell bow away And mortall arrowes, wherewith he doth fill The world with murdrous spoiles and bloody pray, With his faire mother he him dights to play, And with his goodly sisters, Graces three: The Goddesse, pleased with his wanton play, Suffers her selfe through sleepe beguild to bee, The whiles the other Ladies mind theyr mery glee.

Whom when the Palmer saw, abasht he was Through fear and wonder that he nought could say, Till him the childe bespoke; “Long lackt, alas! Hath bene thy faithfull aide in hard assay, Whiles deadly fitt thy pupill doth dismay. Behold this heavy sight, thou reverend Sire! But dread of death and dolor doe away; For life ere long shall to her home retire, And he that breathlesse seems shal corage both respire.

“The charge, which God doth unto me arrett, Of his deare safety, I to thee commend; Yet will I not forgoe, ne yet forgett The care thereof my selfe unto the end, But evermore him succour, and defend Against his foe and mine: watch thou, I pray, For evill is at hand him to offend.” So having said, eftsoones he gan display His painted nimble wings, and vanisht quite away,

The Palmer seeing his lefte empty place, And his slow eies beguiled of their sight, Woxe sore affraid, and standing still a space Gaz’d after him, as fowle escapt by flight. At last, him turning to his charge behight, With trembling hand his troubled pulse gan try; Where finding life not yet dislodged quight, He much rejoyst, and courd it tenderly, As chicken newly hatcht, from dreaded destiny.

At last he spide where towards him did pace Two Paynim knights al armd as bright as skie, And them beside an aged Sire did trace, And far before a light-foote Page

did flie, That breathed strife and troublous enmitie. Those were the two sonnes of Acrates old, Who, meeting earst with Archimago slie Foreby that idle strond, of him were told That he which earst them combatted was Guyon bold.

Which to avenge on him they dearly vowd, Where ever that on ground they mote him find: False Archimage provokte their corage prowd, And stryful Atin in their stubborne mind Coles of contention and whot vengeaunce tind. Now bene they come whereas the Palmer sate, Keeping that slombred corse to him assind: Well knew they both his person, sith of late With him in bloody armes they rashly did debate.

Whom when Pyrochles saw, inflam'd with rage That sire he fowl bespake: "Thou dotard vile, That with thy brutenesse shendst thy comely age, Abandon soone, I read, the caytive spoile Of that same outcast carcas, that erewhile Made it selfe famous through false trechery, And crownd his coward crest with knightly stile; Loe! where he now inglorious doth lye, To proove he lived il that did thus fowly dye."

To whom the Palmer fearlesse answered: "Certes, Sir knight, ye bene too much to blame, Thus for to blott the honor of the dead, And with fowle cowardize his carcas shame, Whose living handes immortalizd his name. Vile is the vengeaunce on the ashes cold, And envy base to barke at sleeping fame. Was never wight that treason of him told: Your self his prowesse prov'd, and found him fiers and bold."

Then sayd Cymochles: "Palmer, thou doest dote, Ne canst of prowesse ne of knighthood deeme, Save as thou seest or hearst. But well I wote, That of his puissaunce tryall made extreeme: Yet gold al is not that doth golden seeme; Ne all good knights that shake well speare and shield. The worth of all men by their end esteeme, And then dew praise or dew reproch them yield; Bad therefore I him deeme that thus lies dead on field."

"Good or bad," gan his brother fiers reply, "What doe I recke, sith that he dide

entire? Or what doth his bad death now satisfy The greedy hunger of revenging yre, Sith wrathfull hand wrought not her owne desire? Yet since no way is lefte to wreake my spight, I will him reave of armes, the victors hire, And of that shield, more worthy of good knight; For why should a dead dog be deckt in armour bright?"

"Fayr Sir," said then the Palmer suppliaunt, "For knighthoods love doe not so fowle a deed, Ne blame your honor with so shamefull vaunt Of vile revenge. To spoile the dead of weed Is sacrilege, and doth all sinnes exceed: But leave these relicks of his living might To decke his herce, and trap his tomb-blacke steed." "What herce or steed" (said he) "should he have dight, But be entombed in the raven or the kight?"

With that, rude hand upon his shield he laid, And th'other brother gan his helme unlace, Both fiercely bent to have him disaraid; Till that they spyde where towards them did pace An armed knight, of bold and bounteous grace, Whose squire bore after him an heben launce And coverd shield. Well kend him so far space Th'enchaunter by his armes and amenaunce, When under him he saw his Lybian steed to praunce;

And to those brethren sayd; "Rise, rise by live, And unto batteil doe your selves addresse; For yonder comes the prowest knight alive, Prince Arthur, flowre of grace and nobilesse, That hath to Paynim knights wrought gret distresse, And thousand Sar'zins fowly donne to dye." That word so deepe did in their harts impresse, That both eftsoones upstarted furiously, And gan themselves prepare to batteill greedily.

But fiers Pyrochles, lacking his owne sword, The want thereof now greatly gan to plaine, And Archimage besought, him that afford Which he had brought for Braggadochio vaine. "So would I," (said th'enchaunter) "glad and faine Beteeme to you this sword, you to defend, Or ought that els your honour might maintaine; But that this weapons powre I well have kend To be contrary to the worke which ye intend:

"For that same knights owne sword this is, of yore Which Merlin made by his

almightie art For that his noursling, when he knighthood swore, Therewith to doen his foes eternall smart. The metall first he mixt with Medæwart, That no enchauntment from his dint might save; Then it in flames of Aetna wrought apart, And seven times dipped in the bitter wave Of hellish Styx, which hidden vertue to it gave.

“The vertue is, that nether steele nor stone The stroke thereof from entraunce may defend; Ne ever may be used by his fone, Ne forst his rightful owner to offend; Ne ever will it breake, ne ever bend: Wherefore Morddure it rightfully is hight. In vaine therefore, Pyrochles, should I lend The same to thee, against his lord to fight; For sure yt would deceive thy labor and thy might.”

“Foolish old man,” said then the Pagan wroth, “That weenest words or charms may force withstond: Soone shalt thou see, and then beleeve for troth, That I can carve with this inchaunted brond His Lords owne flesh.” Therewith out of his hond That vertuous steele he rudely snatcht away, And Guyons shield about his wrest he bond: So ready dight fierce battaile to assay, And match his brother proud in battailous aray.

By this, that straunger knight in presence came, And goodly salued them; who nought againe Him answered, as courtesie became; But with sterne lookes, and stomachous disdaine, Gave signes of grudge and discontentment vaine. Then, turning to the Palmer, he gan spy Where at his feet, with sorrowfull demayne And deadly hew, an armed corse did lye, In whose dead face he redd great magnanimity.

Sayd he then to the Palmer: “Reverend Syre, What great misfortune hath betidd this knight? Or did his lire her fatall date expyre, Or did he fall by treason, or by fight? How ever, sure I rew his pitteous plight.” “Not one, nor other,” sayd the Palmer grave, “Hath him befalne; but cloudes of deadly night A while his heavy eylids cover’d have, And all his sences drowned in deep sencelesse wave:

“Which those his cruell foes, that stand hereby, Making advauntage, to revenge their

spight, Would him disarme and treaten shamefully; Unworthie usage of redoubted knight. But you, faire Sir, whose honourable sight Doth promise hope of helpe and timely grace, Mote I beseech to succour his sad plight, And by your powre protect his feeble cace? First prayse of knighthood is fowle outrage to deface."

"Palmer," (said he) "no knight so rude, I weene, As to doen outrage to a sleeping ghost; Ne was there ever noble corage seene, That in advauntage would his puissaunce bost: Honour is least where oddes appeareth most. May bee, that better reason will aswage The rash revengers heat. Words, well dispost, Have secrete powre t'appease inflamed rage: If not, leave unto me thy knights last patronage."

Tho, turning to those brethren, thus bespoke: "Ye warlike payre, whose valorous great might, It seemes, just wronges to vengeaunce doe provoke, To wreake your wrath on this dead seeming knight, Mote ought allay the storme of your despight, And settle patience in so furious heat? Not to debate the chalenge of your right, But for his carkas pardon I entreat, Whom fortune hath already laid in lowest seat."

To whom Cymochles said; "For what art thou, That mak'st thy selfe his dayes-man, to prolong The vengeaunce prest? Or who shall let me now On this vile body from to wreak my wrong, And make his carkas as the outcast dong? Why should not that dead carrion satisfye The guilt which, if he lived had thus long, His life for dew revenge should deare abye? The trespass still doth live, albee the person dye."

"Indeed," then said the Prince, "the evill donne Dyes not, when breath the body first doth leave; But from the grandsyre to the Nephewes sonne, And all his seede the curse doth often cleave, Till vengeaunce utterly the guilt bereave: So streightly God doth judge. But gentle Knight, That doth against the dead his hand upheave, His honour staines with rancour and despight, And great disparagment makes to his former might."

Pyrochles gan reply the second tyme, And to him said: "Now, felon, sure I read, How that thou art partaker of his cryme: Therefore, by Termagaunt thou shalt be

dead.” With that his hand, more sad then lomp of lead, Uplifting high, he weened with Morddure, His owne good sword Morddure, to cleave his head. The faithfull steele such treason no’uld endure, But, swarving from the marke, his Lordes life did assure.

Yet was the force so furious and so fell, That horse and man it made to reele asyde: Nath’lesse the Prince would not forsake his sell, For well of yore he learned had to ryde, But full of anger fiersly to him cryde; “False traitour! miscreaunt! thou broken hast The law of armes to strike foe undefide: But thou thy treasons fruit, I hope, shalt taste Right sowre, and feele the law the which thou hast defast.”

With that his balefull speare he fiercely bent Against the Pagans brest, and therewith thought His cursed life out of her lodge have rent; But ere the point arrived where it ought, That seven fold shield, which he from Guyon brought, He cast between to ward the bitter stownd: Through all those foldes the steelehead passage wrought, And through his shoulder perst; wherwith to ground He groveling fell, all gored in his gushing wound.

Which when his brother saw, fraught with great griefe And wrath, he to him leaped furiously, And fowly saide: “By Mahoune, cursed thiefe, That direfull stroke thou dearely shalt aby:” Then, hurling up his harmefull blade on hy, Smote him so hugely on his haughtie crest, That from his saddle forced him to fly; Els mote it needes downe to his manly brest Have cleft his head in twaine, and life thence dispossest.

Now was the Prince in daungerous distresse, Wanting his sword when he on foot should fight: His single speare could doe him small redresse Against two foes of so exceeding might, The least of which was match for any knight. And now the other, whom he earst did daunt, Had reard him selfe againe to cruel fight Three times more furious and more puissaunt, Unmindfull of his wound, of his fate ignoraunt.

So both attonce him charge on either syde With hideous strokes and importable powre, That forced him his ground to traverse wyde, And wisely watch to ward that

deadly stowre; For in his shield, as thicke as stormie showre, Their strokes did raine: yet did he never quaile, Ne backward shrinke, but as a stedfast towre, Whom foe with double battry doth assaile, Them on her bulwarke beares, and bids them nought availe.

So stoutly he withstood their strong assay; Till that at last, when he advantage spyde, His poynant speare he thrust with puissant sway At proud Cymochles, whiles his shield was wyde, That through his thigh the mortall steele did gryde: He, swarving with the force, within his flesh Did breake the launce, and let the head abyde. Out of the wound the red blood flowed fresh, That underneath his feet soone made a purple plesh.

Horribly then he gan to rage and rayle, Cursing his Gods, and him selfe damning deepe: Als when his brother saw the red blood rayle Adowne so fast, and all his armour steepe, For very felnesse lowd he gan to weepe, And said; “Caytive, curse on thy cruell hond, That twise hath spedd; yet shall it not thee keepe From the third brunt of this my fatall brond: Lo! where the dreadfull Death behynd thy backe doth stond.”

With that he strooke, and thother strooke withall, That nothing seemd mote beare so monstrous might: The one upon his covered shield did fall, And glauncing downe would not his owner byte; But thother did upon his troncheon smyte, Which hewing quite asunder, further way It made, and on his hacqueton did lyte, The which dividing with importune sway, It seizd in his right side, and there the dint did stay.

Wyde was the wound, and a large lukewarme flood, Red as the Rose, thence gushed grievously; That when the Paynym spyde the streaming blood, Gave him great hart and hope of victory. On th’other side, in huge perplexity The Prince now stood, having his weapon broke; Nought could he hurt, but still at warde did ly: Yet with his troncheon he so rudely stroke Cymochles twise, that twise him forst his foot revoke.

Whom when the Palmer saw in such distresse, Sir Guyon’s sword he lightly to him raught, And said; “Fayre Sonne, great God thy right hand blesse, To use that sword so well as he it ought!” Glad was the knight, and with fresh courage fraught, When as againe he armed felt his hond: Then like a Lyon, which hath long time saught His robbed whelpes, and at the last them fond Emongst the shepeheard swaynes, then wexeth wood and yond:

So fierce he laid about him, and dealt blowes On either side, that neither mayle could hold, Ne shield defend the thunder of his throwes: Now to Pyrochles many strokes he told; Eft to Cymochles twise so many fold; Then, backe againe turning his busie hond, Them both atonce compeld with courage bold To yield wide way to his hart-thrilling brond; And though they both stood stiffe, yet could not both withstond.

As salvage Bull, whom two fierce mastives bayt, When rancour doth with rage him once engore, Forgets with wary warde them to awayt, But with his dreadfull hornes them drives afore, Or flings aloft, or treades downe in the flore, Breathing out wrath, and bellowing disdaine, That all the forest quakes to heare him rore: So rag’d Prince Arthur twixt his foemen twaine, That neither could his mightie puissaunce sustaine.

But ever at Pyrochles when he smitt, (Who Guyons shield cast ever him before, Whereon the Faery Queenes pourtract was writt,) His hand relented and the stroke forbore, And his deare hart the picture gan adore; Which oft the Paynim sav’d from deadly stowre: But him henceforth the same can save no more; For now arrived is his fatall howre, That no’te avoyded be by earthly skill or powre.

For when Cymochles saw the fowle reproch, Which them appeached, prickt with guiltie shame And inward griefe, he fiercely gan approch, Resolv’d to put away that loathly blame, Or dye with honour and desert of fame; And on the haubergh stroke the Prince so sore, That quite disparted all the linked frame, And pierced to the skin, but bit no more; Yet made him twise to reele, that never moov’d afore.

Whereat renfierst with wrath and sharp regret, He stroke so hugely with his borrowd blade, That it empierst the Pagans burganet; And, cleaving the hard steele, did deepe invade Into his head, and cruell passage made Quite through his brayne. He, tombling downe on ground, Breathd out his ghost, which, to th'infernall shade Fast flying, there eternall torment found For all the sinnes wherewith his lewd life did abound.

Which, when his german saw, the stony feare Ran to his hart, and all his sence dismayd, Ne thenceforth life ne corage did appeare; But as a man whom hellish feendes have frayd, Long trembling still he stoode: at last thus sayd; "Traytour, what hast thou doen? How ever may Thy cursed hand so cruelly have swayd Against that knight! Harrow and well away! After so wicked deede why liv'st thou lenger day?"

With that all desperate, as loathing light, And with revenge desyring soone to dye, Assembling all his force and utmost might, With his owne swerd he fierce at him did flye, And strooke, and foynd, and lasht outrageously, Withouten reason or regard. Well knew The Prince, with pacience and sufferaunce sly So hasty heat soone cooled to subdew: Tho, when this breathlesse woxe, that batteil gan renew.

As when a windy tempest bloweth hye, That nothing may withstand his stormy stowre, The clowdes, as thinges affrayd, before him flye; But all so soone as his outrageous powre Is layd, they fiercely then begin to showre; And, as in scorne of his spent stormy spight, Now all attonce their malice forth do poure: So did Prince Arthur beare himselfe in fight, And suffred rash Pyrochles waste his ydle might.

At last, when as the Sarazin perceiv'd How that straunge sword refusd to serve his neede, But when he stroke most strong the dint deceiv'd, He flong it from him; and, devoyd of dreed, Upon him lightly leaping without heed Twixt his two mighty armes engrasped fast, Thinking to overthrowe and downe him tred: But him in strength and skill the Prince surpast, And through his nimble sleight did under him down cast.

Nought booted it the Paynim then to strive; For as a Bittur in the Eagles clawe, That may not hope by flight to scape alive, Still waytes for death with dread and trembling aw; So he, now subject to the victours law, Did not once move, nor upward cast his eye, For vile disdaine and rancour, which did gnaw His hart in twaine with sad melancholy; As one that loathed life, and yet despysd to dye.

But full of princely bounty and great mind, The Conquerour nought cared him to slay; But casting wronges and all revenge behind, More glory thought to give life then decay, And sayd; “Paynim, this is thy dismall day; Yet if thou wilt renounce thy miscreaunce, And my trew liegeman yield thy selfe for ay, Life will I graunt thee for thy valiaunce, And all thy wronges will wipe out of my sovenaunce.”

“Foole!” (sayd the Pagan) “I thy gift defye, But use thy fortune as it doth befall; And say, that I not overcome doe dye, But in despight of life for death doe call.” Wroth was the Prince, and sory yet withall, That he so wilfully refused grace; Yet sith his fate so cruelly did fall, His shining Helmet he gan soone unlace, And left his headlesse body bleeding all the place.

By this Sir Guyon from his traunce awakt, Life having maystered her sencelesse foe, And looking up, whenas his shield he lakt And sword saw not, he wexed wondrous woe; But when the Palmer, whom he long ygoe Had lost, he by him spyde, right glad he grew, And saide; “Deare sir, whom wandring to and fro I long have lackt, I joy thy face to vew: Firme is thy faith, whom daunger never fro me drew.

“But read, what wicked hand hath robbed mee Of my good sword and shield?” The Palmer glad With so fresh hew uprysing him to see, Him answered: “Fayre sonne, be no whit sad For want of weapons; they shall soone be had.” So gan he to discourse the whole debate, Which that straunge knight for him sustained had, And those two Sarazins confounded late, Whose carcases on ground were horribly prostrate.

Which when he heard, and saw the tokens trew, His hart with great affection was

embayd, And to the Prince, bowing with reverence dew As to the patrone of his life, thus sayd; “My Lord, my liege, by whose most gratious ayd I live this day, and see my foes subdewd, What may suffice to be for meede repayd Of so great graces as ye have me shewd, But to be ever bound”—

To whom the Infant thus; “Fayre Sir, what need Good turnes be counted as a servile bond To bind their dooers to receive their meed? Are not all knightes by oath bound to withstond Oppressours powre by armes and puissant hond? Suffise that I have done my dew in place.” So goodly purpose they together fond Of kindnesse and of courteous aggrace; The whiles false Archimage and Atin fled apace.

Canto IX

The house of Temperaunce, in which Doth sober Alma dwell, Besieged of many foes, whom straunger Knightes to flight compell.

Of all Gods workes which doe this worlde adorne, There is no one more faire and excellent Then is mans body, both for powre and forme, Whiles it is kept in sober government; But none then it more fowle and indecent, Distempred through misrule and passions bace; It growes a Monster, and incontinent Doth loose his dignity and native grace: Behold, who list, both one and other in this place.

After the Paynim brethren conquer’d were, The Briton Prince recov’ring his stolne sword, And Guyon his lost shield, they both yfere Forth passed on their way in fayre accord, Till him the Prince with gentle court did bord: “Sir knight, mote I of you this court’sy read, To weet why on your shield, so goodly scord, Beare ye the picture of that Ladies head? Full lively is the semblaunt, though the substance dead.”

“Fayre Sir,” (sayd he) “if in that picture dead Such life ye read, and vertue in vaine shew; What mote ye weene, if the trew lively-head Of that most glorious visage ye did vew: But yf the beauty of her mind ye knew, That is, her bountie, and imperiall powre, Thousand times fairer then her mortall hew, O! how great wonder would

your thoughts devoure, And infinite desire into your spirite poure!

“She is the mighty Queene of Faery, Whose faire retraitt I in my shield doe beare; Shee is the flowre of grace and chastity Throughout the world, renowmed far and neare, My liefe, my liege, my Soveraine, my deare, Whose glory shineth as the morning starre, And with her light the earth enlumines cleare: Far reach her mercies, and her praises farre, As well in state of peace, as puissaunce in warre.”

“Thrise happy man,” (said then the Briton knight) “Whom gracious lott and thy great valiaunce Have made thee soldier of that Princesse bright, Which with her bounty and glad countenaunce Doth blesse her servaunts, and them high advaunce. How may straunge knight hope ever to aspire, By faithfull service and meete amenaunce, Unto such blisse? sufficient were that hire For losse of thousand lives, to die at her desire.”

Said Guyon, “Noble Lord, what meed so great, Or grace of earthly Prince so soveraine, But by your wondrous worth and warlike feat Ye well may hope, and easely attaine? But were your will her sold to entertaine, And numbred be mongst knights of Maydenhed, Great guerdon, well I wote, should you remaine, And in her favor high bee reckoned, As Arthegall and Sophy now beene honored.”

“Certes,” (then said the Prince) “I God avow, That sith I armes and knighthood first did plight, My whole desire hath beene, and yet is now, To serve that Queene with al my powre and might. Seven times the Sunne, with his lamp-burning light, Hath walkte about the world, and I no lesse, Sith of that Goddesse I have sought the sight, Yet no where can her find: such happinesse Heven doth to me envy, and fortune favourlesse.”

“Fortune, the foe of famous chevisaunce, Seldom” (said Guyon) “yields to vertue aide, But in her way throwes mischiefe and mischaunce, Whereby her course is stopt and passage staid: But you, faire Sir, be not herewith dismaid, But constant keepe the way in which ye stand; Which, were it not that I am els delaid With hard

adventure which I have in hand, I labour would to guide you through al Faery land."

"Gramercy Sir," said he; "but mote I weete What straunge adventure doe ye now pursew? Perhaps my succour or advizement meete Mote stead you much your purpose to subdew." Then gan Sir Guyon all the story shew Of false Acrasia, and her wicked wiles; Which to avenge the Palmer him forth drew From Faery court. So talked they, the whiles They wasted had much way, and measurd many miles.

And now faire Phoebus gan decline in haste His weary wagon to the Westerne vale, Whenas they spide a goodly castle, plaste Foreby a river in a pleasaunt dale; Which choosing for that evenings hospitale, They thither marcht: but when they came in sight, And from their sweaty Coursers did avale, They found the gates fast barred long ere night, And every loup fast lockt, as fearing foes despight.

Which when they saw, they weened fowle reproch Was to them doen, their entraunce to forestall, Till that the Squire gan nigher to approch, And wind his horne under the castle wall, That with the noise it shooke as it would fall. Eftsoones forth looked from the highest spire The watch, and lowd unto the knights did call, To weete what they so rudely did require? Who gently answered, They entraunce did desire.

"Fly fly, good knights," (said he) "fly fast away, If that your lives ye love, as meete ye should; Fly fast, and save your selves from neare decay; Here may ye not have entraunce, though we would: We would, and would againe, if that we could; But thousand enemies about us rave, And with long siege us in the castle hould. Seven yeares this wize they us besieged have, And many good knights slaine that have us sought to save."

Thus as he spoke, loe! with outragious cry A thousand villeins rownd about them swarmd Out of the rockes and caves adjoyning nye; Vile caitive wretches, ragged, rude, deformd, All threatning death, all in straunge manner armd; Some with unweldy clubs, some with long speares, Some rusty knifes, some staves in fier

warmd: Sterne was their looke; like wild amazed steares, Staring with hollow eies, and stiffe upstanding heares.

Fiersly at first those knights they did assayle, And drove them to recoile; but when againe They gave fresh charge, their forces gan to fayle, Unhable their encounter to sustaine; For with such puissaunce and impetuous maine Those Champions broke on them, that forst them fly, Like scattered Sheepe, whenas the Shepherds swaine A Lyon and a Tigre doth espye, With greedy pace forth rushing from the forest nye.

A while they fled, but soone retournd againe With greater fury then before was fownd; And evermore their cruell Capitaine Sought with his raskall routs t'enclose them rownd, And, overronne, to tread them to the grownd: But soone the knights with their bright burning blades Broke their rude troupes, and orders did confownd, Hewing and slashing at their idle shades; For though they bodies seem, yet substaunce from them fades.

As when a swarme of Gnats at eventide Out of the fennes of Allan doe arise, Their murmuring small trompetts sownden wide, Whiles in the aire their clustring army flies, That as a cloud doth seeme to dim the skies; Ne man nor beast may rest, or take repast For their sharpe wounds and noyous injuries, Till the fierce Northerne wind with blustring blast Doth blow them quite away, and in the Ocean cast.

Thus when they had that troublous rout disperst, Unto the castle gate they come againe, And entraunce crav'd which was denied erst. Now when report of that their perlous paine, And combrous conflict which they did sustaine, Came to the Ladies eare which there did dwell, Shee forth issewed with a goodly traine Of Squires and Ladies equipaged well, And entertained them right fairely, as befell.

Alma she called was; a virgin bright, That had not yet felt Cupides wanton rage; Yet was shee woo'd or many a gentle knight, And many a Lord of noble parentage, That sought with her to lincke in marriage: For shee was faire as faire mote ever bee, And in the flowre now of her freshest age; Yet full of grace and goodly modestee, That

even heven rejoyced her sweete face to see.

In robe of lilly white she was arayd, That from her shoulder to her heele downe raught; The traine whereof loose far behind her strayd, Braunched with gold and perle most richly wrought, And borne of two faire Damsels which were taught That service well. Her yellow golden heare Was trimly woven and in tresses wrought, Ne other tire she on her head did weare, But crowned with a garland of sweete Rosiere.

Goodly shee entertaind those noble knights, And brought them up into her castle hall; Where gentle court and gracious delight Shee to them made, with mildnesse virginall, Shewing her selfe both wise and liberall. Then, when they rested had a season dew, They her besought of favour speciall Of that faire Castle to affoord them vew: Shee graunted; and, them leading forth, the same did shew.

First she them led up to the Castle wall, That was so high as foe might not it clime, And all so faire and fensible withall; Not built of bricke, ne yet of stone and lime, But of thing like to that Ægyptian slime, Whereof king Nine whilome built Babell towre. But O great pitty! that no lenger time So goodly workemanship should not endure: Soone it must turne to earth; no earthly thing is sure.

The frame thereof seemd partly circulare, And part triangulare; O worke divine! Those two the first and last proportions are; The one imperfect, mortall, fœminine, Th'other immortall, perfect, masculine; And twixt them both a quadrate was the base, Proportiond equally by seven and nine; Nine was the circle sett in heavens place: All which compacted made a goodly Diapase.

Therein two gates were placed seemly well: The one before, by which all in did pas, Did th'other far in workmanship excell; For not of wood, nor of enduring bras, But of more worthy substance fram'd it was: Doubly disparted, it did locke and close, That when it locked none might thorough pas, And when it opened, no man might it close, Still open to their friendes, and closed to their foes.

Of hewen stone the porch was fayrely wrought, Stone more of valew, and more

smooth and fine, Then Jett or Marble far from Ireland brought; Over the which was cast a wandring vine, Enchaced with a wanton yvie twine; And over it a fayre Portcullis hong, Which to the gate directly did incline With comely compasse and compacture strong, Nether unseemly short, nor yet exceeding long.

Within the Barbican a Porter sate, Day and night duely keeping watch and ward; Nor wight nor word mote passe out of the gate, But in good order, and with dew regard; Utterers of secrets he from thence debard, Bablers of folly, and blazers of cryme: His larumbell might lowd and wyde be hard When cause requyrd, but never out of time; Early and late it rong, at evening and at prime.

And rownd about the porch on every syde Twise sixteene warders satt, all armed bright In glistring steele, and strongly fortifyde: Tall yeomen seemed they and of great might, And were enraunged ready still for fight. By them as Alma passed with her guestes, They did obeysaunce, as beseemed right, And then againe retourned to their restes: The Porter eke to her did lout with humble gestes.

Thence she them brought into a stately Hall, Wherein were many tables fayre dispred, And ready dight with drapets festivall, Against the viaundes should be ministred. At th'upper end there sate, yclad in red Downe to the ground, a comely personage, That in his hand a white rod menaged: He Steward was, hight Diet; rype of age, And in demeanure sober, and in counsell sage.

And through the Hall there walked to and fro A jolly yeoman, Marshall of the same, Whose name was Appetite: he did bestow Both guestes and meate, when ever in they came, And knew them how to order without blame, As him the Steward badd. They both attone Did dewty to their Lady, as became; Who, passing by, forth ledd her guestes anone Into the kitchin rowme, ne spard for nicenesse none.

It was a vaut ybuilt for great dispence, With many raunges reard along the wall, And one great chimney, whose long tonnell thence The smoke forth threw. And in the midst of all There placed was a caudron wide and tall Upon a mightie fornace,

burning whott, More whott then Aetn', or flaming Mongiball; For day and night it brent, ne ceased not, So long as any thing it in the caudron gott.

But to delay the heat, least by mischaunce It might breake out and set the whole on fvre, There added was by goodly ordinaunce An huge great payre of bellowes, which did styre Continually, and cooling breath inspyre. About the Caudron many Cookes accoyld With hookes and ladles, as need did requyre; The whyles the viaundes in the vessell boyld They did about their businesse sweat, and sorely toyld.

The maister Cooke was cald Concoction; A carefull man, and full of comely guyse. The kitchin clerke, that hight Digestion, Did order all th'Achates in seemely wise, And set them forth, as well he could devise. The rest had severall offices assynd; Some to remove the scum as it did rise; Others to beare the same away did mynd; And others it to use according to his kynd.

But all the liquour, which was fowle and waste, Not good nor serviceable elles for ought, They in another great rownd vessell plaste, Till by a conduit pipe it thence were brought: And all the rest, that noyous was and nought, By secret wayes, that none might it espy, Was close convaid, and to the backgate brought, That cleped was Port Esquiline, whereby It was avoided quite, and throwne out privily.

Which goodly order and great workmans skill Whenas those knightes beheld, with rare delight And gazing wonder they their mindes did fill; For never had they seene so straunge a sight. Thence backe againe faire Alma led them right, And soone into a goodly Parlour brought, That was with royall arras richly dight, In which was nothing pourtrahed nor wrought; Not wrought nor pourtrahed, but easie to be thought.

And in the midst thereof upon the floure A lovely bevy of faire Ladies sate, Courted of many a jolly Paramoure, The which them did in modest wise amate, And each one sought his Lady to aggrate: And eke emongst them litle Cupid playd His wanton sportes, being retourned late From his fierce warres, and having from him layd His

cruel bow, wherewith he thousands hath dismayd.

Diverse delights they fownd them selves to please; Some song in sweet consort; some laught for joy; Some plaid with strawes; some ydly satt at ease; But other some could not abide to toy; All pleasaunce was to them griefe and annoy: This fround, that faund, the third for shame did blush, Another seemed envious or coy, Another in her teeth did gnaw a rush; But at these straungers presence every one did hush.

Soone as the gracious Alma came in place, They all attonce out of their seates arose, And to her homage made with humble grace: Whom when the knights beheld, they gan dispose Themselves to court, and each a damzell chose. The Prince by chaunce did on a Lady light, That was right faire and fresh as morning rose, But somwhat sad and solemne eke in sight, As if some pensive thought constraind her gentle spright.

In a long purple pall, whose skirt with gold Was fretted all about, she was arayd; And in her hand a Poplar braunch did hold: To whom the Prince in courteous maner sayd; “Gentle Madame, why beene ye thus dismayd, And your faire beautie doe with sadnes spill? Lives any that you hath thus ill apayd? Or doen you love? or doen you lack your will? What ever bee the cause, it sure beseemes you ill.”

“Fayre Sir,” said she, halfe in disdaineful wise, “How is it that this mood in me ye blame, And in your selfe doe not the same advise? Him ill beseemes anothers fault to name, That may unwares bee blotted with the same: Pensive I yeeld I am, and sad in mind, Through great desire of glory and of fame; Ne ought, I weene, are ye therein behynd, That have three years sought one, yet no where can her find.

The Prince was inly moved at her speach, Well weeting trew what she had rashly told; Yet with faire semblaunt sought to hyde the breach, Which chaunge of colour did perforce unfold, Now seeming flaming whott, now stony cold: Tho, turning soft aside, he did inquyre What wight she was that Poplar braunch did hold? It answered was, her name was Prays-desire, That by well doing sought to honour to aspyre.

The whyles the Faery knight did entertayne Another Damsell of that gentle crew, That was right fayre and modest of demayne, But that too oft she chaung'd her native hew. Straunge was her tyre, and all her garment blew, Close rownd about her tuckt with many a plight: Upon her fist the bird, which shonneth vew, And keepes in coverts close from living wight, Did sitt, as yet ashamd how rude Pan did her dight.

So long as Guyon with her commoned, Unto the grownd she cast her modest eye, And ever and anone with rosy red The bashfull blood her snowy cheekes did dye, That her became, as polisht yvory Which cunning Craftesman hand hath overlayd With fayre vermilion or pure Castory. Great wonder had the knight to see the mayd So straungely passioned, and to her gently said:

"Fayre Damzell, seemeth by your troubled cheare, That either me too bold ye weene, this wise You to molest, or other ill to feare That in the secret of your hart close lyes, From whence it doth, as cloud from sea, aryse. If it be I, of pardon I you pray; But if ought else that I mote not devyse, I will, if please you it discure, assay To ease you of that ill, so wisely as I may."

She answerd nought, but more abasht for shame Held downe her head, the whiles her lovely face The flashing blood with blushing did inflame, And the strong passion mard her modest grace, That Guyon mervayld at her uncouth cace; Till Alma him bespake: "Why wonder yee, Faire Sir, at that which ye so much embrace? She is the fountaine of your modestee: You shamefast are, but Shamefastnes it selfe is shee."

Thereat the Elfe did blush in privitee, And turnd his face away; but she the same Dissembled faire, and faynd to oversee. Thus they awhile with court and goodly game Themselves did solace each one with his Dame, Till that great Lady thence away them sought To vew her Castles other wondrous frame: Up to a stately Turret she them brought, Ascending by ten steps of Alabaster wrought.

That Turrets frame most admirable was, Like highest heaven compassed around, And lifted high above this earthly masse, Which it survewd as hils doen lower

ground; But not on ground mote like to this be found: Not that, which antique Cadmus whylome built In Thebes, which Alexander did confound; Nor that proud towre of Troy, though richly guilt, From which young Hectors blood by cruell Greekes was spilt.

The roofe hereof was arched over head, And deckt with flowers and herbars daintily: Two goodly Beacons, set in watches stead, Therein gave light, and flamd continually; For they of living fire most subtilly Were made, and set in silver sockets bright, Cover'd with lids deviz'd of substance sly, That readily they shut and open might. O! who can tell the prayses of that makers might?

Ne can I tell, ne can I stay to tell, This parts great workemanship and wondrous powre, That all this other worldes worke doth excell, And likest is unto that heavenly towre That God hath built for his owne blessed bowre. Therein were divers rowmes, and divers stages; But three the chiefest and of greatest powre, In which there dwelt three honorable sages, The wisest men, I weene, that lived in their ages.

Not he, whom Greece, the Nourse of all good arts, By Phœbus doome the wisest thought alive, Might be compar'd to these by many parts: Nor that sage Pylian syre, which did survive Three ages, such as mortall men contrive, By whose advise old Priams cittie fell, With these in praise of pollicies mote strive. These three in these three rowmes did sondry dwell, And counselled faire Alma how to governe well.

The first of them could things to come foresee; The next could of thinges present best advize; The third things past could keep in memoree: So that no time nor reason could arize, But that the same could one of these comprize. Forthy the first did in the forepart sit, That nought mote hinder his quicke prejudize: He had a sharpe foresight and working wit That never idle was, ne once would rest a whit.

His chamber was dispainted all within With sondry colours, in the which were writ Infinite shapes of thinges dispersed thin; Some such as in the world were never yit, Ne can devized be of mortall wit; Some daily seene and knowen by their names,

Such as in idle fantasies do flit; Infernall Hags, Centaurs, feendes, Hippodames, Apes, Lyons, Aegles, Owles, fooles, lovers, children, Dames.

And all the chamber filled was with flyes Which buzzed all about, and made such sound That they encombred all mens eares and eyes; Like many swarmes of Bees assembled round, After their hives with honny do abound. All those were idle thoughtes and fantasies, Devices, dreames, opinions unsound, Shewes, visions, soothsayes, and prophesies; And all that fained is, as leasings, tales, and lies.

Emongst them all sate he which wonned there, That hight Phantastes by his nature trew, A man of yeares yet fresh, as mote appere, Of swarth complexion, and of crabbed hew, That him full of melancholy did shew; Bent hollow beetle browes, sharpe staring eyes, That mad or foolish seemd: one by his vew Mote deeme him borne with ill-disposed skyes, When oblique Saturne sate in th'house of agonyes.

Whom Alma having shewed to her guestes, Thence brought them to the second rowme, whose wals We painted faire with memorable gestes Of famous Wisards; and with picturals Of Magistrates, of courts, of tribunals, Of commen-wealthes, of states, of pollicy, Of lawes, of judgementes, and of decretals, All artes, all science, all Philosophy, And all that in the world was ay thought wittily.

Of those that rowme was full; and them among There sate a man of ripe and perfect age, Who did them meditate all his life long, That through continuall practise and usage He now was growne right wise and wondrous sage: Great pleasure had those straunger knightes to see His goodly reason and grave personage, That his disciples both desyrd to bee; But Alma thence them led to th'hindmost rowme of three.

That chamber seemed ruinous and old, And therefore was removed far behind, Yet were the wals, that did the same uphold, Right firme and strong, though somwhat they declind; And therein sat an old old man, halfe blind, And all decrepit in his feeble corse, Yet lively vigour rested in his mind, And recompenst them with a better scorse: Weake body wel is chang'd for minds redoubled forse.

This man of infinite remembraunce was, And things foregone through many ages held, Which he recorded still as they did pas, Ne suffred them to perish through long eld, As all things els the which this world doth weld; But laid them up in his immortall scrine, Where they for ever incorrupted dweld: The warres he well remembred of king Nine, Of old Assaracus, and Inachus divine.

The yeares of Nestor nothing were to his, Ne yet Mathusalem, though longest liv'd; For he remembred both their infancis: Ne wonder then, if that he were depriv'd Of native strength now that he them surviv'd. His chamber all was hangd about with rolls And old records from auncient times derivd, Some made in books, some in long parchment scrolls, That were all worm-eaten and full of canker holes.

Amidst them all he in a chaire was sett, Tossing and turning them withouten end; But for he was unhable them to fett, A litle boy did on him still attend To reach, when ever he for ought did send; And oft when thinges were lost, or laid amis, That boy them sought and unto him did lend: Therefore he Anamnestes cleped is; And that old man Eumnestes, by their propertis.

The knightes there entring did him reverence dew, And wondred at his endlesse exercise: Then as they gan his Library to vew, And antique Regesters for to avise, There chaunced to the Princes hand to rize An auncient booke, hight Briton Moniments, That of this lands first conquest did devize, And old division into Regiments, Till it reduced was to one mans governements.

Sir Guyon chaunst eke on another booke, That hight Antiquitee of Faery lond: In which whenas he greedily did looke, Th'ofspring of Elves and Faeryes there he fond, As it delivered was from hond to hond: Whereat they, burning both with fervent fire Their countreys auncestry to understond, Crav'd leave of Alma and that aged sire To read those bookes; who gladly graunted their desire.

Canto X

A chronicle of Briton Kings, From Brute to Uthers rayne. And rolls of Elfin Emperours, Till time of Gloriane.

Who now shall give unto me words and sound Equall unto this haughtie enterprise? Or who shall lend me wings, with which from ground My lowly verse may loftily arise, And lift it selfe unto the highest skies? More ample spirit then hitherto was wount Here needes me, whiles the famous auncestries Of my most dreaded Soveraigne I recount, By which all earthly Princes she doth far surmount.

Ne under Sunne that shines so wide and faire, Whence all that lives does borrow life and light, Lives ought that to her linage may compaire; Which though from earth it be derived right, Yet doth it selfe stretch forth to hevens hight, And all the world with wonder overspred; A labor huge, exceeding far my might. How shall fraile pen, with feare disparaged, Conceive such soveraine glory and great bountyhed?

Argument worthy of Mæonian quill; Or rather worthy of great Phoebus rote, Whereon the ruines of great Ossa hill, And triumphes of Phlegræan Jove, he wrote, That all the Gods admird his lofty note. But if some relish of that hevenly lay His learned daughters would to me report To decke my song withall, I would assay Thy name, O soveraine Queene! to blazon far away.

Thy name, O soveraine Queene! thy realme and race, From this renowmed Prince derived arre, Who mightily upheld that royall mace Which now thou bear’st, to thee descended farre From mighty kings and conquerours in warre, Thy fathers and great Grandfathers of old, Whose noble deeds above the Northerne starre Immortall fame for ever hath enrold; As in that old mans booke they were in order told.

The land which warlike Britons now possesse, And therein have their mighty empire raysd, In antique times was salvage wildernesse, Unpeopled, unmannurd, unprovd, unpraysd; Ne was it Island then, ne was it paysd Amid the ocean waves, ne was it sought Of merchants farre for profits therein praysd; But was all desolate, and of some thought By sea to have bene from the Celticke mayn-land brought.

Ne did it then deserve a name to have, Till that the venturous Mariner that way Learning his ship from those white rocks to save, Which all along the Southerne sea-coast lay Threatning unheedy wrecke and rash decay, For safety that same his sea-marke made, And namd it Albion: But later day, Finding in it fit ports for fishers trade, Gan more the same frequent, and further to invade.

But far in land a salvage nation dwelt Of hideous Giaunts, and halfe beastly men, That never tasted grace, nor goodnes felt; But wild like beastes lurking in loathsome den, And flying fast as Roebucke through the fen, All naked without shame or care of cold, By hunting and by spoiling liveden; Of stature huge, and eke of corage bold, That sonnes of men amazd their sternnesse to behold.

But whence they sprong, or how they were begott, Uneath is to assure; uneath to wene That monstrous error, which doth some assott, That Dioclesians fifty daughters shene Into this land by chaunce have driven bene; Where, companing with feends and filthy Sprights Through vaine illusion of their lust unclene, They brought forth Geaunts, and such dreadful wights As far exceeded men in their immeasurd mights.

They held this land, and with their filthinesse Polluted this same gentle soyle long time; That their owne mother loathd their beastlinesse, And gan abhorre her broods unkindly crime, All were they borne of her owne native slime: Until that Brutus, anciently deriv’d From roiall stocke of old Assaracs line, Driven by fatall error here arriv’d, And them of their unjust possession depriv’d.

But ere he had established his throne, And spred his empire to the utmost shore, He fought great batteils with his salvage fone; In which he them defeated evermore, And many Giaunts left on groning flore: That well can witnes yet unto this day The westerne Hogh, besprincled with the gore Of mighty Goëmot, whome in stout fray Corineus conquered, and cruelly did slay.

And eke that ample Pitt, yet far renownd For the large leape which Debon did

compell Coulin to make, being eight lugs of grownd, Into the which retourning backe he fell: But those three monstrous stones doe most excell, Which that huge sonne of hideous Albion, Whose father Hercules in Fraunce did quell, Great Godmer threw, in fierce contention, At bold Canutus; but of him was slaine anon.

In meed of these great conquests by them gott, Corineus had that Province utmost west To him assigned for his worthy lott, Which of his name and memorable gest He called Cornwaile, yet so called best; And Debons shayre was that is Devonshyre: But Canute had his portion from the rest, The which he cald Canutium, for his hyre; Now Cantium, which Kent we comenly inquyre.

Thus Brute this Realme unto his rule subdewd, And raigned long in great felicity, Lov'd of his freends, and of his foes eschewd: He left three sonnes, his famous progeny, Borne of fayre Inogene of Italy; Mongst whom he parted his imperiall state, And Locrine left chiefe Lord of Britany. At last ripe age bad him surrender late His life, and long good fortune, unto finall fate.

Locrine was left the soveraine Lord of all; But Albanact had all the Northerne part, Which of himselfe Albania he did call; And Camber did possesse the Westerne quart, Which Severne now from Logris doth depart: And each his portion peaceably enjoyd, Ne was there outward breach, nor grudge in hart, That once their quiet government annoyd; But each his paynes to others profit still employd.

Untill a nation straunge, with visage swart, And corage fierce that all men did affray, Which through the world then swarmd in every part, And overflowd all countries far away, Like Noyes great flood, with their importune sway, This land invaded with like violence, And did themselves through all the North display: Untill that Locrine for his Realmes defence, Did head against them make and strong munificence.

He them encountred, a confused rout, Foreby the River that whylome was hight The ancient Abus, where with courage stout He them defeated in victorious fight, And chaste so fiercely after fearefull flight, That forst their chiefetain, for his safeties

sake, (Their Chiefetain Humber named was aright,) Unto the mighty streame him to betake, Where he an end of batteill and of life did make.

The king retourned proud of victory, And insolent wox through unwonted ease, That shortly he forgot the jeopardy, Which in his land he lately did appease, And fell to vaine voluptuous disease: He lov'd faire Ladie Estrild, leudly lov'd, Whose wanton pleasures him too much did please, That quite his hart from Guendolene remov'd, From Guendolene his wife, though alwaies faithful prov'd.

The noble daughter of Corinëus Would not endure to bee so vile disdaind, But, gathering force and corage valorous, Encountred him in batteill well ordaind, In which him vanquisht she to fly constraind: But she so fast pursewd, that him she tooke And threw in bands, where he till death remaind; Als his faire Leman flying through a brooke She overhent, nought moved with her piteous looke;

But both her selfe, and eke her daughter deare, Begotten by her kingly Paramoure, The faire Sabrina, almost dead with feare, She there attached, far from all succoure; The one she slew upon the present floure; But the sad virgin, innocent of all, Adowne the rolling river she did poure, Which of her name now Severne men do call: Such was the end that to disloyall love did fall.

Then for her sonne, which she to Locrin bore, Madan was young, unmeet the rule to sway, In her owne hand the crowne she kept in store, Till ryper years he raught and stronger stay; During which time her powre she did display Through all this Realme, the glory of her sex, And first taught men a woman to obay: But, when her sonne to mans estate did wex, She it surrendred, ne her selfe would lenger vex.

Tho Madan raignd, unworthie of his race, For with all shame that sacred throne he fild. Next Memprise, as unworthy of that place; In which being consorted with Manild, For thirst of single kingdom him he kild. But Ebranck salved both their infamies With noble deedes, and warreyd on Brunchild In Henault, where yet of his victories Brave moniments remaine, which yet that land envies.

An happy man in his first dayes he was, And happy father of faire progeny: For all so many weekes as the yeare has, So many children he did multiply: Of which were twentie sonnes, which did apply Their mindes to prayse and chevalrous desyre: Those germans did subdew all Germany, Of whom it hight; but in the end their Syre With foule repulse from Fraunce was forced to retyre.

Which blott his sonne succeeding in his seat, The second Brute, the second both in name And eke in semblaunce of his puissaunce great, Right well recur'd, and did away that blame With recompence of everlasting fame: He with his victour sword first opened The bowels of wide Fraunce, a forlorne Dame, And taught her first how to be conquered; Since which, with sondrie spoiles she hath been ransacked.

Let Scaldis tell, and let tell Hania, And let the marsh of Esthambruges tell, What colour were their waters that same day, And all the moore twixt Elversham and Dell, With blood of Henalois which therein fell. How oft that day did sad Brunchildis see The greene shield dyde in dolorous vermell? That not Scuith guiridh it mote seeme to bee, But rather y scuith gogh, signe of sad crueltee.

His sonne, king Leill, by fathers labour long, Enjoy'd an heritage of lasting peace, And built Cairleill, and built Cairleon strong. Next Huddibras his realme did not encrease, But taught the land from wearie wars to cease: Whose footsteps Bladud following, in artes Exceld at Athens all the learned preace, From whence he brought them to these salvage parts, And with sweet science mollifide their stubborne harts.

Ensample of his wondrous faculty, Behold the boyling bathes at Cairbadon, Which seeth with secret fire eternally, And in their entrailles, full of quick Brimston, Nourish the flames which they are warmd upon, That to their people wealth they forth do well, And health to every forreyne nation: Yet he at last, contending to excell The reach of men, through flight into fond mischief fell.

Next him king Leyr in happie peace long raynd, But had no issue male him to succeed, But three faire daughters, which were well uptraind In all that seemed fitt

for kingly seed: Mongst whom his realme he equally decreed To have divided. Tho, when feeble age Nigh to his utmost date he saw proceed, He cald his daughters, and with speeches sage Inquyrd, which of them most did love her parentage?

The eldest, Gonorill, gan to protest That she much more than her owne life him lov'd; And Regan greater love to him profest Then all the world, when ever it were proov'd; But Cordeill said she lov'd him as behoov'd: Whose simple answere, wanting colours fayre To paint it forth, him to displeasaunce moov'd, That in his crown he counted her no hayre, But twixt the other twain his kingdom whole did shayre.

So wedded th'one to Maglan king of Scottes, And thother to the king of Cambria, And twixt them shayrd his realme by equall lottes; But without dowre the wise Cordelia Was sent to Aggannip of Celtica. Their aged Syre, thus eased of his crowne, A private life ledd in Albania With Gonorill, long had in great renowne, That nought him griev'd to beene from rule deposed downe.

But true it is that, when the oyle is spent, The light goes out, and weeke is throwne away: So, when he had resignd his regiment, His daughter gan despise his drouping day, And wearie wax of his continuall stay. Tho to his daughter Regan he repayrd, Who him as first well used every way; But when of his departure she despayrd, Her bountie she abated, and his cheare empayrd.

The wretched man gan then avise too late, That love is not where most it is profest; Too truely tryde in his extremest state. At last, resolv'd likewise to prove the rest, He to Cordelia him selfe addrest, Who with entyre affection him receav'd, As for her Syre and king her seemed best; And after all an army strong she leav'd, To war on those which him had of his realme bereav'd,

So to his crowne she him restord againe; In which he dyde, made ripe for death by eld, And after wild it should to her remaine, Who peaceably the same long time did weld, And all mens harts in dew obedience held; Till that her sisters children, woxen

strong, Through proud ambition against her rebeld, And overcommen kept in prison long, Till weary of that wretched life her selfe she hong.

Then gan the bloody brethren both to raine; But fierce Cundah gan shortly to envy His brother Morgan, prickt with proud disdaine To have a pere in part of soverainty; And kindling coles of cruell enmity, Raisd warre, and him in batteill overthrew. Whence as he to those woody hilles did fly, Which hight of him Glamorgan, there him slew: Then did he raigne alone, when he none equall knew.

His sonne Rivall'his dead rowme did supply; In whose sad time blood did from heaven rayne. Next great Gurgustus, then faire Cæcily, In constant peace their kingdomes did contayne. After whom Lago, and Kinmarke did rayne, And Gorbogud, till far in years he grew: Then his ambitious sonnes unto them twayne Arraught the rule, and from their father drew; Stout Ferrex and sterne Porrex him in prison threw.

But O! the greedy thirst of royall crowne, That knowes no kinred, nor regardes no right, Stird Porrex up to put his brother downe; Who, unto him assembling forreigne might, Made warre on him, and fell him selfe in fight: Whose death t'avenge, his mother mercilesse, Most mercilesse of women, Wyden hight, Her other sonne fast sleeping did oppresse, And with most cruell hand him murdred pittilesse.

Here ended Brutus sacred progeny, Which had seven hundred yeares this scepter borne With high renowme and great felicity: The noble braunch from th'antique stocke was torne Through discord, and the roiall throne forlorne. Thenceforth this Realme was into factions rent, Whilest each of Brutus boasted to be borne, That in the end was left no moniment Of Brutus, nor of Britons glorie auncient.

Then up arose a man of matchlesse might, And wondrous wit to menage high affayres, Who, stird with pitty of the stressed plight Of this sad realme, cut into sondry shayres By such as claymd themselves Brutes rightfull hayres, Gathered the Princes of the people loose To taken counsell of their common cares; Who, with his

wisedom won, him streight did choose Their king, and swore him fealty to win or loose.

Then made he head against his enimies, And Ymner slew of Logris miscreate; Then Ruddoc and proud Stater, both allyes, This of Albany newly nominate, And that of Cambry king confirmed late, He overthrew through his owne valiaunce; Whose countries he redus'd to quiet state, And shortly brought to civile governaunce, Now one, which earst were many made through variaunce.

Then made he sacred lawes, which some men say Were unto him reveald in vision; By which he freed the Traveilers high-way, The Churches part, and Ploughmans portion, Restraining stealth and strong extortion, The gratious Numa of great Britany; For till his dayes, the chiefe dominion By strength was wielded without pollicy: Therefore he first wore crowne of gold for dignity.

Donwallo dyde, (for what may live for ay?) And left two sonnes, of pearelesse prowesse both, That sacked Rome too dearely did assay, The recompence of their perjured oth; And ransackt Greece wel tryde, when they were wroth; Besides subjected France and Germany, Which yet their praises speake, all be they loth, And inly tremble at the memory Of Brennus and Belinus, kinges of Britany.

Next them did Gurgiunt, great Belinus sonne, In rule succeede, and eke in fathers praise; He Easterland subdewd, and Denmarke wonne, And of them both did foy and tribute raise, The which was dew in his dead fathers daies. He also gave to fugitives of Spayne, Whom he at sea found wandring from their waies, A seate in Ireland safely to remayne, Which they should hold of him, as subject to Britayne.

After him raigned Guitheline his hayre, The justest man and trewest in his daies, Who had to wife Dame Mertia the fayre, A woman worthy of immortall praise, Which for this Realme found many goodly layes, And wholesome Statutes to her husband brought. Her many deemd to have beene of the Fayes, As was Aegerie that Numa tought: Those yet of her be Mertian lawes both nam'd and thought.

Her sonne Sisillus after her did rayne; And then Kimarus; and then Danius: Next whom Morindus did the crowne sustayne; Who, had he not with wrath outrageous And cruell rancour dim'd his valorous And mightie deedes, should matched have the best: As well in that same field victorious Against the forreine Morands he exprest; Yet lives his memorie, though carcas sleepe in rest.

Five sonnes he left, begotten of one wife, All which successively by turnes did rayne: First Gorboman, a man of vertuous life; Next Archigald, who for his proud disdayne Deposed was from princedome soverayne, And pitteous Elidure put in his sted; Who shortly it to him restord agayne, Till by his death he it recovered: But Peridure and Vigent him disthronized.

In wretched prison long he did remaine, Till they outraigned had their utmost date, And then therein reseized was againe, And ruled long with honorable state, Till he surrendered Realme and life to fate. Then all the sonnes of these five brethren raynd By dew successe, and all their Nephewes late; Even thrise eleven descents the crowne retaynd, Till aged Hely by dew heritage it gaynd.

He had two sonnes, whose eldest, called Lud, Left of his life most famous memory, And endlesse moniments of his great good: The ruin'd wals he did reædifye Of Troynovant, gainst force of enimy, And built that gate which of his name is hight, By which he lyes entombed solemnly. He left two sonnes, too young to rule aright, Androgeus and Tenantius, pictures of his might.

Whilst they were young, Cassibalane, their Eme, Was by the people chosen in their sted, Who on him tooke the roiall Diademe, And goodly well long time it governed; Till the prowde Romanes him disquieted, And warlike Cæsar, tempted with the name Of this sweet Island never conquered, And envying the Britons blazed fame, (O hideous hunger of dominion!) hither came.

Yet twise they were repulsed backe againe, And twise renforst backe to their ships to fly; The whiles with blood they all the shore did staine, And the gray Ocean into

purple dy: Ne had they footing found at last, perdie, Had not Androgeus, false to native soyle, And envious of Uncles soveraintie, Betrayd his countrey unto forreine spoyle. Nought els but treason from the first this land did foyle.

So by him Cæsar got the victory, Through great bloodshed and many a sad assay, In which himselfe was charged heavily Of hardy Nennius, whom he yet did slay, But lost his sword, yet to be seene this day. Thenceforth this land was tributarie made T'ambitious Rome, and did their rule obay, Till Arthur all that reckoning defrayd: Yet oft the Briton kings against them strongly swayd.

Next him Tenantius raignd; them Kimbeline, What time th'eternall Lord in fleshly slime Enwombed was, from wretched Adams line To purge away the guilt of sinfull crime. O joyous memorie of happy time, That heavenly grace so plenteously displayd! (O too high ditty for my simple rime!) Soone after this the Romanes him warrayd; For that their tribute he refusd to let be payd.

Good Claudius, that next was Emperour, An army brought, and with him batteile fought, In which the king was by a Treachetour Disguised slaine, ere any thereof thought: Yet ceased not the bloody fight for ought; For Arvirage his brothers place supplyde Both in his armes and crowne, and by that draught Did drive the Romanes to the weaker syde, That they to peace agreed. So all was pacifyde.

Was never king more highly magnifide, Nor dredd of Romanes, then was Arvirage; For which the Emperour to him allide His daughter Genuiss' in marriage: Yet shortly he renounst the vassallage Of Rome againe, who hither hastly sent Vespasian, that with great spoile and rage Forwasted all, till Genuissa gent Persuaded him to ceasse, and her lord to relent.

He dide; and him succeeded Marius, Who joy'd his dayes in great tranquillity. Then Coyll; and after him good Lucius, That first received Christianity, The sacred pledge of Christes Evangely. Yet true it is, that long before that day Hither came Joseph of Arimathy, Who brought with him the holy grayle, they say, And preacht the truth;

but since it greatly did decay.

This good king shortly without issew dide, Whereof great trouble in the kingdome grew, That did her selfe in sondry parts divide, And with her powre her owne selfe overthrew, Whilest Romanes daily did the weake subdew: Which seeing, stout Bunduca up arose, And taking armes the Britons to her drew; With whom she marched streight against her foes, And them unwares besides the Severne did enclose.

There she with them a cruell batteill tryde, Not with so good successe as shee deserv'd; By reason that the Captaines on her syde, Corrupted by Paulinus, from her swerv'd: Yet, such as were through former flight preserv'd Gathering againe, her Host she did renew, And with fresh corage on the victor servd: But being all defeated, save a few, Rather then fly, or be captiv'd, her selfe she slew.

O famous moniment of womens prayse! Matchable either to Semiramis, Whom antique history so high doth rayse, Or to Hypsiphil', or to Thomiris. Her Host two hundred thousand numbred is; Who, whiles good fortune favoured her might, Triumphed oft against her enemis; And yet, though overcome in haplesse fight, Shee triumphed on death, in enemies despight.

Her reliques Fulgent having gathered, Fought with Severus, and him overthrew, Yet in the chace was slaine of them that fled, So made them victors whome he did subdew. Then gan Carausius tirannize anew, And gainst the Romanes bent their proper powre; But him Allectus treacherously slew, And tooke on him the robe of Emperoure: Nath'lesse the same enjoyed but short happy howre:

For Asclepiodate him overcame, And left inglorious on the vanquisht playne, Without or robe or rag to hide his shame: Then afterwards he in his stead did raigne, But shortly was by Coyll in batteill slaine: Who after long debate, since Lucies tyme, Was of the Britons first crownd Soveraine. Then gan this Realme renew her passed prime: He of his name Coylchester built of stone and lime.

Which when the Romanes heard, they hither sent Constantius, a man of mickle might, With whome king Coyll made an agreëment, And to him gave for wife his daughter bright, Fayre Helena, the fairest living wight; Who in all godly thewes and goodly praise Did far excell, but was most famous hight For skil in Musicke of all in her daies, As well in curious instruments as cunning laies.

Of whom he did great Constantine begett, Who afterward was Emperour of Rome, To which whiles absent he his mind did sett, Octavius here lept into his roome, And it usurped by unrighteous doome: But he his title justifide by might, Slaying Traherne, and having overcome The Romane legion in dreadfull fight. So settled he his kingdome, and confirmd his right:

But wanting yssew male, his daughter deare He gave in wedlocke to Maximian, And him with her made of his kingdome heyre, Who soone by meanes thereof the Empire wan, Till murdred by the freends of Gratian. Then gan the Hunnes and Picts invade this land, .During the raigne of Maximinian; Who dying left none heire them to withstand, But that they overran all parts with easy hand.

The weary Britons, whose war-hable youth Was by Maximian lately ledd away, With wretched miseryes and woefull ruth, Were to those Pagans made an open pray, And daily spectacle of sad decay: Whome Romane warres, which now fowr hundred yeares And more had wasted, could no whit dismay; Til, by consent of Commons and of Peares, They crownd the second Constantine with joyous teares.

Who having oft in batteill vanquished Those spoylefull Picts, and swarming Easterlings, Long time in peace his realme established, Yet oft annoyd with sondry bordragings Of neighbour Scots, and forrein Scatterlings, With which the world did in those dayes abound: Which to outbarre, with painefull pyonings From sea to sea he heapt a mighty mound, Which from Alcluid to Panwelt did that border bownd.

Three sones he dying left, all under age; By meanes whereof their uncle Vortigere Usurpt the crowne during their pupillage; Which th’Infants tutors gathering to feare,

Them closely into Armorick did beare: For dread of whom, and for those Picts annoyes, He sent to Germany straunge aid to reare; From whence eftsoones arrived here three hoyes Of Saxons, whom he for his safety imployes.

Two brethren were their Capitayns, which hight Hengist and Horsus, well approv'd in warre, And both of them men of renowmed might; Who making vantage of their civile jarre, And of those forreyners which came from farre, Grew great, and got large portions of land, That in the Realme ere long they stronger arre Then they which sought at first their helping hand, And Vortiger have forst the kingdome to aband.

But by the helpe of Vortimere his sonne, He is againe unto his rule restord; And Hengist, seeming sad for that was donne, Received is to grace and new accord, Through his faire daughters face and flattring word. Soone after which three hundred Lords he slew Of British blood, all sitting at his bord; Whose dolefull moniments who list to rew, Th'eternall marks of treason may at Stonheng vew.

By this the sonnes of Constantine, which fled, Ambrose and Uther, did ripe yeares attayne, And, here arriving, strongly challenged The crowne which Vortiger did long detayne: Who, flying from his guilt, by them was slayne; And Hengist eke soon brought to shamefull death. Thenceforth Aurelius peaceably did rayne, Till that through poyson stopped was his breath; So now entombed lies at Stoneheng by the heath.

After him Uther, which Pendragon hight, Succeeding—There abruptly it did end,
Without full point, or other Cesure right; As if the rest some wicked hand did rend, Or th'Author selfe could not at least attend To finish it: that so untimely breach The Prince him selfe halfe seemed to offend; Yet secret pleasure did offence empeach, And wonder of antiquity long stopt his speach.

At last, quite ravisht with delight to heare The royall Ofspring of his native land, Cryde out; "Deare countrey! O! how dearely deare Ought thy remembraunce and

perpetuall band Be to thy foster Childe, that from thy hand Did commun breath and nouriture receave. How brutish is it not to understand How much to her we owe, that all us gave; That gave unto us all what ever good we have."

But Guyon all this while his booke did read, Ne yet has ended; for it was a great And ample volume, that doth far exceed My leasure so long leaves here to repeat: It told how first Prometheus did create A man, of many parts from beasts deryv'd, And then stole fire from heven to animate His worke, for which he was by Jove depryv'd Of life him self, and hartstrings of an Aegle ryv'd.

That man so made he called Elfe, to weet Quick, the first author of all Elfin kynd; Who, wandring through the world with wearie feet, Did in the gardins of Adonis fynd A goodly creature, whom he deemd in mynd To be no earthly wight, but either Spright, Or Angell, th'authour of all woman kynd; Therefore a Fay he her according hight, Of whom all Faeryes spring, and fetch their lignage right.

Of these a mighty people shortly grew, And puissant kinges which all the world warrayd, And to them selves all Nations did subdew. The first and eldest, which that scepter swayd, Was Elfin; him all India obayd, And all that now America men call: Next him was noble Elfinan, who laid Cleopolis foundation first of all: But Elfiline enclosd it with a golden wall.

His sonne was Elfinell, who overcame The wicked Gobbelines in bloody field; But Elfant was of most renowmed fame, Who all of Christall did Panthea build: Then Elfar, who two brethren gyauntes kild, The one of which had two heades, th'other three: Then Elfinor, who was in magick skild; He built by art upon the glassy See A bridge of bras, whose sound hevens thunder seem'd to bee.

He left three sonnes, the which in order raynd, And all their Ofspring, in their dew descents; Even seven hundred Princes, which maintaynd With mightie deedes their sondry governments; That were too long their infinite contents Here to record, ne much materiall: Yet should they be most famous moniments, And brave ensample,

both of martiall And civil rule, to kinges and states imperiall.

After all these Elficleos did rayne, The wise Elficleos, in great Majestie, Who mightily that scepter did sustayne, And with rich spoyles and famous victorie Did high advaunce the crowne of Faery: He left two sonnes, of which faire Elferon, The eldest brother, did untimely dy; Whose emptie place the mightie Oberon Doubly supplide, in spousall and dominion.

Great was his power and glorie over all Which, him before, that sacred seate did fill, That yet remaines his wide memoriall. He dying left the fairest Tanaquill, Him to succeede therein, by his last will: Fairer and nobler liveth none this howre, Ne like in grace, ne like in learned skill; Therefore they Glorian call that glorious flowre: Long mayst thou, Glorian, live in glory and great powre!

Beguyld thus with delight of novelties, And naturall desire of countryes state, So long they redd in those antiquities, That how the time was fled they quite forgate; Till gentle Alma, seeing it so late, Perforce their studies broke, and them besought To thinke how supper did them long awaite: So halfe unwilling from their bookes them brought, And fayrely feasted as so noble knightes she ought.

Canto XI

The enimies of Temperaunce Besiege her dwelling place: Prince Arthur them repelles, and fowle Maleger doth deface.

What warre so cruel, or what siege so sore, As that which strong affections doe apply Against the forte of reason evermore, To bring the sowle into captivity? Their force is fiercer through infirmity Of the fraile flesh, relenting to their rage, And exercise most bitter tyranny Upon the partes brought into their bondage: No wretchednesse is like to sinfull vellenage.

But in a body which doth freely yeeld His partes to reasons rule obedient, And letteth her that ought the scepter weeld, All happy peace and goodly government Is

setled there in sure establishment. There Alma, like a virgin Queene most bright, Doth florish in all beautie excellent; And to her guestes doth bounteous banket dight, Attempred goodly well for health and for delight.

Early, before the Morne with cremosin ray The windowes of bright heaven opened had, Through which into the world the dawning day Might looke, that maketh every creature glad, Uprose Sir Guyon, in bright armour clad, And to his purposd journey him prepar'd: With him the Palmer eke in habit sad Him selfe addrest to that adventure hard: So to the rivers syde they both together far'd:

Where them awaited ready at the ford The Ferriman, as Alma had behight, With his well-rigged bote: They goe abord, And he eftsoones gan launch his barke forthright. Ere long they rowed were quite out of sight, And fast the land behynd them fled away. But let them pas, whiles wind and wether right Doe serve their turnes: here I a while must stay, To see a cruell fight doen by the prince this day.

For all so soone as Guyon thence was gon Upon his voyage with his trustie guyde, That wicked band of villeins fresh begon That castle to assaile on every side, And lay strong siege about it far and wyde. So huge and infinite their numbers were, That all the land they under them did hyde; So fowle and ugly, that exceeding feare Their visages imprest when they approched neare.

Them in twelve troupes their Captein did dispart, And round about in fittest steades did place, Where each might best offend his proper part, And his contrary object most deface, As every one seem'd meetest in that cace. Seven of the same against the Castle gate In strong entrenchments he did closely place, Which with incessaunt force and endlesse hate They battred day and night, and entraunce did awate.

The other five five sondry wayes he sett Against the five great Bulwarkes of that pyle, And unto each a Bulwarke did arrett, T'assayle with open force or hidden guyle, In hope thereof to win victorious spoile. They all that charge did fervently apply With greedie malice and importune toyle, And planted there their huge

artillery, With which they dayly made most dreadfull battery.

The first troupe was a monstrous rablement Of fowle misshapen wightes, of which some were Headed like Owles, with beckes uncomely bent; Others like Dogs; others like Gryphons dreare; And some had wings, and some had clawes to teare: And every one of them had Lynces eyes; And every one did bow and arrowes beare. All those were lawlesse lustes, currupt envyes, And covetous aspects, all cruell enimyes.

Those same against the bulwarke of the Sight Did lay strong siege and battailous assault, Ne once did yield it respitt day nor night; But soone as Titan gan his head exault, And soone againe as he his light withhault, Their wicked engins they against it bent; That is, each thing by which the eyes may fault: But two then all more huge and violent, Beautie and Money, they that Bulwarke sorely rent.

The second Bulwarke was the Hearing sence, Gainst which the second troupe assignment makes; Deformed creatures, in straunge difference, Some having heads like Harts, some like to Snakes, Some like wilde Bores late rouzd out of the brakes: Slaunderous reproches, and fowle infamies, Leasinges, backbytinges, and vainglorious crakes, Bad counsels, prayses, and false flatteries: All those against that fort did bend their batteries.

Likewise that same third Fort, that is the Smell, Of that third troupe was cruelly assayd; Whose hideous shapes were like to feendes of hell, Some like to houndes, some like to Apes, dismayd, Some like to Puttockes, all in plumes arayd; All shap't according their conditions: For by those ugly formes weren pourtrayd Foolish delights, and fond abusions, Which doe that sence besiege with light illusions.

And that fourth band which cruell battry bent Against the fourth Bulwarke, that is the Taste, Was, as the rest, a grysie rablement; Some mouth'd like greedy Oystriges; some faste Like loathly Toades; some fashioned in the waste Like swine: for so deformd is luxury, Surfeat, misdiet, and unthriftie waste, Vaine feastes, and ydle superfluity: All those this sences Fort assayle incessantly.

But the fift troupe, most horrible of hew And ferce of force, is dreadfull to report; For some like Snailes, some did like spyders shew, And some like ugly Urchins thick and short: Cruelly they assayed that fift Fort, Armed with dartes of sensuall Delight, With stinges of carnall lust, and strong effort Of feeling pleasures, with which day and night Against that same fift bulwarke they continued fight.

Thus these twelve troupes with dreadfull puissaunce Against that Castle restlesse siege did lay, And evermore their hideous Ordinaunce Upon the Bulwarkes cruelly did play, That now it gan to threaten neare decay: And evermore their wicked Capitayn Provoked them the breaches to assay, Sometimes with threats, sometimes with hope of gayn, Which by the ransack of that peece they should attayn.

On th'other syde, th'assieged Castles ward Their stedfast stonds did mightily maintaine, And many bold repulse and many hard Achievement wrought, with perill and with payne, That goodly frame from ruine to sustaine: And those two brethren Gyauntes did defend The walles so stoutly with their sturdie mayne, That never entraunce any durst pretend, But they to direfull death their groning ghosts did send.

The noble Virgin, Ladie of the Place, Was much dismayed with that dreadful sight, For never was she in so evill cace, Till that the Prince, seeing her wofull plight, Gan her recomfort from so sad affright, Offring his service, and his dearest life For her defence against that Carle to fight, Which was their chiefe and th'authour of that strife: She him remercied as the Patrone of her life.

Eftsoones himselfe in glitterand armes he dight, And his well proved weapons to him hent; So, taking courteous congé, he behight Those gates to be unbar'd, and forth he went. Fayre mote he thee, the prowest and most gent, That ever brandished bright steele on hye! Whome soone as that unruly rablement With his gay Squyre issewing did espye, They reard a most outrageous dreadfull yelling cry:

And therewithall attonce at him let fly Their fluttring arrowes, thicke as flakes of snow, And round about him flocke impetuously, Like a great water flood, that

tombling low Fom the high mountaines, threates to overflow With suddein fury all the fertile playne, And the sad husbandmans long hope doth throw Adowne the streame, and all his vowes make vayne; Nor bounds nor banks his headlong ruine may sustayne.

Upon his shield their heaped hayle he bore, And with his sword disperst the raskall flockes, Which fled asonder, and him fell before; As withered leaves drop from their dryed stockes, When the wroth Western wind does reave their locks: And underneath him his courageous steed, The fierce Spumador, trode them downe like docks; The fierce Spumador, borne of heavenly seed, Such as Laomedon of Phœbus race did breed.

Which suddeine horrour and confused cry When as their Capteine heard, in haste he yode The cause to weet, and fault to remedy: Upon a Tygre swift and fierce he rode, That as the winde ran underneath his lode, Whiles his long legs nigh raught unto the ground. Full large he was of limbe, and shoulders brode, But of such subtile substance and unsound, That like a ghost he seem’d whose grave-clothes were unbound:

And in his hand a bended bow was seene, And many arrowes under his right side, All deadly daungerous, all cruell keene, Headed with flint, and fethers bloody dide; Such as the Indians in their quivers hide: Those could he well direct and streight as line, And bid them strike the marke which he had eyde; Ne was there salve, ne was there medicine, That mote recure their wounds; so inly they did tine.

As pale and wan as ashes was his looke, His body leane and meagre as a rake, And skin all withered like a dryed rooke; Thereto as cold and drery as a snake, That seemd to tremble evermore and quake; All in a canvas thin he was bedight, And girded with a belt of twisted brake: Upon his head he wore an Helmet light, Made of a dead mans skull, that seemd a ghastly sight.

Maleger was his name; and after him There follow’d fast at hand two wicked Hags,

With hoary lockes all loose, and visage grim; Their feet unshod, their bodies wrapt in rags, And both as swift on foot as chased Stags; And yet the one her other legge had lame, Which with a staffe, all full of litle snags, She did support, and Impotence her name: But th'other was Impatience, arm'd with raging flame.

Soone as the Carle from far the Prince espyde Glistring in armes and warlike ornament, His Beast he felly prickt on either syde, And his mischievous bow full readie bent, With which at him a cruell shaft he sent: But he was warie, and it warded well Upon his shield, that it no further went, But to the ground the idle quarrell fell: Then he another and another did expell.

Which to prevent the Prince his mortall speare Soone to him raught, and fierce at him did ride, To be avenged of that shot whyleare; But he was not so hardy to abide That bitter stownd, but turning quicke aside His light-foot beast, fled fast away for feare: Whom to poursue the Infant after hide So fast as his good Courser could him beare; But labour lost it was to weene approch him neare.

For as the winged wind his Tigre fled, That vew of eye could scarse him overtake, Ne scarse his feet on ground were seene to tred: Through hils and dales he speedy way did make, Ne hedge ne ditch his readie passage brake; And in his flight the villein turn'd his face (As wonts the Tartar by the Caspian lake, Whenas the Russian him in fight does chace) Unto his Tygres taile, and shot at him apace.

Apace he shot, and yet he fled apace, Still as the greedy knight nigh to him drew; And oftentimes he would relent his pace, That him his foe more fiercely should poursew: But when his uncouth manner he did vew, He gan avize to follow him no more, But keepe his standing, and his shaftes eschew, Untill he quite had spent his perlous store, And then assayle him fresh, ere he could shift for more.

But that lame Hag, still as abroad he strew His wicked arrowes, gathered them againe, And to him brought, fresh batteill to renew; Which he espying cast her to restraine From yielding succour to that cursed Swaine, And her attaching thought

her hands to tye; But soone as him dismounted on the plaine That other Hag did far away espye Binding her sister, she to him ran hastily;

And catching hold of him, as downe he lent, Him backeward overthrew, and downe him stayd With their rude handes and gryesly graplement; Till that the villein, comming to their ayd, Upon him fell, and lode upon him layd: Full litle wanted but he had him slaine, And of the battell balefull end had made, Had not his gentle Squire beheld his paine, And commen to his reskew, ere his bitter bane.

So greatest and most glorious thing on ground May often need the helpe of weaker hand; So feeble is mans state, and life unsound, That in assuraunce it may never stand, Till it dissolved be from earthly band. Proofe be thou, Prince, the prowest man alyve, And noblest borne of all in Britayne land; Yet thee fierce Fortune did so nearely drive, That, had not grace thee blest, thou shouldest not survive.

The Squyre arriving fiercely in his armes Snatcht first the one, and then the other Jade, His chiefest letts and authors of his harmes, And them perforce withheld with threatned blade, Least that his Lord they should behinde invade; The whiles the Prince, prickt with reprochful shame, As one awakte out of long slombring shade, Revivyng thought of glory and of fame, United all his powres to purge him selfe from blame.

Like as a fire, the which in hollow cave Hath long bene underkept and down suppresst, With murmurous disdayne doth inly rave, And grudge in so streight prison to be prest, At last breakes forth with furious unrest, And strives to mount unto his native seat; All that did earst it hinder and molest, Yt now devoures with flames and scorching heat, And carries into smoake with rage and horror great.

So mightely the Briton Prince him rouzd Out of his holde, and broke his caytive bands; And as a Beare, whom angry curres have touzd, Having off-shakt them and escapt their hands, Becomes more fell, and all that him withstands Treads down and overthrowes. Now had the Carle Alighted from his Tigre, and his hands Discharged

of his bow and deadly quar'le, To seize upon his foe flatt lying on the marle.

Which now him turnd to disavantage deare; For neither can he fly, nor other harme, But trust unto his strength and manhood meare, Sith now he is far from his monstrous swarme, And of his weapons did himselfe disarme. The knight, yet wrothfull for his late disgrace, Fiercely advaunst his valorous right arme, And him so sore smott with his yron mace, That groveling to the ground he fell, and fild his place.

Wel weened hee that field was then his owne, And all his labor brought to happy end; When suddein up the villeine overthrowne Out of his swowne arose, fresh to contend, And gan him selfe to second battaill bend, As hurt he had not beene. Thereby there lay An huge great stone, which stood upon one end, And had not bene removed many a day; Some land-marke seemd to bee, or signe of sundry way:

The same he snatcht, and with exceeding sway Threw at his foe, who was right well aware To shonne the engin of his meant decay; It booted not to thinke that throw to beare, But grownd he gave, and lightly lept areare: Eft fierce retourning, as a faulcon fayre, That once hath failed of her souse full neare, Remounts againe into the open ayre, And unto better fortune doth her selfe prepayre.

So brave retourning, with his brandisht blade He to the Carle him selfe agayn addrest, And strooke at him so sternely, that he made An open passage through his riven brest, That halfe the steele behind his backe did rest; Which drawing backe, he looked evermore When the hart blood should gush out of his chest, Or his dead corse should fall upon the flore; But his dead corse upon the flore fell nathemore.

Ne drop of blood appeared shed to bee, All were the wownd so wide and wonderous That through his carcas one might playnly see. Halfe in amaze with horror hideous, And halfe in rage to be deluded thus, Again through both the sides he strooke him quight, That made his spright to grone full piteous; Yet nathemore forth fled his groning spright, But freshly, as at first, prepard himselfe to fight.

Thereat he smitten was with great affright, And trembling terror did his hart apall; Ne wist he what to thinke of that same sight, Ne what to say, ne what to doe at all: He doubted least it were some magicall Illusion that did beguile his sense, Or wandring ghost that wanted funerall, Or aery spirite under false pretence, Or hellish feend raysd up through divelish science.

His wonder far exceeded reasons reach, That he began to doubt his dazeled sight, And oft of error did himselfe appeach: Flesh without blood, a person without spright, Wounds without hurt, a body without might, That could doe harme, yet could not harmed bee, That could not die, yet seemd a mortall wight, That was most strong in most infirmitee; Like did he never heare, like did he never see.

Awhile he stood in this astonishment, Yet would he not for all his great dismay Give over to effect his first intent, And th'utmost meanes of victory assay, Or th'utmost yssew of his owne decay. His owne good sword Mordure, that never fayld At need till now, he lightly threw away, And his bright shield that nought him now avayld; And with his naked hands him forcibly assayld.

Twixt his two mighty armes him up he snatcht, And crusht his carcas so against his brest, That the disdainfull sowle he thence dispatcht, And th'ydle breath all utterly exprest. Tho, when he felt him dead, adowne he kest The lumpish corse unto the sencelesse grownd; Adowne he kest it with so puissant wrest, That backe againe it did alofte rebownd, And gave against his mother earth a gronefull sownd.

As when Joves harnesse-bearing Bird from hye Stoupes at a flying heron with proud disdayne, The stone-dead quarrey falls so forciblye, That yt rebownds against the lowly playne, A second fall redoubling backe agayne. Then thought the Prince all peril sure was past, And that he victor onely did remayne; No sooner thought, then that the Carle as fast Gan heap huge strokes on him, as ere he down was cast.

Nigh his wits end then woxe th'amazed knight, And thought his labor lost, and travell vayne, Against this lifelesse shadow so to fight: Yet life he saw, and felt his

mighty mayne, That, whiles he marveild still, did still him payne; Forthy he gan some other wayes advize, How to take life from that dead-living swayne, Whom still he marked freshly to arize From th'earth, and from her womb new spirits to reprize.

He then remembred well, that had bene sayd, How th'Earth his mother was, and first him bore; She eke, so often as his life decayd, Did life with usury to him restore, And reysd him up much stronger then before, So soone as he unto her wombe did fall: Therefore to grownd he would him cast no more, Ne him committ to grave terrestriall, But beare him farre from hope of succour usuall.

Tho up he caught him twixt his puissant hands, And having scruzd out of his carrion corse The lothfull life, now loosd from sinfull bands, Upon his shoulders carried him perforse Above three furlongs, taking his full course Until he came unto a standing lake; Him thereinto he threw without remorse, Ne stird, till hope of life did him forsake: So end of that Carles dayes and his owne paynes did make.

Which when those wicked Hags from far did spye, Like two mad dogs they ran about the lands, And th'one of them with dreadfull yelling crye, Throwing away her broken chaines and bands, And having quencht her burning fier-brands, Hedlong her selfe did cast into that lake; But Impotence with her owne wilfull hands One of Malegers cursed darts did take, So ryv'd her trembling hart, and wicked end did make.

Thus now alone he conquerour remaines: Tho, cumming to his Squyre that kept his steed, Thought to have mounted; but his feeble vaines Him faild thereto, and served not his need, Through losse of blood which from his wounds did bleed, That he began to faint, and life decay: But his good Squyre, him helping up with speed, With stedfast hand upon his horse did stay, And led him to the Castle by the beaten way.

Where many Groomes and Squyres ready were To take him from his steed full tenderly; And eke the fayrest Alma mett him there With balme, and wine, and costly spicery, To comfort him in his infirmity. Eftesoones shee causd him up to be

convayd, And of his armes despoyled easily In sumptuous bed shee made him to be layd; And al the while his wounds were dressing by him stayd.

Canto XII

Guyon, by Palmers governaunce, Passing through perils great, Doth overthrow the Bowre of blisse, And Acrasie defeat.

Now ginnes that goodly frame of Temperaunce Fayrely to rise, and her adorned hed To pricke of highest prayse forth to advaunce, Formerly grounded and fast setteled On firme foundation of true bountyhed: And this brave knight, that for this vertue fightes, Now comes to point of that same perilous sted, Where Pleasure dwelles in sensuall delights, Mongst thousand dangers, and ten thousand Magick mights.

Two dayes now in that sea he sayled has, Ne ever land beheld, ne living wight, Ne ought save perill still as he did pas: Tho, when appeared the third Morrow bright Upon the waves to spred her trembling light, An hideous roring far away they heard, That all their sences filled with affright; And streight they saw the raging surges reard Up to the skyes, that them of drowning made affeard.

Said then the Boteman, “Palmer, stere aright, And keepe an even course; for yonder way We needes must pas (God doe us well acquight!) That is the Gulfe of Greedinesse, they say, That deepe engorgeth all this worldes pray; Which having swallowd up excessively, He soone in vomit up againe doth lay, And belcheth forth his superfluity, That all the seas for feare doe seeme away to fly.

“On thother syde an hideous Rocke is pight Of mightie Magnes stone, whose craggie clift Depending from on high, dreadfull to sight, Over the waves his rugged armes doth lift, And threatneth downe to throw his ragged rift On whoso cometh nigh; yet nigh it drawes All passengers, that none from it can shift: For, whiles they fly that Gulfes devouring jawes, They on this rock are rent, and sunck in helples wawes.”

Forward they passe, and strongly he them rowes, Untill they nigh unto that Gulfe arryve, Where streame more violent and greedy growes: Then he with all his puisaunce doth stryve To strike his oares, and mightily doth drive The hollow vessell through the threatfull wave; Which, gaping wide to swallow them alyve In th'huge abysse of his engulfing grave, Doth rore at them in vaine, and with great terrour rave.

They, passing by, that grisely mouth did see Sucking the seas into his entralles deepe, That seemd more horrible then hell to bee, Or that darke dreadfull hole of Tartare steepe Through which the damned ghosts doen often creepe Backe to the world, bad livers to torment: But nought that falles into this direfull deepe Ne that approcheth nigh the wyde descent, May backe retourne, but is condemned to be drent.

On thother side they saw that perilous Rocke, Threatning it selfe on them to ruinate, On whose sharp cliftes the ribs of vessels broke; And shivered ships, which had beene wrecked late, Yet stuck with carkases exanimate Of such, as having all their substance spent In wanton joyes and lustes intemperate, Did afterwards make shipwrack violent Both of their life and fame, for ever fowly blent.

Forthy this hight The Rocke of vile Reproch, A daungerous and detestable place, To which nor fish nor fowle did once approch, But yelling Meawes, with Seagulles hoars and bace, And Cormoyraunts, with birds of ravenous race, Which still sat waiting on that wastfull clift For spoile of wretches, whose unhappy cace, After lost credit and consumed thrift, At last them driven hath to this despairefull drift.

The Palmer, seeing them in safetie past, Thus saide; "Behold th'ensamples in our sights Of lustfull luxurie and thriftlesse wast. What now is left of miserable wightes, Which spent their looser daies in leud delightes, But shame and sad reproch, here to be red By these rent reliques, speaking their ill plightes? Let all that live hereby be counselled To shunne Rocke of Reproch, and it as death to dred!"

So forth they rowed; and that Ferryman With his stiffe oares did brush the sea so strong, That the hoare waters from his frigot ran, And the light bubles daunced all along, Whiles the salt brine out of the billowes sprong. At last fer off they many Islandes spy On every side floting the floodes emong: Then said the knight; “Lo! I the land descry; Therefore, old Syre, thy course doe thereunto apply.”

“That may not bee,” said then the Ferryman, “Least wee unweeting hap to be fordonne; For those same Islands, seeming now and than, Are not firme land, nor any certein wonne, But stragling plots which to and fro doe ronne In the wide waters: therefore are they hight The Wandring Islands. Therefore doe them shonne; For they have ofte drawne many a wandring wight Into most deadly daunger and distressed plight.

“Yet well they seeme to him, that farre doth vew Both faire and fruitfull, and the grownd dispred With grassy greene of delectable hew; And the tall trees with leaves appareled Are deckt with blossoms dyde in white and red, That mote the passengers thereto allure; But whosoever once hath fastened His foot thereon, may never it recure, But wandreth evermore uncertein and unsure.

“As th’Isle of Delos whylome, men report, Amid th’Aegæan sea long time did stray, Ne made for shipping any certeine port, Till that Latona traveiling that way, Flying from Junoes wrath and hard assay, Of her fayre twins was there delivered, Which afterwards did rule the night and day: Thenceforth it firmely was established, And for Apolloes temple highly herried.”

They to him hearken, as beseemeth meete, And passe on forward: so their way does ly, That one of those same Islands, which doe fleet In the wide sea, they needes must passen by, Which seemd so sweet and pleasaunt to the eye, That it would tempt a man to touchen there: Upon the banck they sitting did espy A daintie damsell dressing of her heare, By whom a little skippet floting did appeare.

She, them espying, loud to them can call, Bidding them nigher draw unto the shore,

For she had cause to busie them withall; And therewith lowdly laught: But nathemore Would they once turne, but kept on as afore: Which when she saw, she left her lockes undight, And running to her boat withouten ore, From the departing land it launched light, And after them did drive with all her power and might.

Whom overtaking, she in merry sort Them gan to bord, and purpose diversly; Now faining dalliaunce and wanton sport, Now throwing forth lewd wordes immodestly; Till that the Palmer gan full bitterly Her to rebuke for being loose and light: Which not abiding, but more scornfully Scoffing at him that did her justly wite, She turnd her bote about, and from them rowed quite.

That was the wanton Phædria, which late Did ferry him over the Idle lake: Whom nought regarding they kept on their gate, And all her vaine allurements did forsake; When them the wary Boteman thus bespake: “Here now behoveth us well to avyse, And of our safety good heede to take; For here before a perlous passage lyes, Where many Mermayds haunt making false melodies:

“But by the way there is a great Quicksand, And a whirlepoole of hidden jeopardy; Therefore, Sir Palmer, keepe an even hand, For twixt them both the narrow way doth ly.” Scarse had he saide, when hard at hand they spy That quicksand nigh with water covered; But by the checked wave they did descry It plaine, and by the sea discoloured: It called was the quickesand of Unthriftyhed.

They, passing by, a goodly Ship did see Laden from far with precious merchandize, And bravely furnished as ship might bee, Which through great disaventure, or mesprize, Her selfe had ronne into that hazardize; Whose mariners and merchants with much toyle Labour’d in vaine to have recur’d their prize, And the rich wares to save from pitteous spoyle; But neither toyle nor traveill might her backe recoyle.

On th’other side they see that perilous Poole, That called was the Whirlepoole of decay; In which full many had with haplesse doole Beene suncke, of whom no memorie did stay: Whose circled waters rapt with whirling sway, Like to a restlesse

wheele, still ronning round, Did covet, as they passed by that way, To draw their bote within the utmost bound Of his wide Labyrinth, and then to have them dround.

But th'heedful Boteman strongly forth did stretch His brawnie armes, and all his bodie straine, That th'utmost sandy breach they shortly fetch, Whiles the dredd daunger does behind remaine. Suddeine they see from midst of all the Maine The surging waters like a mountaine rise, And the great sea, puft up with proud disdaine, To swell above the measure of his guise, As threatning to devoure all that his powre despise.

The waves come rolling, and the billowes rore Outragiously, as they enraged were, Or wrathfull Neptune did them drive before His whirling charet for exceeding feare; For not one puffe of winde there did appeare, That all the three thereat woxe much afrayd, Unweeting what such horrour straunge did reare. Eftsoones they saw an hideous hoast arrayd Of huge Sea monsters, such as living sence dismayd:

Most ugly shapes and horrible aspects, Such as Dame Nature selfe mote feare to see, Or shame that ever should so fowle defects From her most cunning hand escaped bee; All dreadfull pourtraicts of deformitee: Spring-headed Hydres; and sea-shouldring Whales; Great whirlpooles which all fishes make to flee; Bright Scolopendraes arm'd with silver scales; Mighty Monoceroses with immeasured tayles.

The dreadful Fish that hath deserv'd the name Of Death, and like him lookes in dreadfull hew; The griesly Wasserman, that makes his game The flying ships with swiftnes to pursew; The horrible Sea-satyre, that doth shew His fearefull face in time of greatest storme; Huge Ziffius, whom Mariners eschew No lesse then rockes, (as travellers informe) And greedy Rosmarines with visages deforme.

All these, and thousand thousands many more, And more deformed Monsters thousand fold, With dreadfull noise and hollow rombling rore Came rushing, in the fomy waves enrold, Which seem'd to fly for feare them to behold. Ne wonder, if

these did the knight appall; For all that here on earth we dreadfull hold, Be but as bugs to fearen babes withall, Compared to the creatures in the seas entrall.

“Feare nought,” then saide the Palmer well aviz’d, “For these same Monsters are not these in deed, But are into these fearefull shapes disguiz’d By that same wicked witch, to worke us dreed, And draw from on this journey to proceed.” Tho lifting up his vertuous staffe on hye, He smote the sea, which calmed was with speed, And all that dreadfull Armie fast gan flye Into great Tethys bosome, where they hidden lye.

Quit from that danger forth their course they kept; And as they went they heard a ruefull cry Of one that wayld and pittifully wept, That through the sea resounding plaints did fly: At last they in an Island did espy A seemely Maiden sitting by the shore, That with great sorrow and sad agony Seemed some great misfortune to deplore, And lowd to them for succour called evermore.

Which Guyon hearing streight his Palmer bad To stere the bote towards that dolefull Mayd, That he might know and ease her sorrow sad; Who, him avizing better, to him sayd: “Faire Sir, be not displeasd if disobayd: For ill it were to hearken to her cry, For she is inly nothing ill apayd; But onely womanish fine forgery, Your stubborne hart t’affect with fraile infirmity.

“To which when she your courage hath inclind Through foolish pitty, then her guilefull bayt She will embosome deeper in your mind, And for your ruine at the last awayt.” The Knight was ruled, and the Boteman strayt Held on his course with stayed stedfastnesse, Ne ever shroncke, ne ever sought to bayt His tyred armes for toylesome wearinesse, But with his oares did sweepe the watry wildernesse.

And now they nigh approched to the sted Whereas those Mermayds dwelt: it was a still And calmy bay, on th’one side sheltered With the brode shadow of an hoarie hill; On th’other side an high rocke toured still, That twixt them both a pleasaunt port they made, And did like an halfe Theatre fulfill: There those five sisters had continuall trade, And usd to bath themselves in that deceiptfull shade.

They were faire Ladies, till they fondly striv’d With th’Heliconian maides for maystery; Of whom they, overcomen, were depriv’d Of their proud beautie, and th’one moyity Transformd to fish for their bold surquedry; But th’upper halfe their hew retayned still, And their sweet skill in wonted melody; Which ever after they abusd to ill, T’allure weake traveillers, whom gotten they did kill.

So now to Guyon, as he passed by, Their pleasaunt tunes they sweetly thus applyde: “O thou fayre sonne of gentle Faery, That art in mightie armes most magnifyde Above all knights that ever batteill tryde, O! turne thy rudder hitherward awhile: Here may thy storme-bett vessell safely ryde; This is the Port of rest from troublous toyle, The worldes sweet In from paine and wearisome turmoyle.”

With that the rolling sea, resounding soft, In his big base them fitly answered; And on the rocke the waves breaking aloft A solemne Meane unto them measured; The whiles sweet Zephyrus lowd whisteled His treble, a straunge kinde of harmony, Which Guyons senses softly tickeled, That he the boteman bad row easily, And let him heare some part of their rare melody.

But him the Palmer from that vanity With temperate advice discounselled, That they it past, and shortly gan descry The land to which their course they leveled; When suddeinly a grosse fog overspred With his dull vapour all that desert has, And heavens chearefull face enveloped, That all things one, and one as nothing was, And this great Universe seemd one confused mas.

Thereat they greatly were dismayd, ne wist How to direct theyr way in darkenes wide, But feard to wander in that wastefull mist, For tombling into mischiefe unespide: Worse is the daunger hidden then descride. Suddeinly an innumerable flight Of harmefull fowles about them fluttering cride, And with their wicked wings them ofte did smight, And sore annoyed, groping in that griesly night.

Even all the nation of unfortunate And fatall birds about them flocked were, Such as by nature men abhorre and hate; The ill-faste Owle, deaths dreadfull messengere;

The hoars Night-raven, trump of dolefull drere; The lether-winged Batt, dayes enimy; The ruefull Strich, still waiting on the bere; The whistler shrill, that whoso heares doth dy; The hellish Harpyes, prophets of sad destiny.

All those, and all that els does horror breed, About them flew, and fild their sayles with feare: Yet stayd they not, but forward did proceed, Whiles th'one did row, and th'other stifly steare; Till that at last the weather gan to cleare, And the faire land it selfe did playnly sheow. Said then the Palmer; "Lo! where does appeare The sacred soile where all our perills grow. Therfore, Sir knight, your ready arms about you throw."

He hearkned, and his armes about him tooke, The whiles the nimble bote so well her sped, That with her crooked keele the land she strooke: Then forth the noble Guyon sallied, And his sage Palmer that him governed; But th'other by his bote behind did stay. They marched fayrly forth, of nought ydred, Both firmely armd for every hard assay, With constancy and care, gainst daunger and dismay.

Ere long they heard an hideous bellowing Of many beasts, that roard outrageously, As if that hungers poynt or Venus sting Had them enraged with fell surquedry: Yet nought they feard, but past on hardily, Untill they came in vew of those wilde beasts, Who all attonce, gaping full greedily, And rearing fercely their upstaring crests, Ran towards to devoure those unexpected guests.

But soone as they approcht with deadly threat, The Palmer over them his staffe upheld, His mighty staffe, that could all charmes defeat. Eftesoones their stubborne corages were queld, And high advaunced crests downe meekely feld; Instead of fraying, they them selves did feare, And trembled as them passing they beheld: Such wondrous powre did in that staffe appeare, All monsters to subdew to him that did it beare.

Of that same wood it fram'd was cunningly, Of which Caduceus whilome was made, Caduceus, the rod of Mercury, With which he wonts the Stygian realmes

invade Through ghastly horror and eternall shade: Th’infernall feends with it he can asswage, And Orcus tame, whome nothing can persuade, And rule the Furyes when they most doe rage. Such vertue in his staffe had eke this Palmer sage.

Thence passing forth, they shortly doe arryve Whereas the Bowre of Blisse was situate; A place pickt out by choyce of best alyve, That natures worke by art can imitate: In which whatever in this worldly state Is sweete and pleasing unto living sense, Or that may dayntest fantasy aggrate, Was poured forth with plentifull dispence, And made there to abound with lavish affluence.

Goodly it was enclosed rownd about, As well their entred guestes to keep within, As those unruly beasts to hold without; Yet was the fence thereof but weake and thin: Nought feard theyr force that fortilage to win, But wisedomes powre, and temperaunces might, By which the mightiest things efforced bin: And eke the gate was wrought of substaunce light, Rather for pleasure then for battery or fight.

Yt framed was of precious yvory, That seemd a worke of admirable witt; And therein all the famous history Of Jason and Medæa was ywritt; Her mighty charmes, her furious loving fitt; His goodly conquest of the golden fleece, His raised fayth, and love too lightly flitt; The wondred Argo, which in venturous peece First through the Euxine seas bore all the flowr of Greece.

Ye might have seene the frothy billowes fry Under the ship as thorough them she went, That seemd the waves were into yvory, Or yvory into the waves were sent; And otherwhere the snowy substaunce sprent With vermell, like the boyes blood therein shed, A piteous spectacle did represent; And otherwhiles, with gold besprinkeled, Yt seemd thenchaunted flame which did Crëusa wed.

All this and more might in that goodly gate Be red, that ever open stood to all Which thither came; but in the Porch there sate A comely personage of stature tall, And semblaunce pleasing, more then naturall, That traveilers to him seemd to entize: His looser garment to the ground did fall, And flew about his heeles in wanton wize, Not

fitt for speedy pace, or manly exercize.

They in that place him Genius did call: Not that celestiall powre, to whom the care Of life, and generation of all That lives, perteines in charge particulare, Who wondrous things concerning our welfare, And straunge phantomes doth lett us ofte foresee, And ofte of secret ill bids us beware: That is our Selfe, whom though we do not see, Yet each doth in him selfe it well perceive to bee.

Therefore a God him sage Antiquity Did wisely make, and good Agdistes call; But this same was to that quite contrary, The foe of life, that good envyes to all, That secretly doth us procure to fall Through guilefull semblants which he makes us see: He of this Gardin had the governall, And Pleasures porter was devizd to bee, Holding a staffe in hand for mere formalitee.

With diverse flowres he daintily was deckt, And strowed rownd about; and by his side A mighty Mazer bowle of wine was sett, As if it had to him bene sacrifide, Wherewith all newcome guests he gratyfide: So did he eke Sir Guyon passing by; But he his ydle curtesie defide, And overthrew his bowle disdainfully, And broke his staffe with which he charmed semblants sly.

Thus being entred, they behold arownd A large and spacious plaine, on every side Strowed with pleasauns; whose fayre grassy grownd Mantled with greene, and goodly beautifide With all the ornaments of Floraes pride, Wherewith her mother Art, as halfe in scorne Of niggard Nature, like a pompous bride Did decke her, and too lavishly adorne, When forth from virgin bowre she comes in th'early morne.

Therewith the Heavens alwayes joviall Lookte on them lovely, still in stedfast state, Ne suffred storme nor frost on them to fall, Their tender buds or leaves to violate; Nor scorching heat, nor cold intemperate, T'afflict the creatures which therein did dwell; But the milde ayre with season moderate Gently attempred, and disposd so well, That still it breathed forth sweet spirit and holesom smell:

More sweet and holesome then the pleasaunt hill Of Rhodope, on which the Nimphe

that bore A gyaunt babe herselfe for griefe did kill; Or the Thessalian Tempe, where of yore Fayre Daphne Phœbus hart with love did gqre; Or Ida, where the Gods lov'd to repayre, When ever they their heavenly bowres forlore; Or sweet Parnasse, the haunt of Muses fayre; Or Eden selfe, if ought with Eden mote compayre.

Much wondred Guyon at the fayre aspect Of that sweet place, yet suffred no delight To sincke into his sence, nor mind affect, But passed forth, and lookt still forward right, Brydling his will and maystering his might, Till that he came unto another gate; No gate, but like one, being goodly dight With bowes and braunches, which did broad dilate Their clasping armes in wanton wreathings intricate:

So fashioned a Porch with rare device, Archt over head with an embracing vine, Whose bounches hanging downe seemd to entice All passers by to taste their lushious wine, And did them selves into their hands incline, As freely offering to be gathered; Some deepe empurpled as the Hyacine, Some as the Rubine laughing sweetely red, Some like faire Emeraudes, not yet well ripened.

And them amongst some were of burnisht gold, So made by art to beautify the rest, Which did themselves emongst the leaves enfold, As lurking from the vew of covetous guest, That the weake boughes, with so rich load opprest Did bow adowne as overburdened. Under that Porch a comely dame did rest Clad in fayre weedes but fowle disordered, And garments loose that seemd unmeet for womanhed.

In her left hand a Cup of gold she held, And with her right the riper fruit did reach, Whose sappy liquor, that with fulnesse sweld, Into her cup she scruzd with daintie breach Of her fine fingers, without fowle empeach, That so faire winepresse made the wine more sweet: Thereof she usd to give to drinke to each, Whom passing by she happened to meet: It was her guise all Straungers goodly so to greet.

So she to Guyon offred it to tast, Who, taking it out of her tender hond, The cup to ground did violently cast, That all in peeces it was broken fond, And with the liquor stained all the lond: Whereat Excesse exceedingly was wroth, Yet no'te the same

amend, ne yet withstond, But suffered him to passe, all were she loth; Who, nought regarding her displeasure, forward goth.

There the most daintie Paradise on ground It selfe doth offer to his sober eye, In which all pleasures plenteously abownd, And none does others happinesse envye; The painted flowres, the trees upshooting hye, The dales for shade, the hilles for breathing space, The trembling groves, the christall running by, And, that which all faire workes doth most aggrace, The art which all that wrought appeared in no place.

One would have thought, (so cunningly the rude And scorned partes were mingled with the fine) That nature had for wantonesse ensude Art, and that Art at nature did repine; So striving each th'other to undermine, Each did the others worke more beautify; So differing both in willes agreed in fine: So all agreed, through sweete diversity, This Gardin to adorne with all variety.

And in the midst of all a fountaine stood, Of richest substance that on earth might bee, So pure and shiny that the silver flood Through every channell running one might see; Most goodly it with curious ymageree Was overwrought, and shapes of naked boyes, Of which some seemd with lively jollitee To fly about, playing their wanton toyes, Whylest others did them selves embay in liquid joyes.

And over all of purest gold was spred A trayle of yvie in his native hew; For the rich metall was so coloured, That wight who did not well avis'd it vew Would surely deeme it to bee yvie trew: Low his lascivious armes adown did creepe, That themselves dipping in the silver dew Their fleecy flowres they fearefully did steepe, Which drops of Christall seemd for wantones to weep.

Infinit streames continually did well Out of this fountaine, sweet and faire to see, The which into an ample laver fell, And shortly grew into so great quantitie, That like a litle lake it seemd to bee; Whose depth exceeded not three cubits hight, That through the waves one might the bottom see, All pav'd beneath with Jaspar shining bright, That seemd the fountaine in that sea did sayle upright.

And all the margent round about was sett With shady Laurell trees, thence to defend The sunny beames which on the billowes bett, And those which therein bathed mote offend. As Guyon hapned by the same to wend, Two naked Damzelles he therein espyde, Which therein bathing seemed to contend And wrestle wantonly, ne car'd to hyde Their dainty partes from vew of any which them eyd.

Sometimes the one would lift the other quight Above the waters, and then downe againe Her plong, as over-maystered by might, Where both awhile would covered remaine, And each the other from to rise restraine; The whiles their snowy limbes, as through a vele, So through the christall waves appeared plaine: Then suddeinly both would themselves unhele, And th'amarous sweet spoiles to greedy eyes revele.

As that faire Starre, the messenger of morne, His deawy face out of the sea doth reare; Or as the Cyprian goddesse, newly borne Of th'Ocean's fruitfull froth, did first appeare: Such seemed they, and so their yellow heare Christalline humor dropped downe apace. Whom such when Guyon saw, he drew him neare, And somewhat gan relent his earnest pace; His stubborne brest gan secret pleasaunce to embrace.

The wanton Maidens, him espying, stood Gazing awhile at his unwonted guise; Then th'one her selfe low ducked in the flood, Abasht that her a straunger did avise; But thother rather higher did arise, And her two lilly paps aloft displayd, And all that might his melting hart entyse To her delights she unto him bewrayd; The rest hidd underneath him more desirous made.

With that the other likewise up arose, And her faire lockes, which formerly were bown'd Up in one knott, she low adowne did lose, Which flowing low and thick her cloth'd arownd, And th'yvorie in golden mantle gownd: So that faire spectacle from him was reft, Yet that which reft it no lesse faire was fownd. So hidd in lockes and waves from lookers theft, Nought but her lovely face she for his looking left.

Withall she laughed, and she blusht withall, That blushing to her laughter gave more

grace, And laughter to her blushing, as did fall. Now when they spyde the knight to slacke his pace Them to behold, and in his sparkling face The secrete signes of kindled lust appeare, Their wanton meriments they did encreace, And to him beckned to approch more neare, And shewd him many sights that corage cold could reare.

On which when gazing him the Palmer saw, He much rebukt those wandring eyes of his, And counseld well him forward thence did draw. Now are they come nigh to the Bowre of blis, Of her fond favorites so nam'd amis, When thus the Palmer: "Now, Sir, well avise; For here the end of all our traveill is: Here wonnes Acrasia, whom we must surprise, Els she will slip away, and all our drift despise."

Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound, Of all that mote delight a daintie eare, Such as attonce might not on living ground, Save in this Paradise, be heard elsewhere: Right hard it was for wight which did it heare, To read what manner musicke that mote bee; For all that pleasing is to living eare Was there consorted in one harmonee; Birdes, voices, instruments, windes, waters, all agree

The joyous birdes, shrouded in chearefull shade Their notes unto the voice attempred sweet; Th'Angelicall soft trembling voyces made To th'instruments divine respondence meet; The silver sounding instruments did meet With the base murmure of the waters fall; The waters fall with difference discreet, Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call; The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.

There, whence that Musick seemed heard to bee, Was the faire Witch her selfe now solacing With a new Lover, whom, through sorceree And witchcraft, she from farre did thither bring: There she had him now laid aslombering In secret shade after long wanton joyes; Whilst round about them pleasauntly did sing Many faire Ladies and lascivious boyes, That ever mixt their song with light licentious toyes.

And all that while right over him she hong With her false eyes fast fixed in his sight, As seeking medicine whence she was stong, Or greedily depasturing delight; And

oft inclining downe, with kisses light For feare of waking him, his lips bedewd, And through his humid eyes did sucke his spright, Quite molten into lust and pleasure lewd; Wherewith she sighed soft, as if his case she rewd.

The whiles some one did chaunt this lovely lay: Ah! see, whoso fayre thing doest faine to see, In springing flowre the image of thy day. Ah! see the Virgin Rose, how sweetly shee Doth first peepe foorth with bashfull modestee, That fairer seemes the lesse ye see her may. Lo! see soone after how more bold and free Her bared bosome she doth broad display; Lo! see soone after how she fades and falls away.

So passeth, in the passing of a day, Of mortall life the leafe, the bud, the flowre; Ne more doth florish after first decay, That earst was sought to deck both bed and bowre Of many a lady', and many a Paramowre. Gather therefore the Rose whilest yet is prime, For soone comes age that will her pride deflowre; Gather the Rose of love whilest yet is time, Whilest loving thou mayst loved be with equall crime.

He ceast; and then gan all the quire of birdes Their diverse notes t'attune unto his lay, As in approvaunce of his pleasing wordes. The constant payre heard all that he did say, Yet swarved not, but kept their forward way Through many covert groves and thickets close, In which they creeping did at last display That wanton Lady with her lover lose, Whose sleepie head she in her lap did soft dispose.

Upon a bed of Roses she was layd, As faint through heat, or dight to pleasant sin; And was arayd, or rather disarayd, All in a vele of silke and silver thin, That hid no whit her alablaster skin, But rather shewd more white, if more might bee: More subtile web Arachne cannot spin; Nor the fine nets, which oft we woven see Of scorched deaw, do not in th'ayre more lightly flee.

Her snowy brest was bare to ready spoyle Of hungry eies, which n'ote therewith be fild; And yet, through languour of her late sweet toyle, Few drops, more cleare then Nectar, forth distild, That like pure Orient perles adowne it trild; And her faire eyes, sweet smyling in delight, Moystened their fierie beames, with which she thrild Fraile

harts, yet quenched not; like starry light, Which, sparckling on the silent waves, does seeme more bright.

The young man, sleeping by her, seemd to be Some goodly swayne of honorable place, That certes it great pitty was to see Him his nobility so fowle deface: A sweet regard and amiable grace, Mixed with manly sternesse, did appeare, Yet sleeping, in his well proportiond face; And on his tender lips the downy heare Did now but freshly spring, and silken blossoms beare.

His warlike Armes, the ydle instruments Of sleeping praise, were hong upon a tree; And his crave shield, full of old moniments, Was fowly ras't, that none the signes might see: Ne for them ne for honour cared hee, Ne ought that did to his advauncement tend; But in lewd loves, and wastfull luxuree, His dayes, his goods, his bodie, he did spend: O horrible enchantment, that him so did blend!

The noble Elfe and carefull Palmer drew So nigh them, minding nought but lustfull game That suddein forth they on them rusht, and threw A subtile net, which only for that same The skilfull Palmer formally did frame: So held them under fast; the whiles the rest Fled all away for feare of fowler shame. The faire Enchauntresse, so unwares opprest, Tryde all her arts and all her sleights thence out to wrest.

And eke her lover strove, but all in vaine; For that same net so cunningly was wound, That neither guile nor force might it distraine. They tooke them both, and both them strongly bound In captive bandes, which there they readie found: But her in chaines of adamant he tyde; For nothing else might keepe her safe and sound: But Verdant (so he hight) he soone untyde, And counsell sage in steed thereof to him applyde.

But all those pleasaunt bowres, and Pallace brave, Guyon broke downe with rigour pittilesse; Ne ought their goodly workmanship might save Them from the tempest of his wrathfulnesse, But that their blisse he turn'd to balefulnesse. Their groves he feld; their gardins did deface; Their arbers spoyle; their Cabinets suppresse; Their

banket houses burne; their buildings race; And, of the fayrest late, now made the fowlest place.

Then led they her away, and eke that knight They with them led, both sorrowfull and sad. The way they came, the same retourn'd they right, Till they arrived where they lately had Charm'd those wild-beasts that rag'd with furie mad; Which, now awaking, fierce at them gan fly, As in their mistresse reskew whom they lad; But them the Palmer soone did pacify. Then Guyon askt, what meant those beastes which there did ly?

Sayd he; "These seeming beasts are men indeed, Whom this Enchauntresse hath transformed thus; Whylome her lovers, which her lustes did feed, Now turned into figures hideous, According to their mindes like monstruous." "Sad end," (quoth he) "of life intemperate, And mourneful meed of joyes delicious! But, Palmer, if it mote thee so aggrate, Let them returned be unto their former state."

Streight way he with his vertuous staffe them strooke, And streight of beastes they comely men became; Yet being men they did unmanly looke, And stared ghastly; some for inward shame, And some for wrath to see their captive Dame: But one above the rest in speciall That had an hog beene late, hight Grylle by name, Repyned greatly, and did him miscall That had from hoggish forme him brought to naturall.

Saide Guyon; "See the mind of beastly man, That hath so soone forgot the excellence Of his creation, when he life began, That now he chooseth with vile difference To be a beast, and lacke intelligence!" To whom the Palmer thus: "The donghill kinde Delightes in filth and fowle incontinence: Let Gryll be Gryll, and have his hoggish minde; But let us hence depart whilest wether serves and winde."

Book III

The Legend of Britomartis, or of Chastity

It falles me here to write of Chastity, The fayrest vertue, far above the rest: For

which what needes me fetch from Faery Forreine ensamples it to have exprest? Sith it is shrined in my Soveraines brest, And formd so lively in each perfect part, That to all Ladies, which have it profest, Need but behold the pourtraict of her hart; If pourtrayd it might bee by any living art.

But living art may not least part expresse, Nor life-resembling pencill it can paynt: All were it Zeuxis or Praxiteles, His dædale hand would faile and greatly faynt, And her perfections with his error taynt: Ne Poets witt, that passeth Painter farre In picturing the parts of beauty daynt, So hard a workemanship adventure darre, For fear, through want of words, her excellence to marre.

How then shall I, Apprentice to the skill That whilome in divinest wits did rayne, Presume so high to stretch mine humble quill? Yet now my luckelesse lott doth me constrayne Hereto perforce. But, O dredd Soverayne! Thus farforth pardon, sith that choicest witt Cannot your glorious pourtraict figure playne, That I in colourd showes may shadow itt, And antique praises unto present persons fitt.

But if in living colours, and right hew, Thy selfe thou covet to see pictured, Who can it doe more lively, or more trew, Then that sweete verse, with Nectar sprinckeled, In which a gracious servaunt pictured His Cynthia, his heavens fayrest light? That with his melting sweetnes ravished, And with the wonder of her beames bright, My sences lulled are in slomber of delight.

But let that same delitious Poet lend A little leave unto a rusticke Muse To sing his mistresse prayse; and let him mend, If ought amis her liking may abuse: Ne let his fayrest Cynthia refuse In mirrours more then one her selfe to see; But either Gloriana let her chuse, Or in Belphœbe fashioned to bee; In th’one her rule, in th’other her rare chastitee.

Canto I

Guyon encountreth Britomart: Fayre Florimell is chaced: Duessaes traines and

Malecastaes Champions are defaced.

The famous Briton Prince and Faerie knight, After long wayes and perilous paines endur'd, Having their weary limbes to perfect plight Restord, and sory wounds right well recur'd, Of the faire Alma greatly were procur'd To make there lenger sojourne and abode; But when thereto they might not be allur'd, From seeking praise and deeds of armes abrode, They courteous congé tooke, and forth together yode.

But the captiv'd Acrasia he sent, Because of traveill long, a nigher way, With a strong gard, all reskew to prevent, And her to Faery court safe to convay; That her for witnes of his hard assay Unto his Faery Queene he might present: But he him selfe betooke another way, To make more triall of his hardiment, And seek adventures as he with Prince Arthure went.

Long so they traveiled through wastefull wayes, Where daungers dwelt, and perils most did wonne, To hunt for glory and renowmed prayse. Full many Countreyes they did overronne, From the uprising to the setting Sunne, And many hard adventures did atchieve; Of all the which they honour ever wonne, Seeking the weake oppressed to relieve, And to recover right for such as wrong did grieve.

At last, as through an open plaine they yode, They spide a knight that towards pricked fayre; And him beside an aged Squire there rode, That seemd to couch under his shield three-square, As if that age badd him that burden spare, And yield it those that stouter could it wield. He them espying gan him selfe prepare, And on his arme addresse his goodly shield That bore a Lion passant in a golden field.

Which seeing, good Sir Guyon deare besought The Prince of grace to let him ronne that turne. He graunted: then the Faery quickly raught His poynant speare, and sharply gan to spurne His fomy steed, whose fiery feete did burne The verdant gras as he thereon did tread; Ne did the other backe his foote returne, But fiercely forward came withouten dread, And bent his dreadful speare against the others head.

They beene ymett, and both theyr points arriv'd; But Guyon drove so furious and

fell, That seemd both shield and plate it would have riv'd; Nathelesse it bore his foe not from his sell, But made him stagger, as he were not well: But Guyon selfe, ere well he was aware, Nigh a speares length behind his crouper fell; Yet in his fall so well him selfe he bare, That mischievous mischaunce his life and limbs did spare.

Great shame and sorrow of that fall he tooke; For never yet, sith warlike armes he bore And shivering speare in bloody field first shooke, He fownd him selfe dishonored so sore. Ah! gentlest knight, that ever armor bore, Let not thee grieve dismounted to have beene, And brought to grownd that never wast before; For not thy fault, but secret powre unseene: That speare enchaunted was which layd thee on the greene.

But weenedst thou what wight thee overthrew, Much greater griefe and shamefuller regrett For thy hard fortune then thou wouldst renew, That of a single damzell thou wert mett On equall plaine, and there so hard besett: Even the famous Britomart it was, Whom straunge adventure did from Britayne sett To seeke her lover (love far sought alas!) Whose image shee had seene in Venus looking glas.

Full of disdainefull wrath he fierce uprose For to revenge that fowle reprochefull shame, And snatching his bright sword began to close With her on foot, and stoutly forward came: Dye rather would he then endure that same. Which when his Palmer saw, he gan to feare His toward perill, and untoward blame, Which by that new rencounter he should reare; For death sate on the point of that enchaunted speare:

And hasting towards him gan fayre perswade Not to provoke misfortune, nor to weene His speares default to mend with cruell blade; For by his mightie Science he had seene The secrete vertue of that weapon keene, That mortall puissaunce mote not withstond. Nothing on earth mote alwaies happy beene: Great hazard were it, and adventure fond, To loose long gotten honour with one evill hond.

By such good meanes he him discounselled From prosecuting his revenging rage: And eke the Prince like treaty handeled, His wrathfull will with reason to aswage;

And laid the blame, not to his carriage, But to his starting steed that swarv'd asyde, And to the ill purveyaunce of his page, That had his furnitures not firmely tyde. So is his angry corage fayrly pacifyde.

Thus reconcilement was betweene them knitt, Through goodly temperaunce and affection chaste; And either vowd with all their power and witt To let not others honour be defaste Of friend or foe, who ever it embaste; Ne armes to beare against the others syde: In which accord the Prince was also plaste, And with that golden chaine of concord tyde. So goodly all agreed they forth yfere did ryde.

O! goodly usage of those antique tymes, In which the sword was servaunt unto right; When not for malice and contentious crymes, But all for prayse, and proofe of manly might, The martiall brood accustomed to fight: Then honour was the meed of victory, And yet the vanquished had no despight. Let later age that noble use envy, Vyle rancor to avoid and cruel surquedry.

Long they thus travelled in friendly wise, Through countreyes waste, and eke well edifyde, Seeking adventures hard, to exercise Their puissaunce, whylome full dernly tryde. At length they came into a forest wyde, Whose hideous horror and sad trembling sownd, Full griesly seemd: Therein they long did ryde, Yet tract of living creature none they fownd, Save Beares, Lyons, and Buls, which romed them arownd.

All suddenly out of the thickest brush, Upon a milkwhite Palfrey all alone, A goodly Lady did foreby them rush, Whose face did seeme as cleare as Christall stone, And eke, through feare, as white as whales bone: Her garments all were wrought of beaten gold, And all her steed with tinsell trappings shone, Which fledd so fast that nothing mote him hold, And scarse them leasure gave her passing to behold.

Still as she fledd her eye she backward threw, As fearing evill that poursewd her fast; And her faire yellow locks behind her flew, Loosely disperst with puff of every blast: All as a blazing starre doth farre outcast His hearie beames, and flaming

lockes dispredd, At sight whereof the people stand aghast; But the sage wisard telles, as he has redd, That it importunes death and dolefull dreryhedd.

So as they gazed after her a whyle, Lo! where a griesly foster forth did rush, Breathing out beastly lust her to defyle: His tyreling Jade he fiersly forth did push Through thicke and thin, both over banck and bush, In hope her to attaine by hooke or crooke, That from his gory sydes the blood did gush. Large were his limbes, and terrible his looke, And in his clownish hand a sharp bore speare he shooke.

Which outrage when those gentle knights did see, Full of great envy and fell gealosy They stayd not to avise who first should bee, But all spurd after, fast as they mote fly, To reskew her from shamefull villany. The Prince and Guyon equally bylive Her selfe pursewd, in hope to win thereby Most goodly meede, the fairest Dame alive: But after the foule foster Timias did strive.

The whiles faire Britomart, whose constant mind Would not so lightly follow beauties chace, Ne reckt of Ladies Love, did stay behynd, And them awayted there a certaine space, To weet if they would turne backe to that place; But when she saw them gone she forward went, As lay her journey, through that perlous Pace, With stedfast corage and stout hardiment: Ne evil thing she feard, ne evill thing she ment.

At last, as nigh out of the wood she came, A stately Castle far away she spyde, To which her steps directly she did frame. That Castle was most goodly edifyde, And plaste for pleasure nigh that forrest syde: But faire before the gate a spatious playne, Mantled with greene, it selfe did spredden wyde, On which she saw six knights, that did darrayne Fiers battaill against one with cruell might and mayne.

Mainely they all attonce upon him laid, And sore beset on every side arownd, That nigh he breathlesse grew, yet nought dismaid, Ne ever to them yielded foot of grownd, All had he lost much blood through many a wownd, But stoutly dealt his blowes, and every way, To which he turned in his wrathfull stownd, Made them recoile, and fly from dredd decay, That none of all the six before him durst assay.

Like dastard Curres that, having at a bay The salvage beast embost in wearie chace, Dare not adventure on the stubborne pray, Ne byte before, but rome from place to place To get a snatch when turned is his face. In such distresse and doubtfull jeopardy When Britomart him saw, she ran apace Unto his reskew, and with earnest cry Badd those same six forbeare that single enimy.

But to her cry they list not lenden care, Ne ought the more their mightie strokes surceasse. But gathering him rownd about more neare, Their direfull rancour rather did encreasse; Till that she rushing through the thickest preasse Perforce disparted their compacted gyre, And soone compeld to hearken unto peace. Tho gan she myldly of them to inquyre The cause of their dissention and outrageous yre.

Whereto that single knight did answere frame: “These six would me enforce by oddes of might To chaunge my liefe, and love another Dame; That death me liefer were then such despight, So unto wrong to yield my wrested right: For I love one, the truest one on grownd, Ne list me chaunge; she th’Errant Damzell hight; For whose deare sake full many a bitter stownd I have endurd, and tasted many a bloody wownd.”

“Certes,” (said she) “then beene ye sixe to blame, To weene your wrong by force to justify; For knight to leave his Lady were great shame That faithfull is, and better were to dy, All losse is lesse, and lesse the infamy, Then losse of love to him that loves but one: Ne may love be compeld by maistery; For soone as maistery comes sweet Love anone Taketh his nimble winges, and soone away is gone.”

Then spake one of those six; “There dwelleth here Within this castle wall a Lady fayre, Whose soveraine beautie hath no living pere; Thereto so bounteous and so debonayre, That never any mote with her compayre: She hath ordaind this law, which we approve, That every knight which doth this way repayre, In case he have no Lady nor no love, Shall doe unto her service, never to remove:

“But if he have a Lady or a Love, Then must he her forgoe with fowle defame, Or

els with us by dint of sword approve, That she is fairer then our fairest Dame; As did this knight, before ye hither came." "Perdy," (said Britomart) "the choise is hard; But what reward had he that overcame?" "He should advaunced bee to high regard," (Said they) "and have our Ladies love for his reward.

"Therefore aread, Sir, if thou have a love." "Love have I sure," (quoth she) "but Lady none; Yet will I not fro mine own love remove, Ne to your Lady will I service done, But wreake your wronges wrought to this knight alone, And prove his cause." With that, her mortall speare She mightily aventred towards one, And downe him smot ere well aware he weare; Then to the next she rode, and downe the next did beare.

Ne did she stay till three on ground she layd That none of them himselfe could reare againe: The fourth was by that other knight dismayd, All were he wearie of his former paine; That now there do but two of six remaine, Which two did yield before she did them smight. "Ah!" (said she then) "now may ye all see plaine, That truth is strong, and trew love most of might, That for his trusty servaunts doth so strongly fight."

"Too well we see," (saide they) "and prove too well Our faulty weakenes, and your matchlesse might: Forthy, faire Sir, yours be the Damozell, Which by her owne law to your lot doth light, And we your liegemen faith unto you plight." So underneath her feet their swords they mard, And, after, her besought, well as they might, To enter in and reape the dew reward. She graunted; and then in they all together far'd.

Long were it to describe the goodly frame, And stately port of Castle Joyeous, (For so that Castle hight by commun name) Where they were entertaynd with courteous And comely glee of many gratious Faire Ladies, and of many a gentle knight, Who, through a Chamber long and spacious, Eftsoones them brought unto their Ladies sight, That of them cleeped was the Lady of Delight.

But for to tell the sumptuous aray Of that great chamber, should be labour lost; For

living wit, I weene, cannot display The royall riches and exceeding cost Of every pillour and of every post, Which all of purest bullion framed were, And with great perles and pretious stones embost; That the bright glister of their beames cleare Did sparckle forth great light, and glorious did appeare.

These stranger knights, through passing, forth were led Into an inner rowme, whose royaltee And rich purveyance might uneath be red; Mote Princes place be seeme so deckt to bee. Which stately manner whenas they did see, The image of superfluous riotize, Exceeding much the state of meane degree, They greatly wondred whence so sumptuous guize Might be maintaynd, and each gan diversely devize.

The wals were round about appareiled With costly clothes of Arras and of Toure; In which with cunning hand was pourtrahed The love of Venus and her Paramoure, The fayre Adonis, turned to a flowre; A worke of rare device and wondrous wit. First did it shew the bitter balefull stowre, Which her essayd with many a fervent fit, When first her tender hart was with his beautie smit.

Then with what sleights and sweet allurements she Entyst the Boy, as well that art she knew, And wooed him her Paramoure to bee; Now making girlonds of each flowre that grew, To crowne his golden lockes with honour dew; Now leading him into a secret shade From his Beauperes, and from bright heavens vew, Where him to sleepe she gently would perswade, Or bathe him in a fountaine by some covert glade:

And whilst he slept she over him would spred Her mantle, colour’d like the starry skyes, And her soft arme lay underneath his hed, And with ambrosiall kisses bathe his eyes; And whilst he bath’d with her two crafty spyes She secretly would search each daintie lim, And throw into the well sweet Rosemaryes, And fragrant violets, and Paunces trim; And ever with sweet Nectar she did sprinkle him.

So did she steale his heedelesse hart away, And joyd his love in secret unespyde: But for she saw him bent to cruell play, To hunt the salvage beast in forrest wyde,

Dreadfull of daunger that mote him betyde, She oft and oft adviz'd him to refraine From chase of greater beastes, whose brutish pryde Mote breede him scath unwares: but all in vaine; For who can shun the chance that dest'ny doth ordaine?

Lo! where beyond he lyeth languishing, Deadly engored of a great wilde Bore; And by his side the Goddesse groveling Makes for him endlesse mone, and evermore With her soft garment wipes away the gore Which staynes his snowy skin with hatefull hew: But, when she saw no helpe might him restore, Him to a dainty flowre she did transmew, Which in that cloth was wrought as if it lively grew.

So was that chamber clad in goodly wize: And rownd about it many beds were dight, As whylome was the antique worldes guize, Some for untimely ease, some for delight, As pleased them to use that use it might; And all was full of Damzels and of Squyres, Dauncing and reveling both day and night, And swimming deepe in sensuall desyres; And Cupid still emongest them kindled lustfull fyres.

And all the while sweet Musicke did divide Her looser notes with Lydian harmony; And all the while sweet birdes thereto applide Their daintie layes and dulcet melody, Ay caroling of love and jollity, That wonder was to heare their trim consort. Which when those knights beheld, with scornefull eye They sdeigned such lascivious disport, And loath'd the loose demeanure of that wanton sort.

Thence they were brought to that great Ladies vew, Whom they found sitting on a sumptuous bed That glistred all with gold and glorious shew, As the proud Persian Queenes accustomed. She seemd a woman of great bountihed, And of rare beautie, saving that askaunce Her wanton eyes, ill signes of womanhed, Did roll too lightly, and too often glaunce, Without regard of grace or comely amenaunce.

Long worke it were, and needlesse, to devize Their goodly entertainement and great glee. She caused them be led in courteous wize Into a bowre, disarmed for to be, And cheared well with wine and spiceree: The Redcrosse Knight was soon disarmed there; But the brave Mayd would not disarmed bee, But onely vented up her

umbriere, And so did let her goodly visage to appere.

As when fayre Cynthia, in darkesome night, Is in a noyous cloud enveloped, Where she may finde the substance thin and light, Breakes forth her silver beames, and her bright hed Discovers to the world discomfited: Of the poore traveiler that went astray With thousand blessings she is heried. Such was the beautie and the shining ray, With which fayre Britomart gave light unto the day.

And eke those six, which lately with her fought, Now were disarmd, and did them selves present Unto her vew, and company unsought; For they all seemed courteous and gent, And all sixe brethren, borne of one parent, Which had them traynd in all civilitee, And goodly taught to tilt and turnament: Now were they liegmen to this Ladie free, And her knights service ought, to hold of her in fee.

The first of them by name Gardantè hight, A jolly person, and of comely vew; The second was Parlantè, a bold knight; And next to him Jocantè did ensew; Basciantè did him selfe most courteous shew; But fierce Bacchantè seemd too fell and keene; And yett in armes Noctantè greater grew: All were faire knights, and goodly well beseene; But to faire Britomart they all but shadowes beene.

For shee was full of amiable grace And manly terror mixed therewithall; That as the one stird up affections bace, So th'other did mens rash desires apall, And hold them backe that would in error fall: As hee that hath espide a vermeill Rose, To which sharp thornes and breres the way forstall, Dare not for dread his hardy hand expose, But wishing it far off his ydle wish doth lose.

Whom when the Lady saw so faire a wight, All ignorant of her contrary sex, (For shee her weend a fresh and lusty knight,) Shee greatly gan enamoured to wex And with vaine thoughts her falsed fancy vex: Her fickle hart conceived hasty fyre, Like sparkes of fire which fall in sclender flex, That shortly brent into extreme desyre, And ransackt all her veines with passion entyre.

Eftsoones shee grew to great impatience, And into termes of open outrage brust,

That plaine discovered her incontinence; Ne reckt shee who her meaning did mistrust, For she was given all to fleshly lust, And poured forth in sensuall delight, That all regard of shame she had discust, And meet respect of honor putt to flight: So shamelesse beauty soone becomes a loathly sight.

Faire Ladies, that to love captived arre, And chaste desires doe nourish in your mind, Let not her fault your sweete affections marre, Ne blott the bounty of all womankind, 'Mongst thousands good one wanton Dame to find: Emongst the Roses grow some wicked weeds: For this was not to love, but lust, inclind; For love does alwaies bring forth bounteous deeds, And in each gentle hart desire of honor breeds.

Nought so of love this looser Dame did skill, But as a coale to kindle fleshly flame, Giving the bridle to her wanton will, And treading under foote her honest name: Such love is hate, and such desire is shame. Still did she rove at her with crafty glaunce Of her false eies, that at her hart did ayme, And told her meaning in her countenaunce; But Britomart dissembled it with ignoraunce.

Supper was shortly dight, and downe they sat; Where they were served with all sumptuous fare, Whiles fruitfull Ceres and Lyæus fat Pourd out their plenty without spight or spare. Nought wanted there that dainty was and rare, And aye the cups their bancks did overflow And aye betweene the cups she did prepare Way to her love, and secret darts did throw; But Britomart would not such guilfull message know.

So, when they slaked had the fervent heat Of appetite with meates of every sort, The Lady did faire Britomart entreat Her to disarme, and with delightfull sport To loose her warlike limbs and strong effort; But when shee mote not thereunto be wonne, (For shee her sexe under that straunge purport Did use to hide, and plaine apparaunce shonne) In playner wise to tell her grievaunce she begonne.

And all attonce discovered her desire With sighes, and sobs, and plaints, and piteous griefe, The outward sparkes of her inburning fire; Which spent in vaine, at last she

told her briefe, That but if she did lend her short reliefe And doe her comfort, she mote algates dye: But the chaste damzell, that had never priefe Of such malengine and fine forgerye, Did easely beleeve her strong extremitye.

Full easy was for her to have beliefe, Who by self-feeling of her feeble sexe, And by long triall of the inward griefe Wherewith imperious love her hart did vexe, Could judge what paines doe loving harts perplexe. Who meanes no guile be guiled soonest shall, And to faire semblaunce doth light faith annex: The bird that knowes not the false fowlers call, Into his hidden nett full easely doth fall.

Forthy she would not in discourteise wise Scorne the faire offer of good will profest; For great rebuke it is love to despise, Or rudely sdeigne a gentle harts request; But with faire countenaunce, as beseemed best, Her entertaynd: nath'lesse shee inly deemd Her love too light, to wooe a wandring guest; Which she misconstruing, thereby esteemd That from like inward fire that outward smoke had steemd.

Therewith a while she her flit fancy fedd, Till she mote winne fit time for her desire; But yet her wound still inward freshly bledd, And through her bones the false instilled fire Did spred itself, and venime close inspire. Tho were the tables taken all away; And every knight, and every gentle Squire, Gan choose his Dame with Bascimano gay With whom he ment to make his sport and courtly play.

Some fell to daunce, some fell to hazardry, Some to make love, some to make meryment, As diverse witts to diverse things apply; And all the while faire Malecasta bent Her crafty engins to her close intent. By this th'eternall lampes, wherewith high Jove Doth light the lower world, were halfe yspent, And the moist daughters of huge Atlas strove Into the Ocean deepe to drive their weary drove.

High time it seemed then for every wight Them to betake unto their kindly rest: Eftesoones long waxen torches weren light Unto their bowres to guyden every guest. Tho, when the Britonesse saw all the rest Avoided quite, she gan her selfe despoile, And safe committ to her soft fethered nest; Wher through long watch, and late daies

weary toile, She soundly slept, and carefull thoughts did quite assoile.

Now whenas all the world in silence deepe Yshrowded was, and every mortall wight Was drowned in the depth of deadly sleepe; Faire Malecasta, whose engrieved spright Could find no rest in such perplexed plight, Lightly arose out of her wearie bed, And, under the blacke vele of guilty Night, Her with a scarlott mantle covered That was with gold and Ermines faire enveloped.

Then panting softe, and trembling every joynt, Her fearfull feete towards the bowre she mov'd, Where she for secret purpose did appoynt To lodge the warlike maide, unwisely loov'd; And, to her bed approching, first she proov'd Whether she slept or wakte: with her softe hand She softely felt if any member moov'd, And lent her wary eare to understand If any puffe of breath or signe of sence shee fond.

Which whenas none she fond, with easy shifte, For feare least her unwares she should abrayd, Th'embroder'd quilt she lightly up did lifte, And by her side her selfe she softly layd, Of every finest fingers touch affrayd; Ne any noise she made, ne word she spake, But inly sigh'd. At last the royall Mayd Out of her quiet slomber did awake, And chaunged her weary side the better ease to take.

Where feeling one close couched by her side, She lightly lept out of her filed bedd, And to her weapon ran, in minde to gride The loathed leachour. But the Dame, halfe dedd Through suddein feare and ghastly drerihedd, Did shrieke alowd, that through the hous it rong, And the whole family, therewith adredd, Rashly out of their rouzed couches sprong, And to the troubled chamber all in armes did throng.

And those sixe knights, that ladies Champions And eke the Redcrosse knight ran to the stownd, Halfe armd and halfe unarmd, with them attons: Where when confusedly they came, they fownd Their lady lying on the sencelesse grownd: On thother side they saw the warlike Mayd Al in her snow-white smocke, with locks unbownd, Threatning the point of her avenging blaed; That with so troublous terror they were all dismayd.

About their Ladye first they flockt arownd; Whom having laid in comfortable couch, Shortly they reard out of her frosen swownd; And afterwardes they gan with fowle reproch To stirre up strife, and troublous contecke broch: But by ensample of the last dayes losse, None of them rashly durst to her approch, Ne in so glorious spoile themselves embosse: Her succourd eke the Champion of the bloody Crosse.

But one of those sixe knights, Gardantè hight, Drew out a deadly bow and arrow keene, Which forth be sent, with felonous despight And fell intent, against the virgin sheene: The mortall steele stayd not till it was seene To gore her side; yet was the wound not deepe, But lightly rased her soft silken skin, That drops of purple blood thereout did weepe, Which did her lilly smock with staines of vermeil steep.

Wherewith enrag'd she fiercely at them flew, And with her flaming sword about her layd, That none of them foule mischiefe could eschew, But with her dreadfull strokes were all dismayd: Here, there, and every where, about her swayd Her wrathfull steele, that none mote it abyde; And eke the Redcrosse knight gave her good ayd, Ay joyning foot to foot, and syde to syde; That in short space their foes they have quite terrifyde.

Tho, whenas all were put to shamefull flight, The noble Britomartis her arayd, And her bright armes about her body dight. For nothing would she lenger there be stayd, Where so loose life, and so ungentle trade, Was usd of knightes and Ladies seeming gent: So earely, ere the grosse Earthes gryesy shade Was all disperst out of the firmament, They tooke their steeds, and forth upon their journey went.

Canto II

The Redcrosse knight to Britomart Describeth Artegall: The wondrous myrrhour, by which she In love with him did fall.

Here have I cause in men just blame to find, That in their proper praise too partiall bee, And not indifferent to woman kind, To whom no share in armes and chevalree

They doe impart, ne maken memoree Of their brave gestes and prowesse martiall: Scarse do they spare to one, or two, or three, Rowme in their writtes; yet the same writing small Does all their deedes deface, and dims their glories all.

But by record of antique times I finde That wemen wont in warres to beare most sway, And to all great exploites them selves inclind, Of which they still the girlond bore away; Till envious Men, fearing their rules decay, Gan coyne streight lawes to curb their liberty: Yet sith they warlike armes have laide away, They have exceld in artes and pollicy, That now we foolish men that prayse gin eke t'envy.

Of warlike puissaunce in ages spent, Be thou, faire Britomart, whose prayse I wryte; But of all wisedom bee thou precedent, O soveraine Queene! whose prayse I would endyte, Endite I would as dewtie doth excyte; But ah! my rymes too rude and rugged arre, When in so high an object they do lyte, And, striving fit to make, I feare, doe marre: Thy selfe thy prayses tell, and make them knowen farre.

She, traveiling with Guyon, by the way Of sondry thinges faire purpose gan to find, T'abridg their journey long, and lingring day; Mongst which it fell into that Fairies mind To aske this Briton Maid, what uncouth wind Brought her into those partes, and what inquest Made her dissemble her disguised kind? Faire Lady she him seemd, like Lady drest, But fairest knight alive, when armed was her brest.

Thereat she sighing softly had no powre To speake a while, ne ready answere make; But with hart-thrilling throbs and bitter stowre, As if she had a fever fitt, did quake, And every daintie limbe with horrour shake; And ever and anone the rosy red Flasht through her face, as it had beene a flake Of lightning through bright heven fulmined: At last, the passion past, she thus him answered.

"Faire Sir, I let you weete, that from the howre I taken was from nourses tender pap, I have been trained up in warlike stowre, To tossen speare and shield, and to affrap The warlike ryder to his most mishap: Sithence I loathed have my life to lead, As Ladies wont, in pleasures wanton lap, To finger the fine needle and nyce thread, Me

lever were with point of foemans speare be dead.

“All my delight on deedes of armes is set, To hunt out perilles and adventures hard, By sea, by land, where so they may be met, Onely for honour and for high regard, Without respect of richesse or reward: For such intent into these partes I came, Withouten compasse or withouten card, Far fro my native soyle, that is by name The greater Brytayne, here to seek for praise and fame.

“Fame blazed hath, that here in Faery lond Doe many famous Knightes and Ladies wonne, And many straunge adventures to bee fond, Of which great worth and worship may be wonne; Which to prove, I this voyage have begonne. But mote I weet of you, right courteous knight, Tydings of one that hath unto me donne Late foule dishonour and reprochfull spight, The which I seeke to wreake, and Arthegall he hight.”

The worde gone out she backe againe would call, As her repenting so to have missayd, But that he, it uptaking ere the fall, Her shortly answered: “Faire martiall Mayd, Certes ye misavised beene t’upbrayd A gentle knight with so unknightly blame; For, weet ye well, of all that ever playd At tilt or tourney, or like warlike game, The noble Arthegall hath ever borne the name.

“Forthy great wonder were it, if such shame Should ever enter in his bounteous thought, Or ever doe that mote deserven blame: The noble corage never weeneth ought That may unworthy of it selfe be thought. Therefore, faire Damzell, be ye well aware, Least that too farre ye have your sorrow sought: You and your countrey both I wish welfare, And honour both; for each of other worthy are.”

The royall Maid woxe inly wondrous glad, To heare her Love so highly magnifyde; And joyd that ever she affixed had Her hart on knight so goodly glorifyde, How ever finely she it faind to hyde. The loving mother, that nine monethes did beare In the deare closett of her painefull syde Her tender babe, it seeing safe appeare, Doth not so much rejoyce as she rejoyced theare.

But to occasion him to further talke, To feed her humor with his pleasing style, Her list in stryfull termes with him to balke, And thus replyde: “How ever, Sir, ye fyle Your courteous tongue his prayses to compyle, It ill beseemes a knight of gentle sort, Such as ye have him boasted, to beguyle A simple maide, and worke so hainous tort, In shame of knighthood, as I largely can report.

“Let bee therefore my vengeaunce to disswade, And read where I that faytour false may find.” “Ah! bat if reason faire might you perswade To slake your wrath, and mollify your mind,” (Said he) “perhaps ye should it better find: For hardie thing it is, to weene by might That man to hard conditions to bind, Or ever hope to match in equall fight, Whose prowesse paragone saw never living wight.

“Ne soothlich is it easie for to read Where now on earth, or how, he may be fownd; For he ne wonneth in one certeine stead, But restlesse walketh all the world arownd, Ay doing thinges that to his fame redownd, Defending Ladies cause and Orphans right, Whereso he heares that any doth confownd Them comfortlesse through tyranny or might: So is his soveraine honour raisde to hevens hight.”

His feeling wordes her feeble sence much pleased, And softly sunck into her molten hart: Hart that is inly hurt is greatly eased With hope of thing that may allegge his smart; For pleasing wordes are like to Magick art, That doth the charmed Snake in slomber lay. Such secrete ease felt gentle Britomart, Yet list the same efforce with faind gainesay; So dischord ofte in Musick makes the sweeter lay:—

And sayd; “Sir knight, these ydle termes forbeare; And, sith it is uneath to finde his haunt, Tell me some markes by which he may appeare, If chaunce I him encounter paravaunt; For perdy one shall other slay, or daunt: What shape, what shield, what armes, what steed, what stedd, And what so else his person most may vaunt?” All which the Redcrosse knight to point aredd, And him in everie part before her fashioned.

Yet him in everie part before she knew, However list her now her knowledge fayne,

Sith him whylome in Britayne she did vew, To her revealed in a mirrhour playne; Whereof did grow her first engraffed payne, Whose root and stalke so bitter yet did taste, That but the fruit more sweetnes did contayne, Her wretched dayes in dolour she mote waste, And yield the pray of love to lothsome death at last.

By straunge occasion she did him behold, And much more straungely gan to love his sight, As it in bookes hath written beene of old. In Deheubarth, that now South-wales is hight, What time king Ryence raign'd and dealed right, The great Magitien Merlin had deviz'd, By his deepe science and hell-dreaded might, A looking glasse, right wondrously aguiz'd, Whose vertues through the wyde worlde soone were solemniz'd.

It vertue had to shew in perfect sight Whatever thing was in the world contaynd, Betwixt the lowest earth and hevens hight, So that it to the looker appertaynd: Whatever foe had wrought, or frend had faynd, Therein discovered was, ne ought mote pas, Ne ought in secret from the same remaynd; Forthy it round and hollow shaped was, Like to the world itselfe, and seemd a world of glas.

Who wonders not, that reades so wonderous worke? But who does wonder, that has red the Towre Wherein th'Aegyptian Phao long did lurke From all mens vew, that none might her discoure, Yet she might all men vew out of her bowre? Great Ptolomæe it for his lemans sake Ybuilded all of glasse, by Magicke powre, And also it impregnable did make; Yet when his love was false he with a peaze it brake.

Such was the glassy globe that Merlin made, And gave unto king Ryence for his gard, That never foes his kingdome might invade, But he it knew at home before he hard Tydings thereof, and so them still debar'd. It was a famous Present for a Prince, And worthy worke of infinite reward, That treasons could bewray, and foes convince: Happy this Realme, had it remayned ever since!

One day it fortuned fayre Britomart Into her fathers closet to repayre; For nothing he from her reserv'd apart, Being his onely daughter and his hayre; Where when she

had espyde that mirrhour fayre, Her selfe awhile therein she vewd in vaine: Tho, her avizing of the vertues rare Which thereof spoken were, she gan againe Her to bethinke of that mote to her selfe pertaine.

But as it falleth, in the gentlest harts Imperious Love hath highest set his throne, And tyrannizeth in the bitter smarts Of them that to him buxome are and prone: So thought this Mayd (as maydens use to done) Whom fortune for her husband would allot: Not that she lusted after any one, For she was pure from blame of sinfull blott; Yet wist her life at last must lincke in that same knot.

Eftsoones there was presented to her eye A comely knight; all arm'd in complete wize, Through whose bright ventayle, lifted up on hye, His manly face, that did his foes agrize, And frends to termes of gentle truce entize, Lookt foorth, as Phœbus face out of the east Betwixt two shady mountaynes doth arize: Portly his person was, and much increast Through his Heroicke grace and honorable gest.

His crest was covered with a couchant Hownd, And all his armour seem'd of antique mould, But wondrous massie and assured sownd, And round about yfretted all with gold, In which there written was, with cyphres old, Achilles armes, which Arthegall did win: And on his shield enveloped sevenfold He bore a crowned little Ermelin, That deckt the azure field with her fayre pouldred skin.

The Damzell well did vew his Personage And liked well, ne further fastned not, But went her way; ne her unguilty age Did weene, unwares, that her unlucky lot Lay hidden in the bottome of the pot. Of hurt unwist most daunger doth redound; But the false Archer, which that arrow shot So slyly that she did not feele the wound, Did smyle full smoothly at her weetlesse wofull stound.

Thenceforth the fether in her lofty crest, Ruffed of love, gan lowly to availe; And her prowd portaunce and her princely gest, With which she earst tryumphed, now did quaile: Sad, solemne, sowre, and full of fancies fraile, She woxe; yet wist she nether how, nor why. She wist not, silly Mayd, what she did aile, Yet wist she was

not well at ease perdy; Yet thought it was not love, but some melancholy.

So soone as Night had with her pallid hew Defaste the beautie of the shyning skye, And refte from men the worldes desired vew, She with her Nourse adowne to sleepe did lye; But sleepe full far away from her did fly: In stead thereof sad sighes and sorrowes deepe Kept watch and ward about her warily, That nought she did but wayle, and often steepe Her dainty couch with teares which closely she did weepe.

And if that any drop of slombring rest Did chaunce to still into her weary spright, When feeble nature felt her selfe opprest, Streightway with dreames, and with fantastick sight Of dreadfull things, the same was put to flight; That oft out of her bed she did astart, As one with vew of ghastly feends affright: Tho gan she to renew her former smart, And thinke of that fayre visage written in her hart.

One night, when she was tost with such unrest, Her aged Nourse, whose name was Glaucè hight, Feelmg her leape out or her loathed nest, Betwixt her feeble armes her quickly keight, And downe againe her in her warme bed dight: “Ah! my deare daughter, ah! my dearest dread, What uncouth fit,” (sayd she) “what evill plight Hath thee opprest, and with sad drearyhead Chaunged thy lively cheare, and living made thee dead?

“For not of nought these suddein ghastly feares All night afflict thy naturall repose; And all the day, when as thine equall peares Their fit disports with faire delight doe chose, Thou in dull corners doest thy selfe inclose; Ne tastest Princes pleasures, ne doest spred Abroad thy fresh youths fayrest flowre, but lose Both leafe and fruite, both too untimely shed, As one in wilfull bale for ever buried.

“The time that mortall men their weary cares Do lay away, and all wilde beastes do rest, And every river eke his course forbeares, Then doth this wicked evill thee infest, And rive with thousand throbs thy thrilled brest: Like an huge Aetn’ of deepe engulfed gryefe, Sorrow is heaped in thy hollow chest, Whence foorth it breakes in sighes and anguish ryfe, As smoke and sulphure mingled with confused stryfe.

“Ay me! how much I feare least love it bee! But if that love it be, as sure I read By knowen signes and passions which I see, Be it worthy of thy race and royall sead, Then I avow, by this most sacred head Of my deare foster childe, to ease thy griefe And win thy will: Therefore away doe dread; For death nor daunger from thy dew reliefe Shall me debarre: tell me therefore, my liefest liefe!”

So having sayd, her twixt her armes twaine Shee streightly straynd, and colled tenderly; And every trembling joynt and every vaine Shee softly felt, and rubbed busily, To doe the frosen cold away to fly; And her faire deawy eies with kisses deare Shee ofte did bathe, and ofte againe did dry; And ever her importund not to feare To let the secret of her hart to her appeare.

The Damzell pauzd; and then thus fearfully: “Ah! Nurse, what needeth thee to eke my payne? Is not enough that I alone doe dye, But it must doubled bee with death of twaine? For nought for me but death there doth remaine.” “O daughter deare!” (said she) “despeire no whit; For never sore but might a salve obtaine: That blinded God, which hath ye blindly smit, Another arrow hath your lovers hart to hit.”

“But mine is not” (quoth she) “like other wownd; For which no reason can finde remedy.” “Was never such, but mote the like be fownd,” (Said she) “and though no reason may apply Salve to your sore, yet love can higher stye Then reasons reach, and oft hath wonders donne.” “But neither God of love nor God of skye Can doe” (said she) “that which cannot be donne.” “Things ofte impossible” (quoth she) “seeme, ere begonne.”

“These idle wordes” (said she) “doe nought aswage My stubborne smart, but more annoiaunce breed: For no, no usuall fire, no usuall rage Yt is, O Nourse! which on my life doth feed, And sucks the blood which from my hart doth bleed: But since thy faithful zele lets me not hyde My crime, (if crime it be) I will it reed. Nor Prince nor pere it is, whose love hath gryde My feeble brest of late, and launched this wound wyde.

“Nor man it is, nor other living wight, For then some hope I might unto me draw; But th’only shade and semblant of a knight, Whose shape or person yet I never saw, Hath me subjected to loves cruell law: The same one day, as me misfortune led, I in my fathers wondrous mirrhour saw, And, pleased with that seeming goodlyhed, Unwares the hidden hooke with baite I swallowed.

“Sithens it hath infixed faster hold Within my bleeding bowells, and so sore Now ranckleth in this same fraile fleshly mould, That all my entrailes flow with poisnous gore, And th’ulcer groweth daily more and more; Ne can my ronning sore finde remedee, Other then my hard fortune to deplore, And languish, as the leafe faln from the tree, Till death make one end of my daies and miseree!”

“Daughter,” (said she) “what need ye be dismayd? Or why make ye such Monster of your minde? Of much more uncouth thing I was affrayd, Of filthy lust, contrary unto kinde; But this affection nothing straunge I finde; For who with reason can you aye reprove To love the semblaunt pleasing most your minde, And yield your heart whence ye cannot remove? No guilt in you, but in the tyranny of love.

“Not so th’Arabian Myrrhe did set her mynd, Nor so did Biblis spend her pining hart; But lov’d their native flesh against al kynd, And to their purpose used wicked art: Yet playd Pasiphaë a more monstrous part, That lov’d a Bul, and learnd a beast to bee. Such shamefull lustes who loaths not, which depart From course of nature and of modestee? Sweete love such lewdnes bands from his faire companee.

“But thine, my Deare, (welfare thy heart, my deare!) Though straunge beginning had, yet fixed is On one that worthy may perhaps appeare; And certes seemes bestowed not amis: Joy thereof have thou and eternall blis!” With that, upleaning on her elbow weake, Her alablaster brest she soft did kis, Which all that while shee felt to pant and quake, As it an Earthquake were: at last she thus bespake.

“Beldame, your words doe worke me litle ease; For though my love be not so lewdly bent As those ye blame, yet may it nought appease My raging smart, ne ought my

flame relent, But rather doth my helpelesse griefe augment; For they, how ever shamefull and unkinde, Yet did possesse their horrible intent; Short end of sorrowes they therby did finde; So was their fortune good, though wicked were their minde.

“But wicked fortune mine, though minde be good, Can have no ende nor hope of my desire, But feed on shadowes whiles I die for food, And like a shadowe wexe, whiles with entire Affection I doe languish and expire. I, fonder then Cephisus foolish chyld, Who, having vewed in a fountaine shere His face, was with the love thereof beguyld; I, fonder, love a shade, the body far exyld.”

“Nought like,” (quoth shee) “for that same wretched boy Was of him selfe the ydle Paramoure, Both love and lover, without hope of joy, For which he faded to a watry flowre: But better fortune thine, and better howre, Which lov’st the shadow of a warlike knight; No shadow but a body hath in powre: That body, wheresoever that it light, May learned be by cyphers, or by Magicke might.

“But if thou may with reason yet represse The growing evill, ere it strength have gott, And thee abandond wholy do possesse, Against it strongly strive, and yield thee nott Til thou in open fielde adowne be smott: But if the passion mayster thy fraile might, So that needs love or death must bee thy lott, Then, I avow to thee, by wrong or right To compas thy desire, and find that loved knight.”

Her chearefull words much cheard the feeble spright Of the sicke virgin, that her downe she layd In her warme bed to sleepe, if that she might; And the old-woman carefully displayd The clothes about her round with busy ayd; So that at last a litle creeping sleepe Surprisd her sence: Shee, therewith well apayd, The dronken lamp down in the oyl did steepe, And sett her by to watch, and sett her by to weepe.

Earely, the morrow next, before that day His joyous face did to the world revele, They both uprose and tooke their ready way Unto the Church, their praiers to appele With great devotion, and with little zele: For the faire Damzel from the holy herse Her love-sicke hart to other thoughts did steale; And that old Dame said many an

idle verse, Out of her daughters hart fond fancies to reverse.

Retourned home, the royall Infant fell Into her former fitt; for-why no powre Nor guidaunce of herselfe in her did dwell: But th'aged Nourse, her calling to her bowre, Had gathered Rew, and Savine, and the flowre Of Camphora, and Calamint, and Dill; All which she in a earthen Pot did poure, And to the brim with Coltwood did it fill, And many drops of milk and blood through it did spill.

Then, taking thrise three heares from off her head, Them trebly breaded in a threefold lace, And round about the Pots mouth bound the thread; And, after having whispered a space Certein sad words with hollow voice and bace, Shee to the virgin sayd, thrise sayd she itt; "Come daughter, come; come, spit upon my face; Spitt thrise upon me, thrise upon me spitt; Th'uneven nomber for this busines is most fitt."

That sayd, her rownd about she from her turnd, She turned her contrary to the Sunne; Thrise she her turnd contrary, and returnd All contrary; for she the right did shunne; And ever what she did was streight undonne. So thought she to undoe her daughters love; But love, that is in gentle brest begonne, No ydle charmes so lightly may remove: That well can witnesse who by tryall it does prove.

Ne ought it mote the noble Mayd avayle, Ne slake the fury of her cruell flame, But that shee still did waste, and still did wayle, That, through long languour and hart-burning brame, She shortly like a pyned ghost became Which long hath waited by the Stygian strond. That when old Glaucè saw, for feare least blame Of her miscarriage should in her be fond, She wist not how t'amend, nor how it to withstond.

Canto III

Merlin bawrayes to Britomart The state of Artegall; And shewes the famous Progeny Which from them springen shall.

Most sacred fyre, that burnest mightily In living brests, ykindled first above Emongst th'eternall spheres and lamping sky, And thence pourd into men, which men call Love! Not that same, which doth base affections move In brutish mindes, and filthy lust inflame, But that sweete fit that doth true beautie love, And choseth vertue for his dearest Dame, Whence spring all noble deedes and never dying fame:

Well did Antiquity a God thee deeme, That over mortall mindes hast so great might, To order them as best to thee doth seeme, And all their actions to direct aright: The fatall purpose of divine foresight Thou doest effect in destined descents, Through deepe impression of thy secret might, And stirredst up th'Heroës high intents, Which the late world admyres for wondrous moniments.

But thy dredd dartes in none doe triumph more, Ne braver proofe in any of thy powre Shewd'st thou, then in this royall Maid of yore, Making her seeke an unknowne Paramoure, From the worlds end, through many a bitter stowre: From whose two loynes thou afterwardes did rayse Most famous fruites of matrimoniall bowre, Which through the earth have spredd their living prayse, That fame in tromp of gold eternally displayes.

Begin then, O my dearest sacred Dame! Daughter of Phœbus and of Memorye, That doest ennoble with immortall name The warlike Worthies, from antiquitye, In thy great volume of Eternitye: Begin, O Clio! and recount from hence My glorious Soveraines goodly auncestrye, Till that by dew degrees, and long protense, Thou have it lastly brought unto her Excellence.

Full many wayes within her troubled mind Old Glaucè cast to cure this Ladies griefe; Full many waies she sought, but none could find, Nor herbes, nor charmes, nor counsel, that is chiefe And choicest med'cine for sick harts reliefe: Forthy great care she tooke, and greater feare, Least that it should her turne to fowle repriefe And sore reproch, when so her father deare Should of his dearest daughters hard misfortune heare.

At last she her avisde, that he which made That mirrhour, wherein the sicke Damosell So straungely vewed her straunge lovers shade, To weet, the learned Merlin, well could tell Under what coast of heaven the man did dwell, And by what means his love might best be wrought: For, though beyond the Africk Ismael Or th'Indian Peru he were, she thought Him forth through infinite endevour to have sought.

Forthwith them selves disguising both in straunge And base atyre, that none might them bewray, To Maridunum, that is now by chaunge Of name Cayr-Merdin cald, they tooke their way: There the wise Merlin whylome wont (they say) To make his wonne, low underneath the ground, In a deepe delve, farre from the vew of day, That of no living wight he mote be found, When so he counseld with his sp rights encompast round.

And, if thou ever happen that same way To travell, go to see that dreadfull place. It is an hideous hollow cave (they say) Under a Rock that lyes a litle space From the swift Barry, tombling downe apace Emongst the woody hilles of Dynevowre: But dare thou not, I charge, in any cace To enter into that same balefull Bowre, For feare the cruell Feendes should thee unwares devowre:

But standing high aloft low lay thine eare, And there such ghastly noise of yron chaines And brasen Caudrons thou shalt rombling heare, Which thousand sprights with long enduring paines Doe tosse, that it will stonne thy feeble braines; And oftentimes great grones, and grievous stownds, When too huge toile and labour them constraines: And oftentimes loud strokes and ringing sowndes From under that deepe Rock most horribly rebowndes.

The cause, some say, is this: A litle whyle Before that Merlin dyde, he did intend A brasen wall in compas to compyle About Cairmardin, and did it commend Unto these Sprights to bring to perfect end: During which worke the Lady of the Lake, Whom long he lov'd, for him in hast did send; Who, thereby forst his workemen to

forsake, Them bownd till his retourne their labour not to slake.

In the meane time, through that false Ladies traine He was surprisd, and buried under beare, Ne ever to his worke returnd againe: Nath'lesse those feends may not their work forbeare, So greatly his commandement they feare, But there doe toyle and traveile day and night, Untill that brasen wall they up doe reare; For Merlin had in Magick more insight Then ever him before, or after, living wight:

For he by wordes could call out of the sky Both Sunne and Moone, and make them him obav; The Land to sea, and sea to maineland dry, And darksom night he eke could turne to day: Huge hostes of men he could alone dismay, And hostes of men of meanest thinges could frame, When so him list his enimies to fray; That to this day, for terror of his fame, The feends do quake when any him to them does name.

And, sooth, men say that he was not the sonne Of mortall Syre or other living wight, But wondrously begotten, and begonne By false illusion of a guilefull Spright On a faire Lady Nonne, that whilome hight Matilda, daughter to Pubidius, Who was the lord of Mathraval by right, And coosen unto king Ambrosius; Whence he indued was with skill so merveilous.

They, here arriving, staid awhile without, Ne durst adventure rashly in to wend, But of their first intent gan make new dout, For dread of daunger which it might portend; Untill the hardy Mayd (with love to frend) First entering, the dreadfull Mage there fownd Deepe busied bout worke of wondrous end, And writing straunge characters in the grownd, With which the stubborne feendes he to his service bownd.

He nought was moved at their entraunce bold, For of their comming well he wist afore; Yet list them bid their businesse to unfold, As if ought in this world in secrete store Were from him hidden, or unknowne of yore. Then Glaucè thus: "Let not it thee offend, That we thus rashly through thy darksom dore Unwares have prest; for either fatall end, Or other mightie cause, us two did hither send."

He bad tell on; And then she thus began. "Now have three Moones with borrowd

brothers light Thrise shined faire, and thrise seemd dim and wan, Sith a sore evill, which this virgin bright Tormenteth and doth plonge in dolefull plight, First rooting tooke; but what thing it mote bee, Or whence it sprong, I can not read aright: But this I read, that, but if remedee Thou her afford, full shortly I her dead shall see."

Therewith th'Enchaunter softly gan to smyle At her smooth speeches, weeting inly well That she to him dissembled womanish guyle, And to her said: "Beldame, by that ye tell More neede of leach-crafte hath your Damozell, Then of my skill: who helpe may have elsewhere, In vaine seekes wonders out of Magick spell." Th'old woman wox half blanck those wordes to heare, And yet was loth to let her purpose plaine appeare;

And to him said: "Yf any leaches skill, Or other learned meanes, could have redrest This my deare daughters deepe engraffed ill, Certes I should be loth thee to molest; But this sad evill, which doth her infest, Doth course of naturall cause farre exceed, And housed is within her hollow brest, That either seemes some cursed witches deed, Or evill spright, that in her doth such torment breed."

The wisard could no lenger beare her bord, But, brusting forth in laughter, to her sayd: "Glaucè, what needes this colourable word To cloke the cause that hath it selfe bewrayd? Ne ye, fayre Britomartis, thus arayd, More hidden are then Sunne in cloudy vele; Whom thy good fortune, having fate obayd, Hath hither brought for succour to appele; The which the powres to thee are pleased to revele."

The doubtfull Mayd, seeing her selfe descryde, Was all abasht, and her pure yvory Into a cleare Carnation suddeine dyde; As fayre Aurora, rysing hastily, Doth by her blushing tell that she did lye All night in old Tithonus frozen bed, Whereof she seemes ashamed inwardly: But her olde Nourse was nought dishartened, But vauntage made of that which Merlin had ared;

And sayd; "Sith then thou knowest all our griefe, (For what doest not thou knowe?) of grace I pray, Pitty our playnt, and yield us meet reliefe." With that the Prophet

still awhile did stay, And then his spirite thus gan foorth display: “Most noble Virgin, that by fatall lore Hast learn’d to love, let no whit thee dismay The hard beginne that meetes thee in the dore, And with sharpe fits thy tender hart oppresseth sore:

“For so must all things excellent begin; And eke enrooted deepe must be that Tree, Whose big embodied braunches shall not lin Till they to hevens hight forth stretched bee: For from thy wombe a famous Progenee Shall spring out of the auncient Trojan blood, Which shall revive the sleeping memoree Of those same antique Peres, the hevens brood, Which Greeke and Asian rivers stayned with their blood.

“Renowmed kings, and sacred Emperours, Thy fruitfull Ofspring, shall from thee descend; Brave Captaines, and most mighty warriours, That shall their conquests through all lands extend, And their decayed kingdomes shall amend: The feeble Britons, broken with long warre, They shall upreare, and mightily defend Against their forren foe that commes from farre, Till universall peace compound all civill jarre.

“It was not, Britomart, thy wandring eye Glauncing unwares in charmed looking glas, But the streight course of hevenly destiny, Led with eternall providence, that has Guyded thy glaunce, to bring his will to pas: Ne is thy fate, ne is thy fortune ill, To love the prowest knight that ever was. Therefore submit thy wayes unto his will, And doe by all dew meanes thy destiny fulfill.”

“But read,” (saide Glaucè) “thou Magitian, What meanes shall she out seeke, or what waies take? How shall she know, how shall she finde the man? Or what needes her to toyle, sith fates can make Way for themselves their purpose to pertake?” Then Merlin thus: “Indeede the fates are firme, And may not shrinck, though all the world do shake; Yet ought mens good endevours them confirme, And guyde the heavenly causes to their constant terme.

“The man, whom heavens have ordaynd to bee The spouse of Britomart, is

Arthegall: He wonneth in the land of Fayeree, Yet is no Fary borne, ne sib at all To Elfes, but sprong of seed terrestriall, And whylome by false Faries stolne away, Whyles yet in infant cradle he did crall; Ne other to himselfe is knowne this day, But that he by an Elfe was gotten of a Fay:

“But sooth he is the sonne of Gorloïs, And brother unto Cador, Cornish king; And for his warlike feates renowmed is, From where the day out of the sea doth spring, Untill the closure of the Evening: From thence him, firmely bound with faithfull band, To this his native soyle thou backe shalt bring, Strongly to ayde his countrey to withstand The powre of forreine Paynims which invade thy land.

“Great ayd thereto his mighty puissaunce And dreaded name shall give in that sad day; Where also proofe of thy prow valiaunce Thou then shalt make, t’increase thy lover’s pray. Long time ye both in armes shall beare great sway, Till thy wombes burden thee from them do call, And his last fate him from thee take away; Too rathe cut off by practise criminall Of secrete foes, that him shall make in mischiefe fall.

“With thee yet shall he leave, for memory Of his late puissaunce, his ymage dead, That living him in all activity To thee shall represent. He, from the head Of his coosen Constantius, without dread Shall take the crowne that was his fathers right, And therewith crowne himselfe in th’others stead: Then shall he issew forth with dreadfull might Against his Saxon foes in bloody field to fight.

“Like as a Lyon that in drowsie cave Hath long time slept, himselfe so shall he shake; And comming forth shall spred his banner brave Over the troubled South, that it shall make The warlike Mertians for feare to quake: Thrise shall he fight with them, and twise shall win; But the third time shall fayre accordaunce make: And, if he then with victorie can lin, He shall his dayes with peace bring to his earthly In.

“His sonne, hight Vortipore, shall him succeede In kingdome, but not in felicity: Yet shall he long time warre with happy speed, And with great honour many batteills try; But at the last to th’importunity Of froward fortune shall be forst to yield: But

his sonne Malgo shall full mightily Avenge his fathers losse with speare and shield, And his proud foes discomfit in victorious field.

“Behold the man! and tell me, Britomart, If ay more goodly creature thou didst see? How like a Gyaunt in each manly part Beares he himselfe with portly majestee, That one of th’old Heroës seemes to bee! He the six Islands, comprovinciall In auncient times unto great Britainee, Shall to the same reduce, and to him call Their sondry kings to do their homage severall.

“All which his sonne Careticus awhile Shall well defend, and Saxons powre suppresse; Untill a straunger king, from unknowne soyle Arriving, him with multitude oppresse; Great Gormond, having with huge mightinesse Ireland subdewd, and therein fixt his throne, Like a swift Otter, fell through emptinesse, Shall overswim the sea, with many one Of his Norveyses, to assist the Britons fone.

“He in his furie all shall overronne, And holy Church with faithlesse handes deface, That thy sad people, utterly fordonne, Shall to the utmost mountaines fly apace. Was never so great waste in any place, Nor so fowle outrage doen by living men; For all thy Citties they shall sacke and race, And the greene grasse that groweth they shall bren, That even the wilde beast shall dy in starved den.

“Whiles thus thy Britons doe in languour pine, Proud Etheldred shall from the North arise, Serving th’ambitious will of Augustine, And, passing Dee, with hardy enterprise Shall backe repulse the valiaunt Brockwell twise, And Bangor with massacred Martyrs fill, But the third time shall rew his foolhardise: For Cadwan, pittying his peoples ill, Shall stoutly him defeat, and thousand Saxons kill.

“But after him, Cadwallin mightily On his sonne Edwin all those wrongs shall wreake; Ne shall availe the wicked sorcery Of false Pellite his purposes to breake, But him shall slay, and on a gallowes bleak Shall give th’enchaunter his unhappy hire. Then shall the Britons, late dismayd and weake, From their long vassalage gin to respire, And on their Paynim foes avenge their ranckled ire.

“Ne shall he yet his wrath so mitigate, Till both the sonnes of Edwin he have slayne, Offricke and Osricke, twinnes unfortunate, Both slaine in battaile upon Layburne playne, Together with the king of Louthiane, Hight Adin, and the king of Orkeny, Both joynt partakers of their fatall payne: But Penda, fearefull of like desteny, Shall yield him selfe his liegeman, and sweare fealty.

“Him shall he make his fatall Instrument T’afflict the other Saxons unsubdewd; He marching forth with fury insolent Against the good king Oswald, who indewd With heavenly powre, and by Angels reskewd, Al holding crosses in their hands on hye, Shall him defeate withouten blood imbrewd: Of which that field, for endlesse memory, Shall Hevenfield be cald to all posterity.

“Whereat Cadwallin wroth shall forth issew, And an huge hoste into Northumber lead, With which he godly Oswald shall subdew, And crowne with martiredome his sacred head: Whose brother Oswin, daunted with like dread, With price of silver shall his kingdome buy; And Penda, seeking him adowne to tread, Shall tread adowne, and doe him fowly dye; But shall with guifts his Lord Cadwallin pacify.

“Then shall Cadwallin die; and then the raine Of Britons eke with him attonce shall dye; Ne shall the good Cadwallader, with paine Or powre, be hable it to remedy, When the full time, prefixt by destiny, Shal be expird of Britons regiment: For heven it selfe shall their successe envy, And them with plagues and murrins pestilent Consume, till all their warlike puissaunce be spent.

“Yet after all these sorrowes, and huge hills Of dying people, during eight yeares space, Cadwallader, not yielding to his ills, From Armoricke, where long in wretched cace He liv’d, retourning to his native place, Shal be by vision staide from his intent: For th’heavens have decreëd to displace The Britons for their sinnes dew punishment And to the Saxons over-give their government.

“Then woe, and woe, and everlasting woe, Be to the Briton babe that shal be borne To live in thraldome of his fathers foe! Late king, now captive; late lord, now

forlorne; The worlds reproch; the cruell victors scorne; Banisht from princely bowre to wastefull wood! O! who shal helpe me to lament and mourne The royall seed, the antique Trojan blood, Whose empire lenger here then ever any stood?"

The Damzell was full deepe empassioned Both for his griefe, and for her peoples sake, Whose future woes so plaine he fashioned; And, sighing sore, at length him thus bespake: "Ah! but will hevens fury never slake, Nor vengeaunce huge relent it selfe at last? Will not long misery late mercy make, But shall their name for ever be defaste, And quite from off the earth their memory be raste?"

"Nay but the terme" (sayd he) "is limited, That in this thraldome Britons shall abide; And the just revolution measured That they as Straungers shal be notifide: For twise fowre hundreth yeares shalbe supplide, Ere they to former rule restor'd shal bee, And their importune fates all satisfide: Yet, during this their most obscuritee, Their beames shall ofte breake forth, that men them faire may see.

"For Rhodoricke, whose surname shal be Great, Shall of him selfe a brave ensample shew, That Saxon kinges his friendship shall intreat; And Howell Dha shall goodly well indew The salvage minds with skill of just and trew: Then Griffyth Conan also shall upreare His dreaded head, and the old sparkes renew Of native corage, that his foes shall feare, Least back againe the kingdom he from them should beare.

"Ne shall the Saxons selves all peaceably Enjoy the crowne, which they from Britons wonne First ill, and after ruled wickedly; For, ere two hundred yeares be full outronne, There shall a Raven, far from rising Sunne, With his wide wings upon them fiercely fly, And bid his faithlesse chickens overronne The fruitfull plaines, and with fell cruelty In their avenge tread downe the victors surquedry.

"Yet shall a third both these and thine subdew. There shall a Lion from the seabord wood Of Neustria come roring, with a crew Of hungry whelpes, his battailous bold brood, Whose clawes were newly dipt in cruddy blood, That from the Daniske Tyrants head shall rend Th'usurped crowne, as if that he were wood, And the spoile

of the countrey conquered Emongst his young ones shall divide with bountyhed.

“Tho, when the terme is full accomplishid, There shall a sparke of fire, which hath long-while Bene in his ashes raked up and hid, Bee freshly kindled in the fruitfull Ile Of Mona, where it lurked in exile; Which shall breake forth into bright burning flame, And reach into the house that beares the stile Of roiall majesty and soveraine name: So shall the Briton blood their crowne agayn reclame.

“Thenceforth eternall union shall be made Betweene the nations different afore, And sacred Peace shall lovingly persuade The warlike minds to learne her goodly lore, And civile armes to exercise no more: Then shall a royall Virgin raine, which shall Stretch her white rod over the Belgicke shore, And the great Castle smite so sore withall, That it shall make him shake, and shortly learn to fall.

“But yet the end is not.”—There Merlin stayd, As overcomen of the spirites powre, Or other ghastly spectacle dismayd, That secretly he saw, yet note discoure: Which suddein fitt, and halfe extatick stoure, When the two fearefull wemen saw, they grew Greatly confused in behaveoure. At last, the fury past, to former hew Hee turnd againe, and chearfull looks as earst did shew.

Then, when them selves they well instructed had Of all that needed them to be inquird, They both, conceiving hope of comfort glad, With lighter hearts unto their home retird; Where they in secret counsell close conspird, How to effect so hard an enterprize, And to possesse the purpose they desird: Now this, now that, twixt them they did devize, And diverse plots did frame to maske in strange disguise.

At last the Nourse in her foolhardy wit Conceiv’d a bold devise, and thus bespake: “Daughter, I deeme that counsel aye most fit, That of the time doth dew advauntage take. Ye see that good king Uther now doth make Strong warre upon the Paynim brethren, hight Octa and Oza, whome hee lately brake Beside Cayr Verolame in victorious fight, That now all Britany doth burne in armes bright.

“That, therefore, nought our passage may empeach, Let us in feigned armes our

selves disguize, And our weake hands (need makes good schollers) teach The dreadful speare and shield to exercize: Ne certes, daughter, that same warlike wize, I weene, would you misseeme; for ye beene tall, And large of limbe t'atchieve an hard emprize; Ne ought ye want but skil, which practize small Wil bring, and shortly make you a mayd Martiall.

"And, sooth, it ought your corage much inflame To heare so often, in that royall hous, From whence, to none inferior, ye came, Bards tell of many wemen valorous, Which have full many feats adventurous Performd, in paragone of proudest men: The bold Bunduca, whose victorious Exployts made Rome to quake; stout Guendolen; Renowmed Martia; and redoubted Emmilen.

"And, that which more then all the rest may sway, Late dayes ensample, which these eyes beheld: In the last field before Menevia, Which Uther with those forrein Pagans held, I saw a Saxon Virgin, the which feld Great Ulfin thrise upon the bloody playne; And, had not Carados her hand withheld From rash revenge, she had him surely slayne: Yet Carados himselfe from her escapt with payne."

"Ah! read," (quoth Britomart) "how is she hight?" "Fayre Angela" (quoth she) "men do her call, No whit lesse fayre then terrible in fight: She hath the leading of a Martiall And mightie people, dreaded more then all The other Saxons, which doe, for her sake And love, themselves of her name Angles call. Therefore, faire Infant, her ensample make Unto thy selfe, and equall corage to thee take."

Her harty wordes so deepe into the mynd Of the yong Damzell sunke, that great desire Of warlike armes in her forthwith they tynd, And generous stout courage did inspyre, That she resolv'd, unweeting to her Syre, Advent'rous knighthood on her selfe to don; And counseld with her Nourse her Maides attyre To turne into a massy habergeon, And bad her all things put in readinesse anon.

Th'old woman nought that needed did omit, But all thinges did conveniently purvay. It fortuned (so time their turne did fitt) A band of Britons, ryding on forray Few

dayes before, had gotten a great pray Of Saxon goods; emongst the which was seene A goodly Armour, and full rich aray, Which long'd to Angela, the Saxon Queene, All fretted round with gold, and goodly wel beseene.

The same, with all the other ornaments, King Ryence caused to be hanged hy In his chiefe Church, for endlesse moniments Of his successe and gladfull victory: Of which her selfe avising readily, In th'evening late old Glaucè thither led Faire Britomart, and, that same Armory Downe taking, her therein appareled Well as she might, and with brave bauldrick garnished.

Beside those armes there stood a mightie speare, Which Bladud made by Magick art of yore, And usd the same in batteill aye to beare; Sith which it had beene here preserv'd in store, For his great virtues proved long afore: For never wight so fast in sell could sit, But him perforce unto the ground it bore. Both speare she tooke and shield which hong by it; Both speare and shield of great powre, for her purpose fit.

Thus when she had the virgin all arayd, Another harnesse which did hang thereby About her selfe she dight, that the yong Mayd She might in equall armes accompany, And as her Squyre attend her carefully. Tho to their ready Steedes they clombe full light, And through back waies, that none might them espy, Covered with secret cloud of silent night, Themselves they forth convaid, and passed forward right.

Ne rested they, till that to Faery lond They came, as Merlin them directed late: Where, meeting with this Redcrosse Knight, she fond Of diverse thinges discourses to dilate, But most of Arthegall and his estate. At last their wayes so fell, that they mote part: Then each to other, well affectionate, Friendship professed with unfained hart. The Redcrosse Knight diverst, but forth rode Britomart.

Canto IV

Bold Marinell of Britomart Is throwne in the Rich strond: Faire Florimell of Arthur

is Long followed, but not fond.

Where is the Antique glory now become, That whylome wont in wemen to appeare? Where be the brave atchievements doen by some? Where be the battels, where the shield and speare, And all the conquests which them high did reare, That matter made for famous Poets verse, And boastfull men so oft abasht to heare? Beene they all dead, and laide in dolefull herse, Or doen they onely sleepe, and shall againe reverse?

If they be dead, then woe is me therefore; But if they sleepe, O let them soone awake: For all too long I burne with envy sore To heare the warlike feates, which Homere spake Of bold Penthesilee, which made a lake Of Greekish blood so oft in Trojan plaine; But when I reade, how stout Debora strake Proud Sisera, and how Camill' hath slaine The huge Orsilochus, I swell with great disdaine.

Yet these, and all that els had puissaunce, Cannot with noble Britomart compare, As well for glorie of great valiaunce, As for pure chastitee and vertue rare, That all her goodly deedes doe well declare. Well worthie stock, from which the branches sprong That in late yeares so faire a blossome bare, As thee, O Queene! the matter of my song, Whose lignage from this Lady I derive along.

Who when, through speaches with the Redcrosse Knight, She learned had th'estate of Arthegall, And in each point her selfe informd aright, A friendly league of love perpetuall She with him bound, and Congé tooke withall: Then he forth on his journey did proceede, To seeke adventures which mote him befall, And win him worship through his warlike deed, Which alwaies of his paines he made the chiefest meed.

But Britomart kept on her former course, Ne ever dofte her armes, but all the way Grew pensive through that amarous discourse, By which the Redcrosse knight did earst display Her lovers shape, and chevalrous aray: A thousand thoughts she fashiond in her mind, And in her feigning fancie did pourtray Him such as fittest she

for love could find, Wise, warlike, personable, courteous, and kind.

With such selfe-pleasing thoughts her wound she fed, And thought so to beguile her grievous smart; But so her smart was much more grievous bred, And the deepe wound more deep engord her hart, That nought but death her dolour mote depart, So forth she rode, without repose or rest, Searching all lands and each remotest part, Following the guydance of her blinded guest, Till that to the sea-coast at length she her addrest.

There she alighted from her light-foot beast, And sitting downe upon the rocky shore, Badd her old Squyre unlace her lofty creast: Tho having vewd awhile the surges hore That gainst the craggy clifts did loudly rore, And in their raging surquedry disdaynd That the fast earth affronted them so sore, And their devouring covetize restraynd; Thereat she sighed deepe, and after thus complaynd.

“Huge sea of sorrow and tempestuous griefe, Wherein my feeble barke is tossed long Far from the hoped haven of reliefe, Why doe thy cruel billowes beat so strong, And thy moyst mountaines each on others throng, Threatning to swallow up my fearefull lyfe? O! doe thy cruell wrath and spightfull wrong At length allay, and stint thy stormy strife, Which in thy troubled bowels raignes and rageth ryfe.

“For els my feeble vessell, crazd and crackt Through thy strong buffets and outrageous blowes, Cannot endure, but needes it must be wrackt On the rough rocks, or on the sandy shallowes, The whiles that love it steres, and fortune rowes: Love, my lewd Pilott, hath a restlesse minde; And fortune, Boteswaine, no assurance knowes; But saile withouten starres gainst tyde and winde: How can they other doe, sith both are bold and blinde?

“Thou God of windes, that raignest in the seas, That raignest also in the Continent, At last blow up some gentle gale of ease, The which may bring my ship, ere it be rent, Unto the gladsome port of her intent. Then, when I shall my selfe in safety see, A table, for eternall moniment Of thy great grace and my great jeopardee, Great

Neptune, I avow to hallow unto thee!”

Then sighing softly sore, and inly deepe, She shut up all her plaint in privy griefe For her great courage would not let her weepe, Till that old Glaucè gan with sharpe repriefe Her to restraine, and give her good reliefe Through hope of those, which Merlin had her told Should of her name and nation be chiefe, And fetch their being from the sacred mould Of her immortall womb, to be in heaven enrold.

Thus as she her recomforted, she spyde Where far away one, all in armour bright, With hasty gallop towards her did ryde. Her dolour soone she ceast, and on her dight Her Helmet, to her Courser mounting light: Her former sorrow into suddein wrath, Both coosen passions of distroubled spright, Converting, forth she beates the dusty path: Love and despight attonce her courage kindled hath.

As, when a foggy mist hath overcast The face of heven, and the cleare ayre engroste, The world in darkenes dwels; till that at last The watry Southwinde, from the seabord coste Upblowing, doth disperse the vapour lo’ste, And poures it selfe forth in a stormy showre: So the fayre Britomart, having disclo’ste Her clowdy care into a wrathfull stowre, The mist of griefe dissolv’d did into vengeance powre.

Eftsoones, her goodly shield addressing fayre, That mortall speare she in her hand did take, And unto battaill did her selfe prepayre. The knight, approching, sternely her bespake: “Sir knight, that doest thy voyage rashly make By this forbidden way in my despight, Ne doest by others death ensample take, I read thee soone retyre, whiles thou hast might, Least afterwards it be too late to take thy flight.”

Ythrild with deepe disdaine of his proud threat, She shortly thus: “Fly they, that need to fly; Wordes fearen babes. I meane not thee entreat To passe, but maugre thee will passe or dy.” Ne lenger stayd for th’other to reply, But with sharpe speare the rest made dearly knowne. Strongly the straunge knight ran, and sturdily Strooke her full on the brest, that made her downe Decline her head, and touch her crouper with her crown.

But she againe him in the shield did smite With so fierce furie and great puissaunce, That, through his three-square scuchin percing quite And through his mayled hauberque, by mischaunce The wicked steele through his left side did glaunce. Him so transfixed she before her bore Beyond his croupe, the length of all her launce; Till, sadly soucing on the sandy shore, He tombled on an heape, and wallowd in his gore.

Like as the sacred Oxe that carelesse stands, With gilden hornes and flowry girlonds crownd, Proud of his dying honor and deare bandes, Whiles th'altars fume with frankincense arownd, All suddeinly, with mortall stroke astownd, Doth groveling fall, and with his streaming gore Distaines the pillours and the holy grownd, And the faire flowres that decked him afore: So fell proud Marinell upon the pretious shore.

The martiall Mayd stayd not him to lament, But forward rode, and kept her ready way Along the strond; which, as she overwent, She saw bestrowed all with rich aray Of pearles and pretious stones of great assay, And all the gravell mixt with golden owre: Whereat she wondred much, but would not stay For gold, or perles, or pretious stones, an howre, But them despised all; for all was in her powre.

Whiles thus he lay in deadly stonishment, Tydings hereof came to his mothers eare: His mother was the blacke-browd Cymoënt, The daughter of great Nereus, which did beare This warlike sonne unto an earthly peare, The famous Dumarin; who, on a day Finding the Nymph asleepe in secret wheare, As he by chaunce did wander that same way, Was taken with her love, and by her closely lay.

There he this knight of her begot, whom borne She, of his father, Marinell did name; And in a rocky cave, as wight forlorne, Long time she fostred up, till he became A mighty man at armes, and mickle fame Did get through great adventures by him donne: For never man he suffred by that same Rich strond to travell, whereas he did wonne, But that he must do battail with the Sea-nymphes sonne.

An hundred knights of honorable name He had subdew'd, and them his vassals

made; That through all Faerie lond his noble fame Now blazed was, and feare did all invade, That none durst passen through that perilous glade: And to advaunce his name and glory more, Her Sea-god syre she dearely did perswade T'endow her sonne with threasure and rich store Bove all the sonnes that were of earthly wombes ybore.

The God did graunt his daughters deare demaund, To doen his Nephew in all riches flow; Eftsoones his heaped waves he did commaund Out of their hollow bosome forth to throw All the huge threasure, which the sea below Had in his greedy gulfe devoured deepe, And him enriched through the overthrow And wreckes of many wretches, which did weepe And often wayle their wealth, which he from them did keepe.

Shortly upon that shore there heaped was Exceeding riches and all pretious things, The spoyle of all the world; that it did pas The wealth of th'East, and pompe of Persian kings: Gold, amber, yvorie, perles, owches, rings, And all that els was pretious and deare, The sea unto him voluntary brings; That shortly he a great Lord did appeare, As was in all the lond of Faery, or else wheare.

Thereto he was a doughty dreaded knight, Tryde often to the scath of many Deare, That none in equall armes him matchen might: The which his mother seeing gan to feare Least his too haughtie hardines might reare Some hard mishap in hazard of his life. Forthy she oft him counseld to forbeare The bloody batteill and to stirre up strife, But after all his warre to rest his wearie knife.

And, for his more assuraunce, she inquir'd One day of Proteus by his mighty spell (For Proteus was with prophecy inspir'd) Her deare sonnes destiny to her to tell, And the sad end of her sweet Marinell: Who, through foresight of his eternall skill, Bad her from womankind to keepe him well, For of a woman he should have much ill; A virgin straunge and stout him should dismay or kill.

Forthy she gave him warning every day The love of women not to entertaine; A

lesson too too hard for living clay From love in course of nature to refraine. Yet he his mothers lore did well retaine, And ever from fayre Ladies love did fly; Yet many Ladies fayre did oft complaine, That they for love of him would algates dy: Dy, who so list for him, he was loves enimy.

But ah! who can deceive his destiny, Or weene by warning to avoyd his fate? That, when he sleepes in most security And safest seemes, him soonest doth amate, And findeth dew effect or soone or late; So feeble is the powre of fleshly arme. His mother bad him wemens love to hate, For she of womans force did feare no harme; So, weening to have arm'd him, she did quite disarme.

This was that woman, this that deadly wownd, That Proteus prophecide should him dismay; The which his mother vainely did expownd To be hart-wownding love, which should assay To bring her sonne unto his last decay. So tide be the termes of mortall state, And full of subtile sophismes, which do play With double senses, and with false debate, T'approve the unknowen purpose of eternall fate.

Too trew the famous Marinell it fownd, Who, through late triall, on that wealthy Strond Inglorious now lies in sencelesse swownd, Through heavy stroke of Britomartis hond. Which when his mother deare did understond, And heavy tydings heard, whereas she playd Amongst her watry sisters by a pond, Gathering sweete daffadillyes, to have made Gay girlonds from the Sun their forheads faire to shade;

Eftesoones both flowres and girlonds far away Shee flong, and her faire deawy lockes yrent; To sorrow huge she turnd her former play, And gamesom merth to grievous dreriment: Shee threw her selfe downe on the Continent, Ne word did speake, but lay as in a swowne, Whiles all her sisters did for her lament With yelling outcries, and with shrieking sowne; And every one did teare her girlond from her crowne.

Soone as shee up out of her deadly fitt Arose, shee bad her charett to be brought; And all her sisters that with her did sitt Bad eke attonce their charetts to be sought:

Tho, full of bitter griefe and pensife thought, She to her wagon clombe; clombe all the rest, And forth together went with sorow fraught. The waves, obedient to theyr beheast, Them yielded ready passage, and their rage surceast.

Great Neptune stoode amazed at their sight, Whiles on his broad rownd backe they softly slid, And eke him selfe mournd at their mournful plight, Yet wist not what their wailing ment; yet did, For great compassion of their sorow, bid His mighty waters to them buxome bee: Eftesoones the roaring billowes still abid, And all the griesly Monsters of the See Stood gaping at their gate, and wondred them to see.

A teme of Dolphins raunged in aray Drew the smooth charett of sad Cymoent: They were all taught by Triton to obay To the long raynes at her commaundement: As swifte as swallowes on the waves they went, That their brode flaggy finnes no fome did reare, Ne bubling rowndell they behinde them sent. The rest, of other fishes drawen weare, Which with their finny oars the swelling sea did sheare.

Soone as they bene arriv'd upon the brim Of the Rich Strond, their charets they forlore, And let their temed fishes softly swim Along the margent of the fomy shore, Least they their finnes should bruze, and surbate sore Their tender feete upon the stony grownd: And comming to the place, where all in gore And cruddy blood enwallowed they fownd The lucklesse Marinell lying in deadly swownd,

His mother swowned thrise, and the third time Could scarce recovered bee out of her paine: Had she not beene devoide of mortall slime, Shee should not then have bene relyv'd againe; But, soone as life recovered had the raine, Shee made so piteous mone and deare wayment, That the hard rocks could scarse from tears refraine; And all her sister Nymphes with one consent Supplide her sobbing breaches with sad complement.

"Deare image of my selfe," (she sayd) "that is The wretched sonne of wretched mother borne, Is this thine high advauncement? O! is this Th'immortall name, with which thee, yet unborne, Thy Grandsire Nereus promist to adorne? Now lyest thou

of life and honor refte; Now lyest thou a lumpe of earth forlorne; Ne of thy late life memory is lefte, Ne can thy irrevocable desteny bee wefte.

“Fond Proteus, father of false prophecis! And they more fond that credit to thee give! Not this the worke of womans hand ywis, That so deepe wound through these deare members drive. I feared love; but they that love doe live, But they that dye doe nether love nor hate: Nath’lesse to thee thy folly I forgive; And to my selfe, and to accursed fate, The guilt I doe ascribe: deare wisedom bought too late!

“O! what availes it of immortall seed To beene ybredd and never borne to dye? Farre better I it deeme to die with speed Then waste in woe and waylfull miserye: Who dyes, the utmost dolor doth abye; But who that lives is lefte to waile his losse: So life is losse, and death felicity: Sad life worse then glad death; and greater crosse To see frends grave, then dead the grave self to engrosse.

“But if the heavens did his dayes envie, And my short blis maligne, yet mote they will Thus much afford me, ere that he did die, That the dim eies of my deare Marinell I mote that close, and him bed farewell, Sith other offices for mother meet They would nor graunt— Yet, maulgre them, farewell, my sweetest sweet! Farewell, my sweetest sonne, sith we no more shall meet!

Thus when they all had sorowed their fill, They softly gan to search his griesly wownd: And, that they might him handle more at will, They him disarmd; and, spredding on the grownd Their watchet mantles fridgd with silver rownd, They softly wipt away the gelly blood From th’orifice; which having well upbownd, They pourd in soveraine balme and Nectar good, Good both for erthly med’cine and for hevenly food.

Tho when the lilly handed liagore (This Liagore whilome had learned skill In leaches craft, by great Apolloes lore, Sith her whilome upon high Pindus hill He loved, and at last her wombe did fill With hevenly seed, whereof wise Pæon sprong) Did feele his pulse, she knew there staied still Some litle life his feeble sprites

emong; Which to his mother told, despeire she from her flong.

Tho, up him taking in their tender hands, They easely unto her charett beare: Her teme at her commaundement quiet stands, Whiles they the corse into her wagon reare, And strowe with flowres the lamentable beare. Then all the rest into their coches clim, And through the brackish waves their passage sheare; Upon great Neptunes necke they softly swim, And to her watry chamber swiftly carry him.

Deepe in the bottome of the sea her bowre Is built of hollow billowes heaped hye, Like to thicke clouds that threat a stormy showre, And vauted all within, like to the Skye, In which the Gods doe dwell eternally; There they him laide in easy couch well dight, And sent in haste for Tryphon, to apply Salves to his wounds, and medicines of might; For Tryphon of sea gods the soveraine leach is hight.

The whiles the Nymphes sit all about him rownd, Lamenting his mishap and heavy plight; And ofte his mother, vewing his wide wownd, Cursed the hand that did so deadly smight Her dearest sonne, her dearest harts delight: But none of all those curses overtooke The warlike Maid, th'ensample of that might; But fairely well shee thryv'd, and well did brooke Her noble deeds, ne her right course for ought forsooke.

Yet did false Archimage her still pursew, To bring to passe his mischievous intent, Now that he had her singled from the crew Of courteous knights, the Prince and Faery gent, Whom late in chace of beauty excellent Shee lefte, pursewing that same foster strong, Of whose fowle outrage they impatient, And full of firy zele, him followed long, To reskew her from shame, and to revenge her wrong.

Through thick and thin, through mountains and through playns, Those two great champions did attonce pursew The fearefull damzell with incessant payns; Who from them fled, as light-foot hare from vew Of hunter swifte and sent of howndes trew. At last they came unto a double way; Where, doubtfull which to take, her to reskew, Themselves they did dispart, each to assay Whether more happy were to

win so goodly pray.

But Timias, the Princes gentle Squyre, That Ladies love unto his Lord forlent, And with proud envy and indignant yre After that wicked foster fiercely went: So beene they three three sondry wayes ybent; But fayrest fortune to the Prince befell, Whose chaunce it was, that soone he did repent, To take that way in which that Damozell Was fledd afore, affraid of him as feend of hell.

At last of her far off he gained vew. Then gan he freshly pricke his fomy steed, And ever as he nigher to her drew, So evermore he did increase his speed, And of each turning still kept wary heed: Alowd to her he oftentimes did call, To doe away vaine doubt and needlesse dreed: Full myld to her he spake, and oft let fall Many meeke wordes to stay and comfort her withall.

But nothing might relent her hasty flight, So deepe the deadly feare of that foule swaine Was earst impressed in her gentle spright. Like as a fearefull Dove, which through the raine Of the wide ayre her way does cut amaine, Having farre off espyde a Tassell gent, Which after her his nimble winges doth straine, Doubleth her hast for feare to bee for-hent, And with her pineons cleaves the liquid firmament.

With no lesse hast, and eke with no lesse dreed, That fearefull Ladie fledd from him, that ment To her no evill thought nor evill deed; Yet former feare of being fowly shent Carried her forward with her first intent: And though, oft looking backward, well she vewde Her selfe freed from that foster insolent, And that it was a knight which now her sewde, Yet she no lesse the knight feard then that villein rude.

His uncouth shield and straunge armes her dismayd, Whose like in Faery lond were seldom seene, That fast she from him fledd, no lesse afrayd Then of wilde beastes if she had chased beene; Yet he her followd still with corage keene So long, that now the golden Hesperus Was mounted high in top of heaven sheene, And warnd his other brethren joyeous To light their blessed lamps in Joves eternall hous.

All suddeinly dim wox the dampish ayre, And griesly shadowes covered heaven

bright, That now with thousand starres was decked fayre: Which when the Prince beheld, a lothfull sight, And that perforce, for want of lenger light, He mote surceasse his suit, and lose the hope Of his long labour, he gan fowly wyte His wicked fortune that had turnd aslope, And cursed night that reft from him so goodly scope.

Tho, when her wayes he could no more descry, But to and fro at disaventure strayd; Like as a ship, whose Lodestar suddeinly Covered with cloudes her Pilott hath dismayd; His wearisome pursuit perforce he stayd, And from his loftie steed dismounting low Did let him forage. Downe himselfe he layd Upon the grassy ground to sleepe a throw: The cold earth was his couch, the hard steele his pillow.

But gentle Sleepe envyde him any rest: In stead thereof sad sorow and disdaine Of his hard hap did vexe his noble brest, And thousand Fancies bett his ydle brayne With their light wings, the sights of semblants vaine. Oft did he wish that Lady faire mote bee His Faery Queene, for whom he did complaine, Or that his Faery Queene were such as shee; And ever hasty Night be blamed bitterlie.

“Night! thou foule Mother of annoyaunce sad, Sister of heavie death, and nourse of woe, Which wast begot in heaven, but for thy bad And brutish shape thrust downe to hell below, Where, by the grim floud of Cocytus slow, Thy dwelling is in Herebus black hous, (Black Herebus, thy husband, is the foe Of all the Gods,) where thou ungratious Halfe of thy dayes doest lead in horrour hideous.

“What had th’eternall Maker need of thee The world in his continuall course to keepe, That doest all thinges deface, ne lettest see The beautie of his worke? Indeed, in sleepe The slouthfull body that doth love to steepe His lustlesse limbes, and drowne his baser mind, Doth praise thee oft, and oft from Stygian deepe Calles thee his goddesse, in his errour blind, And great Dame Natures handmaide chearing every kind.

“But well I wote, that to an heavy hart Thou art the roote and nourse of bitter cares,

Breeder of new, renewer of old smarts: Instead of rest thou lendest rayling teares; Instead of sleepe thou sendest troublous feares And dreadfull visions, in the which alive The dreary image of sad death appeares: So from the wearie spirit thou doest drive Desired rest, and men of happinesse deprive.

“Under thy mantle black there hidden lye Light-shonning thefte, and traiterous intent, Abhorred bloodshed, and vile felony, Shamefull deceipt, and daunger imminent, Fowle horror, and eke hellish dreriment: All these, I wote, in thy protection bee, And light doe shonne for feare of being shent; For light ylike is loth’d of them and thee; And all that lewdnesse love doe hate the light to see.

“For day discovers all dishonest wayes, And sheweth each thing as it is in deed: The prayses of high God he faire displayes, And his large bountie rightly doth areed: Dayes dearest children be the blessed seed Which darknesse shall subdue and heaven win: Truth is his daughter; he her first did breed Most sacred virgin without spot of sinne. Our life is day, but death with darknesse doth begin.

“O! when will day then turne to me againe, And bring with him his long expected light? O Titan! hast to reare thy joyous waine; Speed thee to spred abroad thy beames bright, And chace away this too long lingring night; Chace her away, from whence she came, to hell: She, she it is, that hath me done despight: There let her with the damned spirits dwell, And yield her rowme to day that can it governe well.”

Thus did the Prince that wearie night outweare In restlesse anguish and unquiet paine; And earely, ere the morrow did upreare His deawy head out of the Ocean maine, He up arose, as halfe in great disdaine, And clombe unto his steed. So forth he went With heavy look and lumpish pace, that plaine In him bewraid great grudge and maltalent: His steed eke seemd t’apply his steps to his intent.

Canto V

Prince Arthur heares of Florimell: Three fosters Timias wounds; Belphebe finds him

alost dead. And reareth out of sownd.

Wonder it is to see, in diverse minds, How diversly love doth his pageants play, And shewes his powre in variable kinds: The baser wit, whose idle thoughts alway Are wont to cleave unto the lowly clay, It stirreth up to sensuall desire, And in lewd slouth to wast his carelesse day; But in brave sprite it kindles goodly fire, That to all high desert and honour doth aspire.

Ne suffereth it uncomely idlenesse In his free thought to build her sluggish nest; Ne suffereth it thought of ungentlenesse Ever to creepe into his noble brest; But to the highest and the worthiest Lifteth it up that els would lowly fall: It lettes not fall, it lettes it not to rest; It lettes not scarse this Prince to breath at all, But to his first poursuit him forward still doth call.

Who long time wandred through the forest wyde To finde some issue thence, till that at last He met a Dwarfe, that seemed terrifyde With some late perill which he hardly past, Or other accident, which him aghast; Of whom he asked, whence he lately came, And whither now he travelled so fast: For sore he swat, and, running through that same Thicke forest, was bescracht, and both his feet nigh lame.

Panting for breath, and almost out of hart, The Dwarfe him answerd; “Sir, ill mote I stay To tell the same: I lately did depart From Faery court, where I have many a day Served a gentle Lady of great sway And high accompt through out all Elfin land, Who lately left the same, and tooke this way. Her now I seeke; and if ye understand Which way she fared hath, good Sir, tell out of hand.”

“What mister wight,” (saide he) “and how arayd?” “Royally clad” (quoth he) “in cloth of gold, As meetest may beseeme a noble mayd: Her faire lockes in rich circlet be enrold, A fayrer wight did never Sunne behold? And on a Palfrey rydes more white then snow, Yet she her selfe is whiter manifold. The surest signe, whereby ye may her know, Is that she is the fairest wight alive, I trow.”

“Now certes, swaine,” (saide he) “such one, I weene, Fast flying through this forest

from her fo, A foule ill-favoured foster, I have seene: Her selfe, well as I might, I reskewd tho, But could not stay, so fast she did foregoe, Carried away with wings of speedy feare." "Ah, dearest God!" (quoth he) "that is great woe, And wondrous ruth to all that shall it heare: But can ye read, Sir, how I may her finde, or where?"

"Perdy, me lever were to weeten that," (Said he) "then ransome of the richest knight, Or all the good that ever yet I gat: But froward fortune, and too forward Night, Such happinesse did, maulgre, to me spight, And fro me reft both life and light attone. But, Dwarfe, aread what is that Lady bright That through this forrest wandreth thus alone? For of her errour straunge I have great ruth and mone."

"That Lady is," (quoth he) "where so she bee, The bountiest virgin and most debonaire That ever living eye, I weene, did see. Lives none this day that may with her compare In stedfast chastitie and vertue rare, The goodly ornaments of beautie bright; And is ycleped Florimell the faire, Faire Florimell belov'd of many a knight, Yet she loves none but one, that Marinell is hight.

"A Sea-nymphes sonne, that Marinell is hight, Of my deare Dame is loved dearely well; In other none, but him, she sets delight, All her delight is set on Marinell, But he sets nought at all by Florimell; For Ladies love his mother long ygoe Did him, they say, forwarne through sacred spell: But fame now flies, that of a forreine foe He is yslaine, which is the ground of all our woe.

"Five dayes there be since he (they say) was slaine, And foure since Florimell the Court forwent, And vowed never to returne againe, Till him alive or dead she did invent. Therefore, faire Sir, for love of knighthood gent, And honour of trew Ladies, if ye may By your good counsell, or bold hardiment, Or succour her, or me direct the way, Do one or other good, I you most humbly pray.

"So may ye gaine to you full great renowme Of all good Ladies through the worlde so wide, And haply in her hart find highest rowme Of whom ye seeke to be most magnifide: At least eternall meede shall you abide." To whom the Prince: "Dwarfe,

comfort to thee take, For, till thou tidings learne what her betide, I here avow thee never to forsake. Ill weares he armes, that nill them use for Ladies sake."

So with the Dwarfe he backe retourn'd againe, To seeke his Lady, where he mote her find; But by the way he greatly gan complaine The want of his good Squire late lefte behind, For whom he wondrous pensive grew in mind, For doubt of daunger which mote him betide; For him he loved above all mankinde, Having him trew and faithfull ever tride, And bold, as ever Squire that waited by knights side:

Who all this while full hardly was assayd Of deadly daunger, which to him betid; For, whiles his Lord pursewd that noble Mayd, After that foster fowle he fiercely rid To bene avenged of the shame he did To that faire Damzell: Him he chaced long Through the thicke woods, wherein he would have hid His shamefull head from his avengement strong, And oft him threatned death for his outrageous wrong.

Nathlesse the villein sped himselfe so well, Whether through swiftnesse of his speedy beast, Or knowledge of those woods where he did dwell, That shortly he from daunger was releast, And out of sight escaped at the least: Yet not escaped from the dew reward Of his bad deedes, which daily he increast, Ne ceased not, till him oppressed hard The heavy plague that for such leachours is prepard.

For soone as he was vanisht out of sight, His coward courage gan emboldned bee, And cast t'avenge him of that fowle despight Which he had borne of his bold enimee: Tho to his brethren came, for they were three Ungratious children of one gracelesse sire, And unto them complained how that he Had used beene of that foolehardy Squire: So them with bitter words he stird to bloody ire.

Forthwith themselves with their sad instruments Of spoyle and murder they gan arme bylive, And with him forth into the forrest went To wreake the wrath, which he did earst revive In their sterne brests, on him which late did drive Their brother to reproch and shamefull flight; For they had vow'd that never he alive Out of that forest should escape their might; Vile rancour their rude harts had fild with such

despight.

Within that wood there was a covert glade, Foreby a narrow foord, to them well knowne, Through which it was uneath for wight to wade; And now by fortune it was overflowne. By that same way they knew that Squyre unknowne Mote algates passe: forthy themselves they set There in await, with thicke woods overgrowne, And all the while their malice they did whet With cruell threats his passage through the ford to let.

It fortuned, as they devised had: The gentle Squire came ryding that same way, Unweeting of their wile and treason bad, And through the ford to passen did assay; But that fierce foster, which late fled away, Stoutly foorth stepping on the further shore, Him boldly bad his passage there to stay, Till he had made amends, and full restore For all the damage which he had him doen afore.

With that at him a quiv'ring dart he threw, With so fell force, and villeinous despite, That through his haberjeon the forkehead flew, And through the linked mayles empierced quite, But had no powre in his soft flesh to bite. That stroke the hardy Squire did sore displease, But more that him he could not come to smite; For by no meanes the high banke he could sease, But labour'd long in that deepe ford with vaine disease.

And still the foster with his long bore-speare Him kept from landing at his wished will. Anone one sent out of the thicket neare A cruell shaft, headed with deadly ill, And fethered with an unlucky quill: The wicked steele stayd not till it did light In his left thigh, and deepely did it thrill: Exceeding griefe that wound in him empight, But more that with his foes he could not come to fight.

At last, through wrath and vengeaunce making way, He on the bancke arryvd with mickle payne, Where the third brother him did sore assay, And drove at him with all his might and mayne A forest-bill, which both his hands did strayne; But warily he did avoide the blow, And with his speare requited him againe, That both his sides

were thrilled with the throw, And a large streame of blood out of the wound did flow.

He, tombling downe, with gnashing teeth did bite The bitter earth, and bad to lett him in Into the balefull house of endlesse night, Where wicked ghosts doe waile their former sin. Tho gan the battaile freshly to begin; For nathemore for that spectacle bad Did th'other two their cruell vengeaunce blin, But both attonce on both sides him bestad, And load upon him layd his life for to have had.

Tho when that villayn he aviz'd, which late Affrighted had the fairest Florimell, Full of fiers fury and indignant hate To him he turned, and with rigor fell Smote him so rudely on the Pannikell, That to the chin he clefte his head in twaine. Downe on the ground his carkas groveling fell: His sinfull sowle with desperate disdaine Out of her fleshly ferme fled to the place of paine.

That seeing, now the only last of three Who with that wicked shafte him wounded had, Trembling with horror, as that did foresee The fearefull end of his avengement sad, Through which he follow should his brethren bad, His bootelesse bow in feeble hand upcaught, And therewith shott an arrow at the lad; Which, fayntly fluttering, scarce his helmet raught, And glauncing fel to ground, but him annoyed naught.

With that he would have fled into the wood; But Timias him lightly overhent, Right as he entring was into the flood, And strooke at him with force so violent, That headlesse him into the foord he sent: The carcas with the streame was carried downe, But th'head fell backeward on the Continent; So mischief fel upon the meaners crowne. They three be dead with shame, the Squire lives with renowne.

He lives, but takes small joy of his renowne; For of that cruell wound he bled so sore, That from his steed he fell in deadly swowne: Yet still the blood forth gusht in so great store, That he lay wallowd all in his owne gore. Now God thee keepe, thou gentlest squire alive, Els shall thy loving Lord thee see no more; But both of comfort him thou shalt deprive, And eke thy selfe of honor which thou didst atchive.

Providence hevenly passeth living thought, And doth for wretched mens reliefe make way; For loe! great grace or fortune thither brought Comfort to him that comfortlesse now lay. In those same woods ye well remember may How that a noble hunteresse did wonne, Shee, that base Braggadochio did affray, And make him fast out of the forest ronne; Belphœbe was her name, as faire as Phœbus sunne.

She on a day, as shee pursewd the chace Of some wilde beast, which with her arrowes keene She wounded had, the same along did trace By tract of blood, which she had freshly seene To have besprinckled all the grassy greene: By the great persue which she there perceav'd, Well hoped shee the beast engor'd had beene, And made more haste the life to have bereav'd; But ah! her expectation greatly was deceav'd.

Shortly she came whereas that wofull Squire, With blood deformed, lay in deadly swownd; In whose faire eyes, like lamps of quenched fire, The Christall humor stood congealed rownd; His locks, like faded leaves fallen to grownd, Knotted with blood in bounches rudely ran; And his sweete lips, on which before that stownd The bud of youth to blossome faire began, Spoild of their rosy red were woxen pale and wan.

Saw never living eie more heavy sight, That could have made a rocke of stone to rew, Or rive in twaine: which when that Lady bright, Besides all hope, with melting eies did vew, All suddeinly abasht shee chaunged hew, And with sterne horror backward gan to start; But when shee better him beheld shee grew Full of soft passion and unwonted smart: The point of pitty perced through her tender hart.

Meekely shee bowed downe, to weete if life Yett in his frosen members did remaine; And, feeling by his pulses beating rife That the weake sowle her seat did yett retaine, She cast to comfort him with busie paine. His double folded necke she reard upright, And rubd his temples and each trembling vaine; His mayled haberjeon she did undight, And from his head his heavy burganet did light.

Into the woods thenceforth in haste shee went, To seeke for hearbes that mote him remedy; For shee of herbes had great intendiment, Taught of the Nymphe which from her infancy Her nourced had in trew Nobility: There, whether yt divine Tobacco were, Or Panachæa, or Polygony, Shee fownd, and brought it to her patient deare, Who al this while lay bleding out his hart-blood neare.

The soveraine weede betwixt two marbles plaine Shee pownded small, and did in peeces bruze; And then atweene her lilly handes twaine Into his wound the juice thereof did scruze; And round about, as she could well it uze, The flesh therewith shee suppled and did steepe, T'abate all spasme, and soke the swelling bruze; And, after having searcht the intuse deepe, She with her scarf did bind the wound from cold to keepe.

By this he had sweet life recur'd agayne, And, groning inly deepe, at last his eies, His watry eies drizling like deawy rayne, He up gan lifte toward the azure skies, From whence descend all hopelesse remedies: Therewith he sigh'd; and, turning him aside, The goodly Maide, ful of divinities And gifts of heavenly grace, he by him spide, Her bow and gilden quiver lying him beside.

"Mercy, deare Lord!" (said he) "what grace in this That thou hast shewed to me sinfull wight, To send thine Angell from her bowre of blis To comfort me in my distressed plight. Angell, or Goddesse doe I call thee right? What service may I doe unto thee meete, That hast from darkenes me returnd to light, And with thy hevenly salves and med'cines sweete Hast drest my sinfull wounds? I kisse thy blessed feete."

Thereat she blushing said; "Ah! gentle Squire, Nor Goddesse I, nor Angell; but the Mayd And daughter of a woody Nymphe, desire No service but thy safety and ayd; Which if thou gaine, I shal be well apayd. Wee mortall wights, whose lives and fortunes bee To commun accidents stil open layd, Are bownd with commun bond of fraïltee, To succor wretched wights who we captived see."

By this her Damzells, which the former chace Had undertaken after her, arryv'd, As did Belphœbe, in the bloody place, And thereby deemd the beast had bene depriv'd Of life, whom late their ladies arrow ryv'd: Forthy the bloody tract they followd fast, And every one to ronne the swiftest stryv'd; But two of them the rest far overpast, And where their Lady was arrived at the last.

Where when they saw that goodly boy with blood Defowled, and their Lady dresse his wownd, They wondred much; and shortly understood How him in deadly case theyr Lady fownd, And reskewed out of the heavy stownd. Eftsoones his warlike courser, which was strayd Farre in the woodes whiles that he lay in swownd, She made those Damzels search; which being stayd They did him set theron, and forth with them convayd.

Into that forest farre they thence him led, Where was their dwelling, in a pleasant glade With mountaines rownd about environed, And mightie woodes which did the valley shade And like a stately Theatre it made, Spreading it selfe into a spatious plaine: And in the midst a little river plaide Emongst the pumy stones, which seemd to plaine With gentle murmure that his cours they did restraine.

Beside the same a dainty place there lay, Planted with mirtle trees and laurells greene, In which the birds song many a lovely lay Of Gods high praise, and of their loves sweet teene, As it an earthly Paradize had beene: In whose enclosed shadow there was pight A faire Pavilion, scarcely to bee seene, The which was al within most richly dight, That greatest Princes liking it mote well delight.

Thither they brought that wounded Squyre, and layd In easie couch his feeble limbes to rest. He rested him awhile; and then the Mayd His readie wound with better salves new drest: Daily she dressed him, and did the best His grievous hurt to guarish, that she might; That shortly she his dolour hath redrest, And his foule sore reduced to faire plight: It she reduced, but himselfe destroyed quight.

O foolish physick, and unfruitfull paine, That heales up one, and makes another

wound! She his hurt thigh to him recurd againe, But hurt his hart, the which before was sound, Through an unwary dart, which did rebownd From her faire eyes and gratious countenaunce. What bootes it him from death to be unbownd, To be captived in endlesse duraunce Of sorrow and despeyre without aleggeaunce!

Still as his wound did gather, and grow hole, So still his hart woxe sore, and health decayd: Madnesse to save a part, and lose the whole! Still whenas he beheld the heavenly Mayd, Whiles dayly playsters to his wownd she layd, So still his Malady the more increast, The whiles her matchlesse beautie him dismayd. Ah God! what other could he do at least, But love so fayre a Lady that his life releast?

Long while he strove in his corageous brest With reason dew the passion to subdew, And love for to dislodge out of his nest: Still when her excellencies he did vew, Her soveraine bountie and celestiall hew, The same to love he strongly was constraynd; But when his meane estate he did revew, He from such hardy boldnesse was restraynd, And of his lucklesse lott and cruell love thus playnd:

“Unthankfull wretch,” (said he) “is this the meed, With which her soverain mercy thou doest quight? Thy life she saved by her gratious deed; But thou doest weene with villeinous despight To blott her honour, and her heavenly light. Dye rather, dye, then so disloyally Deeme of her high desert, or seeme so light: Fayre death it is, to shonne more shame, to dy: Dye rather, dy, then ever love disloyally.

“But if to love disloyalty it bee, Shall I then hate her that from deathes dore Me brought? ah, farre be such reproch fro mee! What can I lesse doe then her love therefore, Sith I her dew reward cannot restore? Dye rather, dye, and dying doe her serve; Dying her serve, and living her adore; Thy life she gave, thy life she doth deserve: Dye rather, dye, then ever from her service swerve.

“But, foolish boy, what bootes thy service bace To her to whom the hevens doe serve and sew? Thou, a mean Squyre of meeke and lowly place; She, hevenly borne and of celestiall hew. How then? of all love taketh equall vew; And doth not highest

God vouchsafe to take The love and service of the basest crew? If she will not, dye meekly for her sake: Dye rather, dye, then ever so faire love forsake!”

Thus warreid he long time against his will; Till that through weaknesse he was forst at last To yield himselfe unto the mightie ill, Which, as a victour proud, gan ransack fast His inward partes, and all his entrayles wast, That neither blood in face nor life in hart It left, but both did quite drye up and blast; As percing levin, which the inner part Of every thing consumes, and calcineth by art.

Which seeing fayre Belphœbe gan to feare, Least that his wound were inly well not heald, Or that the wicked steele empoysned were: Litle shee weend that love he close conceald. Yet still he wasted, as the snow congeald When the bright sunne his beams theron doth beat: Yet never he his hart to her reveald; But rather chose to dye for sorow great, Then with dishonorable termes her to entreat.

She, gracious Lady, yet no paines did spare To doe him ease, or doe him remedy. Many Restoratives of vertues rare, And costly Cordialles she did apply, To mitigate his stubborne malady: But that sweet Cordiall, which can restore A love-sick hart, she did to him envy; To him, and to all th’unworthy world forlore She did envy that soveraine salve in secret store.

That daintie Rose, the daughter of her Morne, More deare then life she tendered, whose flowre The girlond of her honour did adorne: Ne suffred she the Middayes scorching powre, Ne the sharp Northerne wind thereon to showre; But lapped up her silken leaves most chayre, When so the froward skye began to lowre; But, soone as calmed was the christall ayre, She did it fayre dispred and let to florish fayre.

Eternall God, in his almightie powre, To make ensample of his heavenly grace, In Paradize whylome did plant this flowre; Whence he it fetcht out of her native place, And did in stocke of earthly flesh enrace, That mortall men her glory should admyre. In gentle Ladies breste and bounteous race Of woman kind it fayrest Flowre doth spyre, And beareth fruit of honour and all chast desyre.

Fayre ympes of beautie, whose bright shining beames Adorne the world with like to heavenly light, And to your willes both royalties and Reames Subdew, through conquest of your wondrous might, With this fayre flowre your goodly girlonds dight Of chastity and vertue virginall, That shall embellish more your beautie bright, And crowne your heades with heavenly coronall, Such as the Angels weare before Gods tribunall!

To your faire selves a faire ensample frame Of this faire virgin, this Belphebe fayre; To whom, in perfect love and spotlesse fame Of chastitie, none living may compayre: Ne poysnous Envy justly can empayre The prayse of her fresh flowring Maydenhead; Forthy she standeth on the highest stayre Of th'honorable stage of womanhead, That Ladies all may follow her ensample dead.

In so great prayse of stedfast chastity Nathlesse she was so courteous and kynde, Tempred with grace and goodly modesty, That seemed those two vertues strove to fynd The higher place in her Heroick mynd: So striving each did other more augment, And both encreast the prayse of woman kynde, And both encreast her beautie excellent: So all did make in her a perfect complement.

Canto VI

The birth of faire Belphoebe and Of Amorett is told. The Gardins of Adonis fraught With pleasures manifold.

Well may I weene, faire Ladies, all this while Ye wonder how this noble Damozell So great perfections did in her compile, Sith that in salvage forests she did dwell, So farre from court and royall Citadell, The great schoolmaistresse of all courtesy: Seemeth that such wilde woodes should far expell All civile usage and gentility, And gentle sprite deforme with rude rusticity.

But to this faire Belphœbe in her berth The hevens so favorable were and free, Looking with myld aspect upon the earth In th'Horoscope of her nativitee, That all

the gifts of grace and chastitee On her they poured forth of plenteous horne: Jove laught on Venus from his soverayne see, And Phœbus with faire beames did her adorne, And all the Graces rockt her cradle being borne.

Her berth was of the wombe of Morning dew, And her conception of the joyous Prime; And all her whole creation did her shew Pure and unspotted from all loathly crime That is ingenerate in fleshly slime. So was this virgin borne, so was she bred; So was she trayned up from time to time In all chaste vertue and true bountihed, Till to her dew perfection she were ripened.

Her mother was the faire Chrysogonee, The daughter of Amphisa, who by race A Faerie was, yborne of high degree. She bore Belphœbe; she bore in like cace Fayre Amoretta in the second place: These two were twinnes, and twixt them two did share The heritage of all celestiall grace; That all the rest it seemd they robbed bare Of bounty, and of beautie, and all vertues rare.

It were a goodly storie to declare By what straunge accident faire Chrysogone Conceiv'd these infants, and how them she bare In this wilde forrest wandring all alone, After she had nine moneths fulfild and gone: For not as other wemens commune brood They were enwombed in the sacred throne Of her chaste bodie; nor with commune food, As other wemens babes, they sucked vitall blood:

But wondrously they were begot and bred Through influence of th'hevens fruitfull ray, As it in antique bookes is mentioned. It was upon a Sommers shinie day, When Titan faire his beames did display, In a fresh fountaine, far from all mens vew, She bath'd her brest the boyling heat t'allay; She bath'd with roses red and violets blew, And all the sweetest flowers that in the forrest grew:

Till faint through yrkesome wearines, adowne Upon the grassy ground her selfe she layd To sleepe, the whiles a gentle slombring swowne Upon her fell, all naked bare displayd. The sunbeames bright upon her body playd, Being through former bathing mollifide, And pierst into her wombe, where they embayd With so sweet sence and

secret powre unspide, That in her pregnant flesh they shortly fructifide.

Miraculous may seeme to him that reades So straunge ensample of conception; But reason teacheth that the fruitfull seades Of all things living, through impression Of the sunbeames in moyst complexion, Doe life conceive and quickned are by kynd: So, after Nilus inundation, Infinite shapes of creatures men doe fynd Informed in the mud on which the Sunne hath shynd.

Great father he of generation Is rightly cald, th'authour of life and light; And his faire sister for creation Ministreth matter fit, which, tempred right With heate and humour, breedes the living wight. So sprong these twinnes in womb of Chrysogone; Yet wist she nought thereof, but sore affright, Wondred to see her belly so upblone, Which still increast till she her terme had full outgone.

Whereof conceiving shame and foule disgrace, Albe her guiltlesse conscience her cleard, She fled into the wildernesse a space, Till that unweeldy burden she had reard, And shund dishonor which as death she feard: Where, wearie of long traveill, downe to rest Her selfe she set, and comfortably cheard: There a sad cloud of sleepe her overkest, And seized every sence with sorrow sore opprest.

It fortuned, faire Venus having lost Her little sonne, the winged god of love, Who, for some light displeasure which him crost, Was from her fled as flit as ayery Dove, And left her blisfull bowre of joy above: (So from her often he had fled away, When she for ought him sharpely did reprove, And wandred in the world in straunge aray, Disguiz'd in thousand shapes, that none might him bewray.)

Him for to seeke, she left her heavenly hous, The house of goodly formes and faire aspect, Whence all the world derives the glorious Features of beautie, and all shapes select, With which high God his workmanship hath deckt; And searched everie way through which his wings Had borne him, or his tract she mote detect: She promist kisses sweet, and sweeter things, Unto the man that of him tydings to her brings.

First she him sought in Court, where most he us'd Whylome to haunt, but there she

found him not; But many there she found which sore accus'd His falshood, and with fowle infamous blot His cruell deedes and wicked wyles did spot: Ladies and Lordes she everywhere mote heare Complayning, how with his empoysned shot Their wofull harts he wounded had whyleare, And so had left them languishing twixt hope and feare.

She then the Cities sought from gate to gate, And everie one did aske, did he him see? And everie one her answerd, that too late He had him seene, and felt the crueltee Of his sharpe dartes and whot artilleree: And every one threw forth reproches rife Of his mischievous deedes, and sayd that hee Was the disturber of all civill life, The enimy of peace, and authour of all strife.

Then in the countrey she abroad him sought, And in the rurall cottages inquir'd; Where also many plaintes to her were brought, How he their heedelesse harts with love had fir'd, And his false venim through their veines inspir'd: And eke the gentle Shepheard swaynes, which sat Keeping their fleecy flockes as they were hyr'd, She sweetly heard complaine, both how and what Her sonne had to them doen; yet she did smile thereat.

But when in none of all these she him got, She gan avize where els he mote him hyde: At last she her bethought that she had not Yet sought the salvage woods and forests wyde, In which full many lovely Nymphes abyde; Mongst whom might be that he did closely lye, Or that the love of some of them him tyde: Forthy she thither cast her course t'apply, To search the secret haunts of Dianes company.

Shortly unto the wastefull woods she came, Whereas she found the Goddesse with her crew, After late chace of their embrewed game, Sitting beside a fountaine in a rew; Some of them washing with the liquid dew From off their dainty limbs the dusty sweat And soyle, which did deforme their lively hew; Others lay shaded from the scorching heat, The rest upon her person gave attendance great.

She, having hong upon a bough on high Her bow and painted quiver, had unlaste

Her silver buskins from her nimble thigh, And her lanck loynes ungirt, and brests unbraste, After her heat the breathing cold to taste: Her golden lockes, that late in tresses bright Embreaded were for hindring of her haste, Now loose about her shoulders hong undight, And were with sweet Ambrosia all besprinckled light.

Soone as she Venus saw behinde her backe, She was asham'd to be so loose surpriz'd; And woxe halfe wroth against her damzels slacke, That had not her thereof before aviz'd, But suffred her so carelesly disguiz'd Be overtaken. Soone her garments loose Upgath'ring, in her bosome she compriz'd Well as she might, and to the Goddesse rose; Whiles all her Nymphes did like a girlond her enclose.

Goodly she gan faire Cytherea greet, And shortly asked her, what cause her brought Into that wildernesse for her unmeet, From her sweete bowres, and beds with pleasures fraught? That suddein chaunge she straunge adventure thought. To whom halfe weeping she thus answered; That she her dearest sonne Cupido sought, Who in his frowardnes from her was fled, That she repented sore to have him angered.

Thereat Diana gan to smile, in scorne Of her vaine playnt, and to her scoffing sayd: "Great pitty sure that ye be so forlorne Of your gay sonne, that gives ye so good ayd To your disports: ill mote ye bene apayd." But she was more engrieved, and replide; "Faire sister, ill beseemes it to upbrayd A dolefull heart with so disdainfull pride: The like that mine may be your paine another tide.

"As you in woods and wanton wildernesse Your glory sett to chace the salvage beasts, So my delight is all in joyfulnesse, In beds, in bowres, in banckets, and in feasts: And ill becomes you, with your lofty creasts, To scorne the joy that Jove is glad to seeke: We both are bownd to follow heavens beheasts, And tend our charges with obeisaunce meeke. Spare, gentle sister, with reproch my paine to eeke;

"And tell me, if that ye my sonne have heard To lurke emongst your Nimphes in secret wize, Or keepe their cabins: much I am affeard Least he like one of them him selfe disguize, And turne his arrowes to their exercize. So may he long him selfe full

easie hide; For he is faire and fresh in face and guize As any Nimphe; (let not it be envide.") So saying, every Nimph full narrowly shee eide.

But Phœbe therewith sore was angered, And sharply saide: "Goe, Dame; goe, seeke your boy, Where you him lately lefte, in Mars his bed: He comes not here; we scorne his foolish joy, Ne lend we leisure to his idle toy: But if I catch him in this company, By Stygian lake I vow, whose sad annoy The Gods doe dread, he dearly shall abye: Ile clip his wanton wings, that he no more shall flye."

Whom whenas Venus saw so sore displeasd, Shee inly sory was, and gan relent What shee had said; so her she soone appeasd With sugred words and gentle blandishment, Which as a fountaine from her sweete lips went. And welled goodly forth, that in short space She was well pleasd, and forth her damzells sent Through all the woods, to search from place to place, If any tract of him or tidings they mote trace.

To search the God of love her Nimphes she sent Throughout the wandring forest every where: And after them her selfe eke with her went To seeke the fugitive both farre and nere. So long they sought, till they arrived were In that same shady covert whereas lay Faire Crysogone in slombry traunce whilere; Who in her sleepe (a wondrous thing to say) Unwares had borne two babes, as faire as springing day.

Unwares she them conceivd, unwares she bore: She bore withouten paine, as she conceiv'd Withouten pleasure; ne her need implore Lucinaes aide: which when they both perceiv'd, They were through wonder nigh of sence berev'd, And gazing each on other nought bespake. At last they both agreed her seeming griev'd Out of her heavie swowne not to awake But from her loving side the tender babes to take.

Up they them tooke; each one a babe uptooke, And with them carried to be fostered. Dame Phœbe to a Nymphe her babe betooke To be upbrought in perfect Maydenhed, And, of her selfe, her name Belphœbe red: But Venus hers thence far away convayd, To be upbrought in goodly womanhed; And, in her litle loves stead,

which was strayd, Her Amoretta cald, to comfort her dismayd.

Shee brought her to her joyous Paradize, Wher most she wonnes when she on earth does dwell; So faire a place as Nature can devize: Whether in Paphos, or Cytheron hill, Or it in Gnidus bee, I wote not well; But well I wote by triall, that this same All other pleasaunt places doth excell, And called is by her lost lovers name, The Gardin of Adonis, far renowmd by fame.

In that same Gardin all the goodly flowres, Wherewith dame Nature doth her beautify, And decks the girlonds of her Paramoures, Are fetcht: there is the first seminary Of all things that are borne to live and dye, According to their kynds. Long worke it were Here to account the endlesse progeny Of all the weeds that bud and blossome there; But so much as doth need must needs be counted here.

It sited was in fruitfull soyle of old, And girt in with two walls on either side; The one of yron, the other of bright gold, That none might thorough breake, nor overstride: And double gates it had which opened wide, By which both in and out men moten pas: Th'one faire and fresh, the other old and dride. Old Genius the porter of them was, Old Genius, the which a double nature has.

He letteth in, he letteth out to wend All that to come into the world desire: A thousand thousand naked babes attend About him day and night, which doe require That he with fleshly weeds would them attire: Such as him list, such as eternall fate Ordained hath, he clothes with sinfull mire, And sendeth forth to live in mortall state, Till they agayn returne backe by the hinder gate.

After that they againe retourned beene, They in that Gardin planted bee agayne, And grow afresh, as they had never seene Fleshly corruption, nor mortall payne. Some thousand yeares so doen they there remayne, And then of him are clad with other hew, Or sent into the chaungefull world agayne, Till thither they retourne where first they grew: So, like a wheele, arownd they ronne from old to new.

Ne needs there Gardiner to sett or sow, To plant or prune; for of their owne accord

All things, as they created were, doe grow, And yet remember well the mighty word Which first was spoken by th'Almighty Lord, That bad them to increase and multiply: Ne doe they need with water of the ford, Or of the clouds, to moysten their roots dry; For in themselves eternall moisture they imply.

Infinite shapes of creatures there are bred, And uncouth formes, which none yet ever knew: And every sort is in a sondry bed Sett by it selfe, and ranckt in comely rew; Some fitt for reasonable sowles t'indew; Some made for beasts, some made for birds to weare; And all the fruitfull spawne of fishes hew In endlesse rancks along enraunged were, That seemd the Ocean could not containe them there.

Daily they grow, and daily forth are sent Into the world, it to replenish more; Yet is the stocke not lessened nor spent, But still remaines in everlasting store, As it at first created was of yore: For in the wide wombe of the world there lyes, In hatefull darknes and in deepe horrore An huge eternall Chaos, which supplyes The substaunces of natures fruitfull progenyes.

All things from thence doe their first being fetch, And borrow matter whereof they are made; Which, whenas forme and feature it does ketch, Becomes a body, and doth then invade The state of life out of the griesly shade. That substaunce is eterne, and bideth so; Ne when the life decayes and forme does fade, Doth it consume and into nothing goe, But chaunged is, and often altred to and froe.

The substaunce is not chaungd nor altered, But th'only forme and outward fashion; For every substaunce is conditioned To chaunge her hew, and sondry formes to don, Meet for her temper and complexion: For formes are variable, and decay By course of kinde and by occasion; And that faire flowre of beautie fades away, As doth the lilly fresh before the sunny ray.

Great enimy to it, and to all the rest That in the Gardin of Adonis springs, Is wicked Tyme; who with his scyth addrest Does mow the flowring herbes and goodly things, And all their glory to the ground downe flings, Where they do wither, and are fowly

mard: He flyes about, and with his flaggy winges Beates downe both leaves and buds without regard, Ne ever pitty may relent his malice hard.

Yet pitty often did the gods relent, To see so faire thinges mard and spoiled quight; And their great mother Venus did lament The losse of her deare brood, her deare delight: Her hart was pierst with pitty at the sight, When walking through the Gardin them she saw, Yet no'te she find redresse for such despight: For all that lives is subject to that law; All things decay in time, and to their end doe draw.

But were it not that Time their troubler is, All that in this delightfull Gardin growes Should happy bee, and have immortall blis: For here all plenty and all pleasure flowes; And sweete love gentle fitts emongst them throwes, Without fell rancor or fond gealosy. Franckly each Paramor his leman knowes, Each bird his mate; ne any does envy Their goodly meriment and gay felicity.

There is continuall Spring, and harvest there Continuall, both meeting at one tyme: For both the boughes doe laughing blossoms beare, And with fresh colours decke the wanton Pryme, And eke attonce the heavy trees they clyme, Which seeme to labour under their fruites lode: The whiles the joyous birdes make their pastyme Emongst the shady leaves, their sweet abode, And their trew loves without suspition tell abrode.

Right in the middest of that Paradise There stood a stately Mount, on whose round top A gloomy grove of mirtle trees did rise, Whose shady boughes sharp steele did never lop, Nor wicked beastes their tender buds did crop, But like a girlond compassed the hight; And from their fruitfull sydes sweet gum did drop, That all the ground, with pretious deaw bedight, Threw forth most dainty odours and most sweet delight.

And in the thickest covert of that shade There was a pleasaunt Arber, not by art But of the trees owne inclination made, Which knitting their rancke braunches, part to part, With wanton yvie twine entrayld athwart, And Eglantine and Caprifole emong,

Fashiond above within their inmost part, That nether Phœbus beams could through them throng, Nor Æolus sharp blast could worke them any wrong.

And all about grew every sort of flowre, To which sad lovers were transformde of yore; Fresh Hyacinthus, Phœbus paramoure And dearest love; Foolish Narcisse, that likes the watry shore; Sad Amaranthus, made a flowre but late, Sad Amaranthus, in whose purple gore Me seemes I see Amintas wretched fate, To whom sweet Poets verse hath given endlesse date.

There wont fayre Venus often to enjoy Her deare Adonis joyous company, And reape sweet pleasure of the wanton boy: There yet, some say, in secret he does ly, Lapped in flowres and pretious spycery, By her hid from the world, and from the skill Of Stygian Gods, which doe her love envy; But she her selfe, when ever that she will, Possesseth him, and of his sweetnesse takes her fill.

And sooth, it seemes, they say; for he may not For ever dye, and ever buried bee In balefull night where all thinges are forgot: All be he subject to mortalitie, Yet is eterne in mutabilitie, And by succession made perpetuall, Transformed oft, and chaunged diverslie; For him the Father of all formes they call: Therfore needs mote he live, that living gives to all.

There now he liveth in eternall blis, Joying his goddesse, and of her enjoyd; Ne feareth he henceforth that foe of his, Which with his cruell tuske him deadly cloyd: For that wilde Bore, the which him once annoyd, She firmely hath emprisoned for ay, That her sweet love his malice mote avoyd, In a strong rocky Cave, which is, they say, Hewen underneath that Mount, that none him losen may.

There now he lives in everlasting joy, With many of the Gods in company Which thither haunt, and with the winged boy, Sporting him selfe in safe felicity: Who when he hath with spoiles and cruelty Ransackt the world, and in the wofull harts Of many wretches set his triumphes hye, Thither resortes, and, laying his sad dartes Asyde, with faire Adonis playes his wanton partes.

And his trew love faire Psyche with him playes, Fayre Psyche to him lately reconcyld, After long troubles and unmeet upbrayes With which his mother Venus her revyld, And eke himselfe her cruelly exyld: But now in stedfast love and happy state She with him lives, and hath him borne a chyld, Pleasure, that doth both gods and men aggrate, Pleasure, the daughter of Cupid and Psyche late.

Hither great Venus brought this infant fayre, The yonger daughter of Chrysogonee, And unto Psyche with great trust and care Committed her, yfostered to bee And trained up in trew feminitee: Who no lesse carefully her tendered Then her owne daughter Pleasure, to whom shee Made her companion, and her lessoned In all the lore of love, and goodly womanhead.

In which when she to perfect ripenes grew, Of grace and beautie noble Paragone, She brought her forth into the worldes vew, To be th'ensample of true love alone, And Lodestarre of all chaste affection To all fayre Ladies that doe live on grownd. To Faery court she came; where many one Admyrd her goodly haveour, and fownd His feeble hart wide launched with loves cruel wownd.

But she to none of them her love did cast, Save to the noble knight Sir Scudamore, To whom her loving hart she linked fast In faithfull love, t'abide for evermore; And for his dearest sake endured sore Sore trouble of an hainous enimy, Who her would forced have to have forlore Her former love and stedfast loialty, As ye may elswhere reade that ruefull history.

But well I weene, ye first desire to learne What end unto that fearefull Damozell, Which fledd so fast from that same foster stearne Whom with his brethren Timias slew, befell: That was, to weet, the goodly Florimell; Who wandring for to seeke her lover deare, Her lover deare, her dearest Marinell, Into misfortune fell, as ye did heare, And from Prince Arthure fled with wings of idle feare.

Canto VII

The witches sonne loves Florimell: She flyes; he faines to die. Satyrane save the Squire of Dames From Gyaunts tyranny.

Like as an Hynd forth singled from the heard, That hath escaped from a ravenous beast, Yet flyes away of her owne feete afeard, And every leafe, that shaketh with the least Murmure of winde, her terror hath encreast; So fledd fayre Florimell from her vaine feare, Long after she from perill was releast: Each shade she saw, and each noyse she did heare, Did seeme to be the same which she escapt whileare.

All that same evening she in flying spent, And all that night her course continewed; Ne did she let dull sleepe once to relent, Nor wearinesse to slack her hast, but fled Ever alike, as if her former dred Were hard behind, her ready to arrest; And her white Palfrey, having conquered The maistring raines out of her weary wrest, Perforce her carried where ever he thought best.

So long as breath and hable puissaunce Did native corage unto him supply, His pace he freshly forward did advaunce, And carried her beyond all jeopardy; But nought that wanteth rest can long aby: He, having through incessant traveill spent His force, at last perforce adowne did ly, Ne foot could further move. The Lady gent Thereat was suddein strook with great astonishment;

And, forst t'alight, on foot mote algates fare A traveiler unwonted to such way: Need teacheth her this lesson hard and rare, That fortune all in equall launce doth sway, And mortall miseries doth make her play. So long she traveild, till at length she came To an hilles side, which did to her bewray A litle valley subject to the same, All coverd with thick woodes that quite it overcame.

Through the tops of the high trees she did descry A litle smoke, whose vapour thin and light Reeking aloft uprolled to the sky: Which chearefull signe did send unto her sight That in the same did wonne some living wight. Eftsoones her steps she thereunto applyd, And came at last in weary wretched plight Unto the place, to which her hope did guyde, To finde some refuge there, and rest her wearie syde.

There in a gloomy hollow glen she found A little cottage, built of stickes and reedes In homely wize, and wald with sods around; In which a witch did dwell, in loathly weedes And wilfull want, all carelesse of her needes; So choosing solitarie to abide Far from all neighbours, that her divelish deedes And hellish arts from people she might hide, And hurt far off unknowne whom ever she envide.

The Damzell there arriving entred in; Where sitting on the flore the Hag she found Busie (as seem'd) about some wicked gin: Who, soone as she beheld that suddein stound, Lightly upstarted from the dustie ground, And with fell looke and hollow deadly gaze Stared on her awhile, as one astound, Ne had one word to speake for great amaze, But shewd by outward signes that dread her sence did daze.

At last, turning her feare to foolish wrath, She askt, what devill had her thither brought, And who she was, and what unwonted path Had guided her, unwelcomed, unsought? To which the Damzell, full of doubtfull thought, Her mildly answer'd: "Beldame, be not wroth With silly Virgin, by adventure brought Unto your dwelling, ignorant and loth, That crave but rowme to rest while tempest overblo'th."

With that adowne out of her christall eyne Few trickling teares she softly forth let fall, That like to orient perles did purely shyne Upon her snowy cheeke; and therewithall She sighed soft, that none so bestiall Nor salvage hart, but ruth of her sad plight Would make to melt, or pitteously appall; And that vile Hag, all were her whole delight In mischiefe, was much moved at so pitteous sight;

And gan recomfort her in her rude wyse, With womanish compassion of her plaint, Wiping the teares from her suffused eyes, And bidding her sit downe, to rest her faint And wearie limbes awhile. She, nothing quaint Nor 'sdeignfull of so homely fashion, Sith brought she was now to so hard constraint, Sate downe upon the dusty ground anon; As glad of that small rest as Bird of tempest gon.

Tho gan she gather up her garments rent, And her loose lockes to dight in order dew With golden wreath and gorgeous ornament; Whom such whenas the wicked Hag

did vew, She was astonisht at her heavenly hew, And doubted her to deeme an earthly wight, But or some Goddesse, or of Dianes crew, And thought her to adore with humble spright T'adore thing so divine as beauty were but right.

This wicked woman had a wicked sonne, The comfort of her age and weary dayes, A laesy loord, for nothing good to donne, But stretched forth in ydlenesse alwayes, Ne ever cast his mind to covet prayse, Or ply himselfe to any honest trade, But all the day before the sunny rayes He us'd to slug, or sleepe in slothfull shade: Such laesinesse both lewd and poore attonce him made.

He, comming home at undertime, there found The fayrest creature that he ever saw Sitting beside his mother on the ground; The sight whereof did greatly him adaw, And his base thought with terrour and with aw So inly smot, that as one, which hath gaz'd On the bright Sunne unwares, doth soone withdraw His feeble eyne, with too much brightnes daz'd, So stared he on her, and stood long while amaz'd.

Softly at last he gan his mother aske, What mister wight that was, and whence deriv'd, That in so straunge disguizement there did maske, And by what accident she there arriv'd? But she, as one nigh of her wits depriv'd, With nought but ghastly lookes him answered; Like to a ghost, that lately is reviv'd From Stygian shores where late it wandered: So both at her, and each at other wondered.

But the fayre Virgin was so meeke and myld, That she to them vouchsafed to embace Her goodly port, and to their senses vyld Her gentle speach applyde, that in short space She grew familiare in that desert place. During which time the Chorle, through her so kind And courteise use, conceiv'd affection bace, And cast to love her in his brutish mind: No love, but brutish lust, that was so beastly tind.

Closely the wicked flame his bowels brent, And shortly grew into outrageous fire; Yet had he not the hart, nor hardiment, As unto her to utter his desire; His caytive thought durst not so high aspire: But with soft sighes and lovely semblaunces He ween'd that his affection entire She should aread; many resemblaunces To her he

made, and many kinde remembraunces.

Oft from the forrest wildings he did bring, Whose sides empurpled were with smyling red; And oft young birds, which he had taught to sing, His maistresse praises sweetly caroled; Girlonds of flowres sometimes for her faire hed He fine would dight; sometimes the squirrell wild He brought to her in bands, as conquered To be her thrall, his fellow-servant vild: All which she of him tooke with countenance meeke and mild.

But, past a while, when she fit season saw To leave that desert mansion, she cast In secret wize herselfe thence to withdraw, For feare of mischiefe, which she did forecast Might by the witch or by her sonne compast. Her wearie Palfrey, closely as she might, Now well recovered after long repast, In his proud furnitures she freshly dight, His late miswandred wayes now to remeasure right.

And earely, ere the dawning day appear'd, She forth issewed, and on her journey went: She went in perill, of each noyse affeard, And of each shade that did it selfe present; For still she feared to be overhent Of that vile hag, or her uncivile sonne; Who when, too late awaking, well they kent That their fayre guest was gone, they both begonne To make exceeding mone, as they had been undonne.

But that lewd lover did the most lament For her depart, that ever man did heare: He knockt his brest with desperate intent, And scratcht his face, and with his teeth did teare His rugged flesh, and rent his ragged heare; That his sad mother, seeing his sore plight, Was greatly woe begon, and gan to feare Least his fraile senses were emperisht quight, And love to frenzy turnd, sith love is franticke hight.

All wayes shee sought him to restore to plight, With herbs, with charms, with counsel, and with teares; But tears, nor charms, nor herbs, nor counsell, might Asswage the fury which his entrails teares: So strong is passion that no reason heares. Tho when all other helpes she saw to faile, She turnd her selfe backe to her wicked leares; And by her divelish arts thought to prevaile To bringe her backe

againe, or worke her finall bale.

Eftesoones out of her hidden cave she cald An hideous beast of horrible aspect, That could the stoutest corage have appald; Monstrous, mishapt, and all his backe was spect With thousand spots of colours queint elect, Thereto so swifte that it all beasts did pas: Like never yet did living eie detect; But likest it to an Hyena was, That feeds on wemens flesh as others feede on gras.

It forth she cald, and gave it streight in charge Through thicke and thin her to poursew apace, Ne once to stay to rest, or breath at large, Till her he had attaind and brought in place, Or quite devourd her beauties scornefull grace. The Monster, swifte as word that from her went, Went forth in haste, and did her footing trace So sure and swiftly, through his perfect sent And passing speede, that shortly he her overhent.

Whom when the fearefull Damzell nigh espide, No need to bid her fast away to flie: That ugly shape so sore her terrifide, That it she shund no lesse then dread to die; And her flitt palfrey did so well apply His nimble feet to her conceived feare, That whitest his breath did strength to him supply, From peril free he away her did beare; But when his force gan faile his pace gan wex areare.

Which whenas she perceiv'd, she was dismayd At that same last extremity ful sore, And of her safety greatly grew afrayd. And now she gan approch to the sea shore, As it befell, that she could flie no more, But yield herselfe to spoile of greedinesse: Lightly she leaped, as a wight forlore, From her dull horse, in desperate distresse, And to her feet betooke her doubtfull sickernesse.

Not halfe so fast the wicked Myrrha fled From dread of her revenging fathers hond; Nor halfe so fast to save her maydenhed Fled fearfull Daphne on th'Ægæan strond, As Florimell fled from that Monster yond, To reach the sea ere she of him were raught: For in the sea to drowne herselfe she fond, Rather then of the tyrant to be caught: Thereto fear gave her wings, and need her corage taught.

It fortuned (high God did so ordaine) As shee arrived on the roring shore, In minde to leape into the mighty maine, A little bote lay hoving her before, In which there slept a fisher old and pore, The whiles his nets were drying on the sand. Into the same shee lept, and with the ore Did thrust the shallop from the floting strand: So safety fownd at sea which she fownd not at land.

The Monster, ready on the pray to sease, Was of his forward hope deceived quight; Ne durst assay to wade the perlous seas, But greedily long gaping at the sight, At last in vaine was forst to turne his flight, And tell the idle tidings to his Dame: Yet, to avenge his divelish despight, He sett upon her Palfrey tired lame, And slew him cruelly ere any reskew came.

And, after having him embowelled To fill his hellish gorge, it chaunst a knight To passe that way, as forth he traveiled: Yt was a goodly Swaine, and of great might, As ever man that bloody field did fight; But in vain sheows, that wont yong knights bewitch, And courtly services, tooke no delight; But rather joyd to bee then seemen sich, For both to be and seeme to him was labor lich.

It was to weete the good Sir Satyrane, That raungd abrode to seeke adventures wilde, As was his wont, in forest and in plaine: He was all armd in rugged steele unfilde, As in the smoky forge it was compilde, And in his Scutchin bore a Satyres hedd. He comming present, where the Monster vilde Upon that milkewhite Palfreyes carcas fedd, Unto his reskew ran, and greedily him spedd.

There well perceivd he that it was the horse Whereon faire Florimell was wont to ride, That of that feend was rent without remorse: Much feared he least ought did ill betide To that faire Maide, the flowre of wemens pride; For her he dearely loved, and in all His famous conquests highly magnifide: Besides, her golden girdle, which did fall From her in flight, he fownd, that did him sore apall.

Full of sad feare and doubtfull agony Fiercely he flew upon that wicked feend, And with huge strokes and cruell battery Him forst to leave his pray, for to attend Him

selfe from deadly daunger to defend: Full many wounds in his corrupted flesh He did engrave, and muchell blood did spend, Yet might not doe him die: but aie more fresh And fierce he still appeard, the more he did him thresh.

He wist not how him to despoile of life, Ne how to win the wished victory, Sith him he saw still stronger grow through strife, And him selfe weaker through infirmity. Greatly he grew enrag'd, and furiously Hurling his sword away he lightly lept Upon the beast, that with great cruelty Rored and raged to be underkept; Yet he perforce him held, and strokes upon him hept.

As he that strives to stop a suddein flood, And in strong bancks his violence enclose, Forceth it swell above his wonted mood, And largely overflow the fruitfull plaine, That all the countrey seemes to be a Maine, And the rich furrowes flote, all quite fordonne: The wofull husbandman doth lowd complaine To see his whole yeares labor lost so soone, For which to God he made so many an idle boone:

So him he held, and did through might amate. So long he held him, and him bett so long, That at the last his fiercenes gan abate, And meekely stoup unto the victor strong: Who, to avenge the implacable wrong Which he supposed donne to Florimell, Sought by all meanes his dolor to prolong, Sith dint of steele his carcas could not quell; His maker with her charmes had framed him so well.

The golden ribband, which that virgin wore About her sclender waste, he tooke in hand, And with it bownd the beast, that lowd did rore For great despight of that unwonted band, Yet dared not his victor to withstand, But trembled like a lambe fled from the pray; And all the way him followd on the strand, As he had long bene learned to obay; Yet never learned he such service till that day.

Thus as he led the Beast along the way, He spide far off a mighty Giauntesse Fast flying, on a Courser dapled gray, From a bold knight that with great hardinesse Her hard pursewd, and sought for to suppresse. She bore before her lap a dolefull Squire, Lying athwart her horse in great distresse, Fast bounden hand and foote with cords

of wire, Whom she did meane to make the thrall of her desire.

Which whenas Satyrane beheld, in haste He lefte his captive Beast at liberty, And crost the nearest way, by which he cast, Her to encounter ere she passed by; But she the way shund nathemore forthy, But forward gallopt fast; which when he spyde, His mighty speare he couched warily, And at her ran: she, having him descryde, Her selfe to fight addrest, and threw her lode aside.

Like as a Goshauke, that in foote doth beare A trembling Culver, having spide on hight An Eagle that with plumy wings doth sheare The subtile ayre stouping with all his might, The quarry throwes to ground with fell despight, And to the batteill doth her selfe prepare: So ran the Geauntesse unto the fight Her fyrie eyes with furious sparkes did stare, And with blasphemous bannes high God in peeces tare.

She caught in hand an huge great yron mace, Wherewith she many had of life depriv'd; But, ere the stroke could seize his aymed place, His speare amids her sun-brode shield arriv'd: Yet nathemore the steele asonder riv'd, All were the beame in bignes like a mast, Ne her out of the stedfast sadle driv'd; But, glauncing on the tempred metall, brast In thousand shivers, and so forth beside her past.

Her Steed did stagger with that puissaunt strooke; But she no more was moved with that might Then it had lighted on an aged Oke, Or on the marble Pillour that is pight Upon the top of Mount Olympus hight, For the brave youthly Champions to assay With burning charet wheeles it nigh to smite; But who that smites it mars his joyous play, And is the spectacle of ruinous decay.

Yet, therewith sore enrag'd, with sterne regard Her dreadfull weapon she to him addrest, Which on his helmet martelled so hard That made him low incline his lofty crest, And bowd his battred visour to his brest: Wherewith he was so stund that he n'ote ryde, But reeled to and fro from east to west. Which when his cruell enimy espyde, She lightly unto him adjoyned syde to syde;

And, on his collar laying puissaunt hand, Out of his wavering seat him pluckt

perforse, Perforse him pluckt, unable to withstand Or helpe himselfe; and laying thwart her horse, In loathly wise like to a carrion corse, She bore him fast away. Which when the knight That her pursewed saw, with great remorse He nere was touched in his noble spright, And gan encrease his speed as she encreast her flight.

Whom when as nigh approching she espyde, She threw away her burden angrily; For she list not the batteill to abide, But made her selfe more light away to fly: Yet her the hardy knight pursewd so nye That almost in the backe he oft her strake; But still, when him at hand she did espy, She turnd, and semblaunce of faire fight did make, But, when he stayd, to flight againe she did her take.

By this the good Sir Satyrane gan wake Out of his dreame that did him long entraunce, And, seeing none in place, he gan to make Exceeding mone, and curst that cruell chaunce Which reft from him so faire a chevisaunce. At length he spyde whereas that wofull Squyre, Whom he had reskewed from captivaunce Of his strong foe, lay tombled in the myre, Unable to arise, or foote or hand to styre.

To whom approching, well he mote perceive In that fowle plight a comely personage And lovely face, made fit for to deceive Fraile Ladies hart with loves consuming rage, Now in the blossome of his freshest age. He reard him up and loosd his yron bands, And after gan inquire his parentage, And how he fell into the Gyaunts hands, And who that was which chaced her along the lands.

Then trembling yet through feare the Squire bespake: “That Geauntesse Argantè is behight, A daughter of the Titans which did make Warre against heven, and heaped hils on hight To scale the skyes and put Jove from his right: Her syre Typhoeus was; who, mad through merth, And dronke with blood of men slaine by his might, Through incest her of his owne mother Earth Whylome begot, being but halfe twin of that berth:

“For at that berth another Babe she bore; To weet, the mightie Ollyphant, that wrought Great wreake to many errant knights of yore, And many hath to foule

confusion brought. These twinnes, men say, (a thing far passing thought) While in their mothers wombe enclosd they were, Ere they into the lightsom world were brought, In fleshly lust were mingled both yfere, And in that monstrous wise did to the world appere.

“So liv’d they ever after in like sin, Gainst natures law and good behaveoure; But greatest shame was to that maiden twin, Who, not content so fowly to devoure Her native flesh and staine her brothers bowre, Did wallow in all other fleshly myre, And suffred beastes her body to deflowre, So whot she burned in that lustfull fyre; Yet all that might not slake her sensuall desyre:

“But over all the countrie she did raunge To seeke young men to quench her flaming thrust, And feed her fancy with delightfull chaunge: Whom so she fittest findes to serve her lust, Through her maine strength, in which she most doth trust, She with her bringes into a secret Ile, Where in eternall bondage dye he must, Or be the vassall of her pleasures vile, And in all shamefull sort him selfe with her defile.

“Me, seely wretch, she so at vauntage caught, After she long in waite for me did lye, And meant unto her prison to have brought, Her lothsom pleasure there to satisfye; That thousand deathes me lever were to dye Then breake the vow that to faire Columbell I plighted have, and yet keepe stedfastly. As for my name, it mistreth not to tell: Call me the Squyre of Dames; that me beseemeth well.

“But that bold knight, whom ye pursuing saw That Geauntesse, is not such as she seemd, But a faire virgin that in martiall law And deedes of armes above all Dames is deem’d, And above many knightes is eke esteemd For her great worth: She Palladine is hight. She you from death, you me from dread, redeemd; Ne any may that Monster match in fight, But she, or such as she, that is so chaste a wight.”

“Her well beseemes that Quest,” (quoth Satyrane) “But read, thou Squyre of Dames, what vow is this, Which thou upon thy selfe hast lately ta’ne?” “That shall I you recount,” (quoth he) “ywis, So be ye pleasd to pardon all amis. That gentle Lady

whom I love and serve, After long suit and wearie servicis, Did aske me, how I could her love deserve, And how she might be sure that I would never swerve?

“I, glad by any meanes her grace to gaine, Badd her commaund my life to save or spill. Eftsoones she badd me, with incessaunt paine To wander through the world abroad at will, And every where, where with my power or skill I might doe service unto gentle Dames, That I the same should faithfully fulfill; And at the twelve monethes end should bring their names And pledges, as the spoiles of my victorious games.

“So well I to faire Ladies service did, And found such favour in their loving hartes, That ere the yeare his course had compassid, Thre hundred pledges for my good desartes, And thrice three hundred thanks for my good partes, I with me brought, and did to her present: Which when she saw, more bent to eke my smartes Then to reward my trusty true intent, She gan for me devise a grievous punishment;

“To weet, that I my traveill should resume, And with like labour walke the world arownd, Ne ever to her presence should presume, Till I so many other Dames had fownd, The which, for all the suit I could propownd, Would me refuse their pledges to afford, But did abide for ever chaste and sownd.” “Ah! gentle Squyre,” (quoth he) “tell at one word, How many fownd’st thou such to put in thy record?”

“Indeed, Sir knight,” (said he) “one word may tell All that I ever fownd so wisely stayd, For onely three they were disposd so well; And yet three yeares I now abrode have strayd, To fynd them out.” “Mote I,” (then laughing sayd The knight) “inquire of thee what were those three, The which thy proffred curtesie denayd? Or ill they seemed sure avizd to bee, Or brutishly brought up, that nev’r did fashions see.”

“The first which then refused me,” (said hee) “Certes was but a common Courtisane; Yet flat refusd to have adoe with mee, Because I could not give her many a Jane.” (Thereat full hartely laughed Satyrane.) “The second was an holy Nunne to chose, Which would not let me be her Chappellane, Because she knew, she said, I would

disclose Her counsell, if she should her trust in me repose.

“The third a Damzell was of low degree, Whom I in countrey cottage fownd by chaunce: Full litle weened I that chastitee Had lodging in so meane a maintenaunce; Yet was she fayre, and in her countenaunce Dwelt simple truth in seemely fashion. Long thus I woo’d her with due observaunce, In hope unto my pleasure to have won; But was as far at last, as when I first begon.

“Safe her, I never any woman found That chastity did for it selfe embrace, But were for other causes firme and sound; Either for want of handsome time and place, Or else for feare of shame and fowle disgrace. Thus am I hopelesse ever to attaine My Ladies love in such a desperate case, But all my dayes am like to waste in vaine, Seeking to match the chaste with th’unchaste Ladies traine.”

“Perdy” (sayd Satyrane) “thou Squyre of Dames, Great labour fondly hast thou hent in hand, To get small thankes, and therewith many blames, That may emongst Alcides labours stand.” Thence backe returning to the former land, Where late he left the Beast he overcame, He found him not; for he had broke his band, And was returnd againe unto his Dame, To tell what tydings of fayre Florimell became.

Canto VIII

The Witch creates a snowy Lady Like to Florimell; Who, wrong’d by Carle, by Proteus sav’d, Is sought by Paridell.

So oft as I this history record, My heart doth melt with meere compassion, To thinke how causelesse, of her owne accord, This gentle Damzell, whom I write upon, Should plonged be in such affliction Without all hope of comfort or reliefe; That sure, I weene, the hardest hart of stone Would hardly finde to aggravate her griefe; For misery craves rather mercy then repriefe.

But that accursed Hag, her hostesse late, Had so enranckled her malitious hart, That she desyrd th’abridgement of her fate, Or long enlargement of her painefull smart.

Now when the Beast, which by her wicked art Late foorth she sent, she backe retourning spyde Tyde with her golden girdle; it a part Of her rich spoyles whom he had earst destroyd She weend, and wondrous gladnes to her hart applyde.

And, with it ronning hast'ly to her sonne, Thought with that sight him much to have reliv'd; Who, thereby deeming sure the thing as donne, His former griefe with furie fresh reviv'd Much more then earst, and would have algates riv'd The hart out of his brest: for sith her dedd He surely dempt, himselfe he thought depriv'd Quite of all hope wherewith he long had fedd His foolish malady, and long time had misledd.

With thought whereof exceeding mad he grew, And in his rage his mother would have slaine, Had she not fled into a secret mew, Where she was wont her Sprightes to entertaine, The maisters of her art: there was she faine To call them all in order to her ayde, And them conjure, upon eternall paine, To counsell her, so carefully dismayd, How she might heale her sonne whose senses were decayd.

By their advice, and her owne wicked wit, She there deviz'd a wondrous worke to frame, Whose like on earth was never framed yit; That even Nature selfe envide the same, And grudg'd to see the counterfet should shame The thing it selfe: In hand she boldly tooke To make another like the former Dame, Another Florimell, in shape and looke So lively and so like, that many it mistooke.

The substance, whereof she the body made, Was purest snow in massy mould congeald, Which she had gathered in a shady glade Of the Riphœan hils, to her reveald By errant Sprights, but from all men conceald: The same she tempred with fine Mercury And virgin wex that never yet was seald, And mingled them with perfect vermily; That like a lively sanguine it seemd to the eye.

Instead of eyes two burning lampes she set In silver sockets, shyning like the skyes, And a quicke moving Spirit did arret To stirre and roll them like to womens eyes: Instead of yellow lockes she did devyse With golden wyre to weave her curled head; Yet golden wyre was not so yellow thryse As Florimells fayre heare: and, in the

stead Of life, she put a Spright to rule the carcas dead;

A wicked Spright, yfraught with fawning guyle And fayre resemblance above all the rest, Which with the Prince of Darkenes fell somewhyle From heavens blis and everlasting rest: Him needed not instruct which way were best Him selfe to fashion likest Florimell, Ne how to speake, ne how to use his gest; For he in counterfesaunce did excell, And all the wyles of wemens wits knew passing well.

Him shaped thus she deckt in garments gay, Which Florimell had left behind her late; That who so then her saw would surely say It was her selfe whom it did imitate, Or fayrer then her selfe, if ought algate Might fayrer be. And then she forth her brought Unto her sonne that lay in feeble state; Who seeing her gan streight upstart, and thought She was the Lady selfe whom he so long had sought.

Tho fast her clipping twixt his armes twayne, Extremely joyed in so happy sight, And soone forgot his former sickely payne: But she, the more to seeme such as she hight, Coyly rebutted his embracement light; Yet still, with gentle countenaunce, retain'd Enough to hold a foole in vaine delight. Him long she so with shadowes entertain'd, As her Creatresse had in charge to her ordain'd.

Till on a day, as he disposed was To walke the woodes with that his Idole faire, Her to disport and idle time to pas In th'open freshnes of the gentle aire, A knight that way there chaunced to repaire; Yet knight he was not, but a boastfull swaine That deedes of armes had ever in despaire, Proud Braggadocchio, that in vaunting vaine His glory did repose, and credit did maintaine.

He, seeing with that Chorle so faire a wight, Decked with many a costly ornament, Much merveiled thereat, as well he might, And thought that match a fowle disparagement: His bloody speare eftesoones he boldly bent Against the silly clowne, who dead through feare Fell streight to ground in great astonishment. "Villein," (sayd he) "this Lady is my deare; Dy, if thou it gainesay: I will away her beare."

The fearefull Chorle durst not gainesay nor dooe, But trembling stood, and yielded him the pray; Who, finding litle leasure her to wooe On Tromparts steed her mounted without stay, And without reskew led her quite away. Proud man himselfe then Braggadochio deem'd, And next to none after that happy day, Being possessed of that spoyle, which seem'd The fairest wight on ground, and most of men esteem'd.

But, when hee saw him selfe free from poursute, He gan make gentle purpose to his Dame With termes of love and lewdnesse dissolute; For he could well his glozing speaches frame To such vaine uses that him best became: But she thereto would lend but light regard, As seeming sory that she ever came Into his powre, that used her so hard To reave her honor, which she more then life prefard.

Thus as they two of kindnes treated long, There them by chaunce encountred on the way An armed knight upon a courser strong, Whose trampling feete upon the hollow lay Seemed to thunder, and did nigh affray That Capons corage: yet he looked grim, And faynd to cheare his lady in dismay, Who seemd for feare to quake in every lim, And her to save from outrage meekely prayed him.

Fiercely that straunger forward came: and, nigh Approching, with bold words and bitter threat Bad that same boaster, as he mote, on high, To leave to him that lady for excheat, Or bide him batteill without further treat. That challenge did too peremptory seeme, And fild his senses with abashment great; Yet seeing nigh him jeopardy extreme, He it dissembled well, and light seemd to esteeme;

Saying, "Thou foolish knight, that weenst with words To steale away that I with blowes have wonne, And brought through points of many perilous swords: But if thee list to see thy Courser ronne, Or prove thy selfe, this sad encounter shonne, And seeke els without hazard of thy hedd." At those prowd words that other knight begonne To wex exceeding wroth, and him aredd To turne his steede about, or sure he should be dedd.

“Sith then,” (said Braggadochio) “needes thou wilt Thy daies abridge through proofe of puissaunce, Turne we our steeds; that both in equall tilt May meete againe, and each take happy chaunce.” This said, they both a furlongs mountenaunce Retird their steeds, to ronne in even race; But Braggadochio, with his bloody launce, Once having turnd, no more returnd his face, But lefte his love to losse, and fled him selfe apace.

The knight, him seeing flie, had no regard Him to poursew, but to the lady rode; And having her from Trompart lightly reard, Upon his Courser sett the lovely lode, And with her fled away without abode. Well weened he, that fairest Florimell It was with whom in company he yode, And so her selfe did alwaies to him tell; So made him thinke him selfe in heven that was in hell.

But Florimell her selfe was far away, Driven to great distresse by fortune straunge, And taught the carefull Mariner to play, Sith late mischaunce had her compeld to chaunge The land for sea, at randon there to raunge: Yett there that cruell Queene avengeresse, Not satisfyde so far her to estraunge From courtly blis and wonted happinesse, Did heape on her new waves of weary wretchednesse.

For being fled into the fishers bote For refuge from the Monsters cruelty, Long so she on the mighty maine did flote, And with the tide drove forward carelesly; For th’ayre was milde and cleared was the skie, And all his windes Dan Æolus did keepe From stirring up their stormy enmity, As pittying to see her waile and weepe: But all the while the fisher did securely sleepe.

At last when droncke with drowsinesse he woke, And saw his drover drive along the streame, He was dismayd; and thrise his brest he stroke, For marveill of that accident extreame: But when he saw that blazing beauties beame, Which with rare light his bote did beautifye, He marveild more, and thought he yet did dreame Not well awakte; or that some extasye Assotted had his sence, or dazed was his eye.

But when her well avizing hee perceiv’d To be no vision nor fantasticke sight, Great

comfort of her presence he conceiv'd, And felt in his old corage new delight To gin awake, and stir his frosen spright: Tho rudely askte her, how she thither came? "Ah!" (sayd she) "father, I note read aright What hard misfortune brought me to this same; Yet am I glad that here I now in safety ame.

"But thou, good man, sith far in sea we bee, And the great waters gin apace to swell, That now no more we can the mayn-land see, Have care, I pray, to guide the cock-bote well, Least worse on sea then us on land befell." Thereat th'old man did nought but fondly grin, And saide his boat the way could wisely tell; But his deceiptfull eyes did never lin To looke on her faire face and marke her snowy skin.

The sight whereof in his congealed flesh Infixt such secrete sting of greedy lust, That the drie withered stocke it gan refresh, And kindled heat that soone in flame forth brust: The driest wood is soonest burnt to dust. Rudely to her he lept, and his rough hond Where ill became him rashly would have thrust; But she with angry scorne did him withstond, And shamefully reproved for his rudenes fond.

But he, that never good nor maners knew, Her sharpe rebuke full litle did esteeme; Hard is to teach an old horse amble trew: The inward smoke, that did before but steeme, Broke into open fire and rage extreme; And now he strength gan adde unto his will, Forcyng to doe that did him fowle misseeme. Beastly he threwe her downe, ne car'd to spill Her garments gay with scales of fish that all did fill.

The silly virgin strove him to withstand All that she might, and him in vaine revild: Shee strugled strongly both with foote and hand To save her honor from that villaine vilde, And cride to heven, from humane help exild. O! ye brave knights, that boast this Ladies love, Where be ye now, when she is nigh defild Of filthy wretch? well may she you reprove Of falsehood or of slouth, when most it may behove.

But if that thou, Sir Satyran, didst weete, Or thou, Sir Peridure, her sory state, How soone would yee assemble many a fleete, To fetch from sea that ye at land lost late! Towres, citties, kingdomes, ye would ruinate In your avengement and despiteous

rage, Ne ought your burning fury mote abate; But if Sir Calidore could it presage, No living creature could his cruelty asswage.

But sith that none of all her knights is nye, See how the heavens, of voluntary grace And soveraine favor towards chastity, Doe succor send to her distressed cace; So much high God doth innocence embrace. It fortuned, whilest thus she stifly strove, And the wide sea importuned long space With shrilling shriekes, Proteus abrode did rove, Along the fomy waves driving his finny drove.

Proteus is Shepheard of the seas of yore, And hath the charge of Neptunes mighty heard; An aged sire with head all frory hore, And sprinckled frost upon his deawy beard: Who when those pittifull outcries he heard Through all the seas so ruefully resownd, His charett swifte in hast he thither steard, Which with a teeme of scaly Phocas bownd Was drawne upon the waves that fomed him arownd.

And comming to that Fishers wandring bote, That went at will withouten card or sayle, He therein saw that yrkesome sight, which smote Deepe indignation and compassion frayle Into his hart attonce: streight did he hayle The greedy villein from his hoped pray, Of which he now did very litle fayle, And with his staffe, that drives his heard astray, Him bett so sore, that life and sence did much dismay.

The whiles the pitteous Lady up did ryse, Ruffled and fowly raid with filthy soyle, And blubbred face with teares of her faire eyes: Her heart nigh broken was with weary toyle, To save her selfe from that outrageous spoyle; But when she looked up, to weet what wight Had her from so infamous fact assoyld, For shame, but more for feare of his grim sight, Downe in her lap she hid her face, and lowdly shright.

Her selfe not saved yet from daunger dredd She thought, but chaung'd from one to other feare: Like as a fearefull partridge, that is fledd From the sharpe hauke which her attached neare, And fals to ground to seeke for succor theare, Whereas the hungry Spaniells she does spye With greedy jawes her ready for to teare: In such distresse and sad perplexity Was Florimell, when Proteus she did see her by.

But he endevored with speaches milde Her to recomfort, and accourage bold, Bidding her feare no more her foeman vilde, Nor doubt himselfe; and who he was her told: Yet all that could not from affright her hold, Ne to recomfort her at all prevayld; For her faint hart was with the frosen cold Benumbd so inly, that her wits nigh fayld, And all her sences with abashment quite were quayld.

Her up betwixt his rugged hands he reard, And with his frory lips full softly kist, Whiles the cold ysickles from his rough beard Dropped adowne upon her yvory brest: Yet he him selfe so busily addrest, That her out of astonishment he wrought; And out of that same fishers filthy nest Removing her, into his charet brought, And there with many gentle termes her faire besought.

But that old leachour, which with bold assault That beautie durst presume to violate, He cast to punish for his hainous fault: Then tooke he him, yet trembling sith of late, And tyde behind his charet, to aggrate The virgin whom he had abusde so sore; So drag'd him through the waves in scornfull state, And after cast him up upon the shore; But Florimell with him unto his bowre he bore.

His bowre is in the bottom of the maine, Under a mightie rocke, gainst which doe rave The roring billowes in their proud disdaine, That with the angry working of the wave Therein is eaten out an hollow cave, That seemes rough Masons hand with engines keene Had long while laboured it to engrave: There was his wonne; ne living wight was seene Save one old Nymph, hight Panopè, to keepe it cleane.

Thither he brought the sory Florimell, And entertained her the best he might, And Panopè her entertaind eke well, As an immortall mote a mortall wight, To winne her liking unto his delight: With flattering wordes he sweetly wooed her, And offered faire guiftes t'allure her sight; But she both offers and the offerer Despysde, and all the fawning of the flatterer.

Dayly he tempted her with this or that, And never suffred her to be at rest; But evermore she him refused flat, And all his fained kindnes did detest, So firmely she

had sealed up her brest. Sometimes he boasted that a God he hight, But she a mortall creature loved best: Then he would make him selfe a mortall wight; But then she said she lov'd none, but a Faery knight.

Then like a Faerie knight him selfe he drest, For every shape on him he could endew; Then like a king he was to her exprest, And offred kingdoms unto her in vew, To be his Leman and his Lady trew: But when all this he nothing saw prevaile, With harder meanes he cast her to subdew, And with sharpe threates her often did assayle; So thinking for to make her stubborne corage quayle.

To dreadfull shapes he did him selfe transforme; Now like a Gyaunt; now like to a feend; Then like a Centaure; then like to a storme Raging within the waves: thereby he weend Her will to win unto his wished eend; But when with feare, nor favour, nor with all He els could doe, he saw him selfe esteemd, Downe in a Dongeon deepe he let her fall, And threatned there to make her his eternall thrall.

Eternall thraldome was to her more liefe Then losse of chastitie, or chaunge of love: Dye had she rather in tormenting griefe Then any should of falsenesse her reprove, Or loosenes, that she lightly did remove. Most vertuous virgin! glory be thy meed, And crowne of heavenly prayse with Saintes above, Where most sweet hymmes of this thy famous deed Are still emongst them song, that far my rymes exceed.

Fit song of Angels caroled to bee! But yet whatso my feeble Muse can frame Shal be t'advance thy goodly chastitee And to enroll thy memorable name In th'heart of every honourable Dame, That they thy vertuous deedes may imitate, And be partakers of thy endlesse fame. Yt yrkes me leave thee in this wofull state, To tell of Satyrane where I him left of late.

Who having ended with that Squyre of Dames A long discourse of his adventures vayne, The which himselfe then Ladies more defames, And finding not th'Hyena to be slayne, With that same Squyre retourned back againe To his first way. And, as they forward went, They spyde a knight fay re pricking on the playne, As if he were

on some adventure bent, And in his port appeared manly hardiment.

Sir Satyrane him towardes did addresse, To weet what wight he was, and what his quest; And, comming nigh, eftsoones he gan to gesse, Both by the burning hart which on his brest He bare, and by the colours in his crest, That Paridell it was. Tho to him yode, And him saluting as beseemed best, Gan first inquire of tydinges farre abrode, And afterwardes on what adventure now he rode.

Who thereto answering said: “The tydinges bad, Which now in Faery court all men doe tell, Which turned hath great mirth to mourning sad, Is the late ruine of proud Marinell, And suddein parture of faire Florimell To find him forth: and after her are gone All the brave knightes that doen in armes excell To savegard her ywandred all alone: Emongst the rest my lott (unworthy’) is to be one.”

“Ah! gentle knight,” (said then Sir Satyrane) “Thy labour all is lost, I greatly dread, That hast a thanklesse service on thee ta’ne, And offrest sacrifice unto the dead: For dead, I surely doubt, thou maist aread Henceforth for ever Florimell to bee; That all the noble knights of Maydenhead, Which her ador’d, may sore repent with mee, And all faire Ladies may for ever sory bee.”

Which wordes when Paridell had heard, his hew Gan greatly chaunge and seemd dismaid to bee; Then said: “Fayre Sir, how may I weene it trew, That ye doe tell in such uncerteintee? Or speake ye of report, or did ye see Just cause of dread, that makes ye doubt so sore? For, perdie, elles how mote it ever bee, That ever hand should dare for to engore Her noble blood? The hevens such crueltie abhore.”

“These eyes did see that they will ever rew T’have seene,” (quoth he) “when as a monstrous beast The Palfrey whereon she did travell slew, And of his bowels made his bloody feast: Which speaking token sheweth at the least Her certeine losse, if not her sure decay: Besides, that more suspicion encreast, I found her golden girdle cast astray, Distaynd with durt and blood, as relique of the pray.”

“Ay me!” (said Paridell) “the signes be sadd; And, but God turne the same to good

sooth-say, That Ladies safetie is sore to be dradd: Yet will I not forsake my forward way, Till triall doe more certeine truth bewray." "Faire Sir," (quoth he) "well may it you succeed! Ne long shall Satyrane behind you stay, But to the rest, which in this Quest proceed, My labour adde, and be partaker of their speed."

"Ye noble knights," (said then the Squyre of Dames) "Well may yee speede in so praiseworthy payne! But sith the Sunne now ginnes to slake his beames In deawy vapours of the westerne mayne, And lose the teme out of his weary wayne, Mote not mislike you also to abate Your zealous hast, till morrow next againe Both light of heven and strength of men relate: Which if ye please, to yonder castle turne your gate."

That counsell pleased well: so all yfere Forth marched to a Castle them before; Where soone arryving they restrained were Of ready entraunce, which ought evermore To errant knights be commune: wondrous sore Thereat displeasd they were, till that young Squyre Gan them informe the cause, why that same dore Was shut to all which lodging did desyre: The which to let you weet will further time requyre.

Canto IX

Malbecco will no straunge knights host, For peevish gealosie. Paridell giusts with Britomart: Both shew their anncestrie.

Redoubted knights, and honorable Dames, To whom I levell all my labours end, Right sore I feare, least with unworthie blames This odious argument my rymes should shend, Or ought your goodly patience offend, Whiles of a wanton Lady I doe write, Which with her loose incontinence doth blend The shyning glory of your soveraine light; And knighthood fowle defaced by a faithlesse knight.

But never let th'ensample of the bad Offend the good; for good, by paragone Of evill, may more notably be rad, As white seemes fayrer macht with blacke attone;

Ne all are shamed by the fault of one: For lo! in heven, whereas all goodnes is, Emongst the Angels, a whole legione Of wicked Sprightes did fall from happy blis; What wonder then if one, of women all, did mis?

Then listen, Lordings, if ye list to weet The cause why Satyrane and Paridell Mote not be entertaynd, as seemed meet, Into that Castle, (as that Squyre does tell.) “Therein a cancred crabbed Carle does dwell, That has no skill of Court nor courtesie, Ne cares what men say of him, ill or well; For all his dayes he drownes in privitie, Yet has full large to live and spend at libertie.

“But all his minde is set on mucky pelfe, To hoord up heapes of evill gotten masse, For which he others wrongs, and wreckes himselfe: Yet is he lincked to a lovely lasse, Whose beauty doth her bounty far surpasse; The which to him both far unequall yeares, And also far unlike conditions has; For she does joy to play emongst her peares, And to be free from hard restraynt and gealous feares.

“But he is old, and withered like hay, Unfit faire Ladies service to supply; The privie guilt whereof makes him alway Suspect her truth, and keepe continuall spy Upon her with his other blincked eye; Ne suffreth he resort of living wight Approch to her, ne keepe her company, But in close bowre her mewes from all mens sight, Depriv’d of kindly joy and naturall delight.

“Malbecco he, and Hellenore she hight; Unfitly yokt together in one teeme. That is the cause why never any knight Is suffred here to enter, but he seeme Such as no doubt of him he neede misdeeme.” Thereat Sir Satyrane gan smyle, and say; “Extremely mad the man I surely deeme, That weenes with watch and hard restraynt to stay A womans will, which is disposd to go astray.

“In vaine he feares that which he cannot shonne; For who wotes not, that womans subtiltyes Can guylen Argus, when she list misdonne? It is not yron bandes, nor hundred eyes, Nor brasen walls, nor many wakefull spyes, That can withhold her wilfull wandring feet; But fast goodwill, with gentle courtesyes, And timely service

to her pleasures meet, May her perhaps containe, that else would algates fleet."

"Then is he not more mad," (sayd Paridell) "That hath himselfe unto such service sold, In dolefull thraldome all his dayes to dwell? For sure a foole I doe him firmely hold, That loves his fetters, though they were of gold. But why doe wee devise of others ill, Whyles thus we suffer this same dotard old To keepe us out in scorne, of his owne will, And rather do not ransack all, and him selfe kill?"

"Nay, let us first" (sayd Satyrane) "entreat The man by gentle meanes to let us in, And afterwardes affray with cruell threat, Ere that we to efforce it doe begin: Then, if all fayle, we will by force it win, And eke reward the wretch for his mesprise, As may be worthy of his haynous sin." That counsell pleasd: then Paridell did rise And to the Castle gate approcht in quiet wise.

Whereat soft knocking entrance he desyrd. The good man selfe, which then the Porter playd, Him answered, that all were now retyrd Unto their rest, and all the keyes convayd Unto their maister, who in bed was layd, That none him durst awake out of his dreme; And therefore them of patience gently prayd. Then Paridell began to chaunge his theme, And threatned him with force and punishment extreme:

But all in vaine, for nought mote him relent. And now so long before the wicket fast They wayted, that the night was forward spent, And the faire welkin fowly overcast Gan blowen up a bitter stormy blast, With showre and hayle so horrible and dred, That this faire many were compeld at last To fly for succour to a little shed, The which beside the gate for swyne was ordered.

It fortuned, soone after they were gone, Another knight, whom tempest thither brought, Came to that Castle, and with earnest mone, Like as the rest, late entrance deare besought: But, like so as the rest, he prayd for nought; For flatly he of entrance was refusd. Sorely thereat he was displeased, and thought How to avenge himselfe so sore abusd, And evermore the Carle of courtesie accusd.

But, to avoyde th'intolerable stowre, He was compeld to seeke some refuge neare,

And to that shed, to shrowd him from the showre, He came, which full of guests he found whyleare, So as he was not let to enter there: Whereat he gan to wex exceeding wroth, And swore that he would lodge with them yfere, Or them dislodge, all were they liefe or loth; And so defyde them each, and so defyde them both.

Both were full loth to leave that needfull tent, And both full loth in darkenesse to debate; Yet both full liefe him lodging to have lent, And both full liefe his boasting to abate: But chiefely Paridell his hart did grate To heare him threaten so despightfully, As if he did a dogge in kenell rate That durst not barke; and rather had he dy Then, when he was defyde, in coward corner ly.

Tho hastily remounting to his steed He forth issew'd: like as a boystrous winde, Which in th'earthes hollow caves hath long ben hid And shut up fast within her prisons blind, Makes the huge element, against her kinde, To move and tremble as it were aghast, Untill that it an issew forth may finde: Then forth it breakes, and with his furious blast Confounds both land and seas, and skyes doth overcast.

Their steel-hed speares they strongly coucht, and met Together with impetuous rage and forse, That with the terrour of their fierce affret They rudely drove to ground both man and horse, That each awhile lay like a sencelesse corse. But Paridell sore brused with the blow Could not arise the counterchaunge to scorse, Till that young Squyre him reared from below; Then drew he his bright sword, and gan about him throw.

But Satyrane forth stepping did them stay, And with faire treaty pacifide their yre. Then, when they were accorded from the fray, Against that Castles Lord they gan conspire, To heape on him dew vengeaunce for his hire. They beene agreed; and to the gates they goe To burn the same with unquenchable fire, And that uncurteous Carle, their commune foe, To doe fowle death to die, or wrap in grievous woe.

Malbecco, seeing them resolvd indeed To flame the gates, and hearing them to call For fire in earnest, ran with fearfull speed, And to them calling from the castle wall,

Besought them humbly him to beare withall, As ignorant of servants bad abuse And slacke attendaunce unto straungers call. The knights were willing all things to excuse, Though nought belev'd, and entraunce late did not refuse.

They beene ybrought into a comely bowre, And servd of all things that mote needfull bee; Yet secretly their hoste did on them lowre, And welcomde more for feare then charitee; But they dissembled what they did not see, And welcomed themselves. Each gan undight Their garments wett, and weary armour free, To dry them selves by Vulcanes flaming light, And eke their lately bruzed parts to bring in plight.

And eke that straunger knight emongst the rest Was for like need enforst to disaray: Tho, whenas vailed was her lofty crest, Her golden locks, that were in trammells gay Upbounden, did them selves adowne display And raught unto her heeles; like sunny beames, That in a cloud their light did long time stay, Their vapour vaded, shewe their golden gleames, And through the persant aire shoote forth their azure streames.

Shee also dofte her heavy haberjeon, Which the faire feature of her limbs did hyde; And her well-plighted frock, which she did won To tucke about her short when she did ryde, Shee low let fall, that flowd from her lanck syde Downe to her foot with carelesse modestee. Then of them all she plainly was espyde To be a woman-wight, unwist to bee, The fairest woman-wight that ever eie did see.

Like as Bellona (being late returnd From slaughter of the Giaunts conquered: Where proud Encelade, whose wide nosethrils burnd With breathed flames, like to a furnace redd, Transfixed with her speare downe tombled dedd From top of Hemus by him heaped hye;) Hath loosd her helmet from her lofty hedd, And her Gorgonian shield gins to untye From her lefte arme, to rest in glorious victorye.

Which whenas they beheld, they smitten were With great amazement of so wondrous sight; And each on other, and they all on her, Stood gazing, as if suddein great affright Had them surprizd. At last, avizing right Her goodly personage and

glorious hew, Which they so much mistooke, they tooke delight In their first error, and yett still anew With wonder of her beauty fed their hongry vew.

Yet note their hongry vew be satisfide, But seeing still the more desir'd to see, And ever firmely fixed did abide In contemplation of divinitee: But most they mervaild at her chevalree And noble prowesse, which they had approv'd, That much they faynd to know who she mote bee; Yet none of all them her thereof amov'd, Yet every one her likte, and every one her lov'd.

And Paridell, though partly discontent With his late fall and fowle indignity, Yet was soone wonne his malice to relent, Through gratious regard of her faire eye, And knightly worth which he too late did try, Yet tried did adore. Supper was dight; Then they Malbecco prayd of courtesy, That of his lady they might have the sight And company at meat, to doe them more delight.

But he, to shifte their curious request, Gan causen why she could not come in place; Her erased helth, her late recourse to rest, And humid evening ill for sicke folkes cace; But none of those excuses could take place, Ne would they eate till she in presence came. Shee came in presence with right comely grace, And fairely them saluted, as became, And shewd her selfe in all a gentle courteous Dame.

They sate to meat; and Satyrane his chaunce Was her before, and Paridell beside; But he him selfe sate looking still askaunce Gainst Britomart, and ever closely eide Sir Satyrane, that glaunces might not glide: But his blinde eie, that sided Paridell, All his demeasnure from his sight did hide: On her faire face so did he feede his fill, And sent close messages of love to her at will.

And ever and anone, when none was ware, With speaking lookes, that close embassage bore, He rov'd at her, and told his secret care; For all that art he learned had of yore: Ne was she ignoraunt of that leud lore, But in his eye his meaning wisely redd, And with the like him aunswerd evermore. Shee sent at him one fyrie dart, whose hedd Empoisned was with privy lust and gealous dredd.

He from that deadly throw made no defence, But to the wound his weake heart opened wyde: The wicked engine through false influence Past through his eies, and secretly did glyde Into his heart, which it did sorely gryde. But nothing new to him was that same paine, Ne paine at all; for he so ofte had tryde The powre thereof, and lov'd so oft in vaine, That thing of course he counted love to entertaine.

Thenceforth to her he sought to intimate His inward griefe, by meanes to him well knowne: Now Bacchus fruit out of the silver plate He on the table dasht, as overthrowne, Or of the fruitfull liquor overflowne; And by the dauncing bubbles did divine, Or therein write to lett his love be showne; Which well she redd out of the learned line: A sacrament prophane in mistery of wine.

And, when so of his hand the pledge she raught, The guilty cup she fained to mistake, And in her lap did shed her idle draught, Shewing desire her inward flame to slake. By such close signes they secret way did make Unto their wils, and one eies watch escape: Two eies he needeth, for to watch and wake, Who lovers will deceive. Thus was the ape, By their faire handling, put into Malbeccoes cape.

Now, when of meats and drinks they had their fill, Purpose was moved by that gentle Dame Unto those knights adventurous, to tell Of deeds of armes which unto them became, And every one his kindred and his name. Then Paridell, in whom a kindly pride Of gratious speach and skill his words to frame Abounded, being glad of so fitte tide Him to commend to her, thus spake, of al well eide.

"Troy, that art now nought but an idle name, And in thine ashes buried low dost lie, Though whilome far much greater then thy fame, Before that angry Gods and cruell skie Upon thee heapt a direfull destinie; What boots it boast thy glorious descent, And fetch from heven thy great genealogie, Sith all thy worthie prayses being blent Their ofspring hath embaste, and later glory shent?

"Most famous Worthy of the world, by whome That warre was kindled which did Troy inflame, And stately towres of Ilion whilome Brought unto balefull ruine, was

by name Sir Paris far renowmd through noble fame; Who, through great prowesse and bold hardinesse, From Lacedæmon fetcht the fayrest Dame That ever Greece did boast, or knight possesse, Whom Venus to him gave for meed of worthinesse;

“Fayre Helene, flowre of beautie excellent, And girlond of the mighty Conquerours, That madest many Ladies deare lament The heavie losse of their brave Paramours, Which they far off beheld from Trojan toures, And saw the fieldes of faire Scamander strowne With carcases of noble warrioures Whose fruitlesse lives were under furrow sowne, And Xanthus sandy bankes with blood all overflowne.

“From him my linage I derive aright, Who long before the ten yeares siege of Troy, Whiles yet on Ida he a shepeheard hight, On faire Oenone got a lovely boy, Whom, for remembrance of her passed joy, She, of his Father, Parius did name; Who, after Greekes did Priams realme destroy, Gathred the Trojan reliques sav’d from flame, And with them sayling thence to th’isle of Paros came.

“That was by him cald Paros, which before Hight Nausa: there he many yeares did raine, And built Nausicle by the Pontick shore; The which he dying lefte next in remaine To Paridas his sonne, From whom I Paridell by kin descend: But, for faire ladies love and glories gaine, My native soile have lefte, my dayes to spend In seewing deeds of armes, my lives and labors end.”

Whenas the noble Britomart heard tell Of Trojan warres and Priams citie sackt, The ruefull story of Sir Paridell, She was empassiond at that piteous act, With zelous envy of Greekes cruell fact Against that nation, from whose race of old She heard that she was lineally extract; For noble Britons sprong from Trojans bold, And Troynovant was built of old Troyes ashes cold.

Then, sighing soft awhile, at last she thus: “O lamentable fall of famous towne! Which raignd so many yeares victorious, And of all Asie bore the soveraine crowne, In one sad night consumd and throwen downe: What stony hart, that heares thy haplesse fate, Is not empierst with deepe compassiowne, And makes ensample of

mans wretched state, That floures so fresh at morne, and fades at evening late?

“Behold, Sir, how your pitifull complaint Hath fownd another partner of your payne; For nothing may impresse so deare constraint As countries cause, and commune foes disdayne. But if it should not grieve you backe agayne To turne your course, I would to heare desyre What to Aeneas fell; sith that men sayne He was not in the cities wofull fyre Consum’d, but did him selfe to safety retyre.”

“Anchyses sonne, begott of Venus fayre,” Said he, “out of the flames for safegard fled, And with a remnant did to sea repayre; Where he through fatall errour long was led Full many yeares, and weetlesse wandered From shore to shore emongst the Lybick sandes, Ere rest he fownd. Much there he suffered, And many perilles past in forreine landes, To save his people sad from victours vengefull handes.

“At last in Latium he did arryve, Where he with cruell warre was entertaind Of th’inland folke, which sought him backe to drive, Till he with old Latinus was constraind To contract wedlock, (so the fates ordaind) Wedlocke contract in blood, and eke in blood Accomplished, that many deare complaind: The rivall slaine, the victour, through the flood Escaped hardly, hardly praisd his wedlock good.

“Yet, after all, he victour did survive, And with Latinus did the kingdom part; But after, when both nations gan to strive Into their names the title to convart, His sonne Iülus did from thence depart With all the warlike youth of Trojans bloud, And in long Alba plast his throne apart; Where faire it florished and long time stoud, Till Romulus, renewing it, to Rome remoud.”

“There; there,” (said Britomart) “afresh appeard The glory of the later world to spring, And Troy againe out of her dust was reard To sitt in second seat of soveraine king Of all the world, under her governing. But a third kingdom yet is to arise Out of the Trojans scattered ofspring, That in all glory and great enterprise, Both first and second Troy shall dare to equalise.

“It Troynovant is hight, that with the waves Of wealthy Thamis washed is along,

Upon whose stubborne neck, (whereat he raves With roring rage, and sore him selfe does throng) That all men feare to tempt his billowes strong, She fastned hath her foot; which stands so hy, That it a wonder of the world is song In forreine lands; and all which passen by, Beholding it from farre, doe thinke it threates the skye.

“The Trojan Brute did first that citie fownd, And Hygate made the meare thereof by West, And Overt gate by North: that is the bownd Toward the land; two rivers bownd the rest. So huge a scope at first him seemed best, To be the compasse of his kingdomes seat: So huge a mind could not in lesser rest, Ne in small meares containe his glory great, That Albion had conquered first by warlike feat.”

“Ah! fairest Lady knight,” (said Paridell) “Pardon, I pray, my heedlesse oversight, Who had forgot that whylome I heard tell From aged Mnemon; for my wits beene light. Indeed he said, (if I remember right) That of the antique Trojan stocke there grew Another plant, that raught to wondrous hight, And far abroad his mightie braunches threw Into the utmost Angle of the world he knew.

“For that same Brute, whom much he did advaunce In all his speach, was Sylvius his sonne, Whom having slain through luckles arrowes glaunce, He fled for feare of that he had misdonne, Or els for shame, so fowle reproch to shonne, And with him ledd to sea an youthly trayne; Where wearie wandring they long time did wonne, And many fortunes prov’d in th’Ocean mayne, And great adventures found, that now were long to sayne.

“At last by fatall course they driven were Into an Island spatious and brode, The furthest North that did to them appeare: Which, after rest, they, seeking farre abrode, Found it the fittest soyle for their abode, Fruitfull of all thinges fitt for living foode, But wholy waste and void of peoples trode, Save an huge nation of the Geaunts broode That fed on living flesh, and dronck mens vitall blood.

“Whom he, through wearie wars and labours long, Subdewd with losse of many Britons bold: In which the great Goemagot of strong Corineus, and Coulin of Debon

old, Were overthrowne and laide on th'earth full cold, Which quaked under their so hideous masse; A famous history to bee enrold In everlasting moniments of brasse, That all the antique Worthies merits far did passe.

"His worke great Troynovant, his worke is eke Faire Lincolne, both renowmed far away; That who from East to West will endlong seeke, Cannot two fairer Cities find this day, Except Cleopolis: so heard I say Old Mnemon. Therefore, Sir, I greet you well Your countrey kin; and you entyrely pray Of pardon for the strife, which late befell Betwixt us both unknowne." So ended Paridell.

But all the while that he these speeches spent, Upon his lips hong faire Dame Hellenore With vigilant regard and dew attent, Fashioning worldes of fancies evermore In her fraile witt, that now her quite forlore: The whiles unwares away her wondring eye And greedy eares her weake hart from her bore; Which he perceiving, ever privily, In speaking many false belgardes at her let fly.

So long these knights discoursed diversly Of straunge affaires, and noble hardiment, Which they had past with mickle jeopardy, That now the humid night was farforth spent, And hevenly lampes were halfendeale ybrent: Which th'old man seeing wel, who too long thought Every discourse, and every argument, Which by the houres he measured, besought Them go to rest. So all unto their bowres were brought.

Canto X

Paridell rapeth Hellenore: Malbecco her pursewes: Findes emongst Satyres whence with him To tume she doth refuse.

The morow next, so soone as Phœbus Lamp Bewrayed had the world with early light, And fresh Aurora had the shady damp Out of the goodly heven amoved quight, Faire Britomart and that same Faery knight Uprose, forth on their journey for to wend: But Paridell complaynd, that his late fight With Britomart so sore did him offend, That ryde he could not, till his hurts he did amend.

So foorth they far'd; but he behind them stayd, Maulgre his host, who grudged grievously To house a guest that would be needes obayd, And of his owne him lefte not liberty: Might wanting measure moveth surquedry. Two things he feared, but the third was death; That fiers youngmans unruly maystery; His money, which he lov'd as living breath; And his faire wife, whom honest long he kept uneath.

But patience perforce, he must abie What fortune and his fate on him will lay; Fond is the feare that findes no remedie: Yet warily he watcheth every way, By which he feareth evill happen may; So th'evill thinkes by watching to prevent: Ne doth he suffer her, nor night nor day, Out of his sight her selfe once to absent: So doth he punish her, and eke him selfe torment.

But Paridell kept better watch then hee, A fit occasion for his turne to finde. False love! why do men say thou canst not see, And in their foolish fancy feigne thee blinde, That with thy charmes the sharpest sight doest binde, And to thy will abuse? Thou walkest free, And seest every secret of the minde; Thou seest all, yet none at all sees thee: All that is by the working of thy Deitee.

So perfect in that art was Paridell, That he Malbeccoes halfen eye did wyle; His halfen eye he wiled wondrous well, And Hellenors both eyes did eke beguyle, Both eyes and hart attonce, during the whyle That he there sojourned his woundes to heale; That Cupid selfe, it seeing, close did smyle To weet how he her love away did steale, And bad that none their joyous treason should reveale.

The learned lover lost no time nor tyde That least avantage mote to him afford, Yet bore so faire a sayle, that none espyde His secret drift, till he her layd abord. When so in open place and commune bord He fortun'd her to meet, with commune speach He courted her; yet bayted every word, That his ungentle hoste n'ote him appeach Of vile ungentlenesse, or hospitages breach.

But when apart (if ever her apart) He found, then his false engins fast he plyde, And all the sleights unbosomd in his hart: He sigh'd, he sobd, he swownd, he perdy dyde,

And cast himselfe on ground her fast besyde: Tho, when againe he him bethought to live, He wept, and wayld, and false laments belyde, Saying, but if she Mercie would him give, That he mote algates dye, yet did his death forgive.

And otherwhyles with amorous delights And pleasing toyes he would her entertaine; Now singing sweetly to surprize her sprights, Now making layes of love and lovers paine, Bransles, Ballads, virelayes, and verses vaine; Oft purposes, oft riddles, he devysd, And thousands like which flowed in his braine, With which he fed her fancy, and entysd To take to his new love, and leave her old despysd.

And every where he might, and everie while, He did her service dewtifull, and sewd At hand with humble pride and pleasing guile; So closely yet, that none but she it vewd, Who well perceived all, and all indewd. Thus finely did he his false nets dispred, With which he many weake harts had subdewd Of yore, and many had ylike misled: What wonder then, if she were likewise carried?

No fort so fensible, no wals so strong, But that continuall battery will rive, Or daily siege, through dispurvayaunce long And lacke of reskewes, will to parley drive; And Peece, that unto parley eare will give, Will shortly yield it selfe, and will be made The vassall of the victors will bylive: That stratageme had oftentimes assayd This crafty Paramoure, and now it plaine display'd:

For through his traines he her intrapped hath, That she her love and hart hath wholy sold To him, without regard of gaine or scath, Or care of credite, or of husband old, Whom she hath vow'd to dub a fayre Cucquold. Nought wants but time and place, which shortly shee Devized hath, and to her lover told. It pleased well: So well they both agree: So readie rype to ill ill wemens counsels bee!

Darke was the Evening, fit for lovers stealth, When chaunst Malbecco busie be elsewhere, She to his closet went, where all his wealth Lay hid; thereof she countlesse summes did reare, The which she meant away with her to beare; The rest she fyr'd, for sport, or for despight: As Hellene, when she saw aloft appeare The

Trojane flames and reach to hevens hight, Did clap her hands, and joyed at that dolefull sight.

This second Helene, fay re Dame Hellenore, The whiles her husband ran with sory haste To quench the flames which she had tyn'd before, Laught at his foolish labour spent in waste, And ran into her lovers armes right fast; Where streight embraced she to him did cry And call alowd for helpe, ere helpe were past; For lo! that Guest did beare her forcibly, And meant to ravish her, that rather had to dy.

The wretched man hearing her call for ayd, And ready seeing him with her to fly, In his disquiet mind was much dismayd: But when againe he backeward cast his eye, And saw the wicked fire so furiously Consume his hart, and scorch his Idoles face, He was therewith distressed diversely, Ne wist he how to turne, nor to what place: Was never wretched man in such a wofull cace.

Ay when to him she cryde, to her he turnd, And left the fire; love money overcame: But, when he marked how his money burnd, He left his wife; money did love disclame: Both was he loth to loose his loved Dame, And loth he leave his liefest pelfe behinde; Yet, sith he n'ote save both, he sav'd that same Which was the dearest to his dounghill minde, The God of his desire, the joy of misers blinde.

Thus whilest all things in troublous uprore were, And all men busie to suppresse the flame, The loving couple neede no reskew feare, But leasure had and liberty to frame Their purpost flight, free from all mens reclame; And Night, the patronesse of love-stealth fayre, Gave them safe conduct, till to end they came. So beene they gone yfere, a wanton payre Of lovers loosely knit, where list them to repayre.

Soone as the cruell flames yslaked were, Malbecco, seeing how his losse did lye, Out of the flames which he had quencht whylere, Into huge waves of griefe and gealosye Full deepe emplonged was, and drowned nye Twixt inward doole and felonous despight: He rav'd, he wept, he stampt, he lowd did cry, And all the passions that in man may light Did him attonce oppresse, and vex his caytive

spright.

Long thus he chawd the cud of inward griefe, And did consume his gall with anguish sore: Still when he mused on his late mischiefe, Then still the smart thereof increased more, And seemd more grievous then it was before. At last when sorrow he saw booted nought, Ne griefe might not his love to him restore, He gan devise how her he reskew mought: Ten thousand wayes he cast in his confused thought.

At last resolving, like a Pilgrim pore, To search her forth where so she might be fond, And bearing with him treasure in close store, The rest he leaves in ground: So takes in hond To seeke her endlong both by sea and lond. Long he her sought, he sought her far and nere, And every where that he mote understond Of knights and ladies any meetings were; And of each one he mett he tidings did inquere.

But all in vaine: his woman was too wise Ever to come into his clouch againe, And hee too simple ever to surprise The jolly Paridell, for all his paine. One day, as hee forpassed by the plaine With weary pace, he far away espide A couple, seeming well to be his twaine, Which hoved close under a forest side, As if they lay in wait, or els them selves did hide.

Well weened hee that those the same mote bee; And as he better did their shape avize, Him seemed more their maner did agree; For th'one was armed all in warlike wize, Whom to be Paridell he did devize; And th'other, al yclad in garments light Discolourd like to womanish disguise, He did resemble to his lady bright; And ever his faint hart much earned at the sight:

And ever faine he towards them would goe, But yet durst not for dread approchen nie, But stood aloofe, unweeting what to doe; Till that prickt forth with loves extremity That is the father of fowle gealosy, He closely nearer crept the truth to weet: But, as he nigher drew, he easily Might scerne that it was not his sweetest sweet, Ne yet her Belamour, the partner of his sheet:

But it was scornefull Braggadochio, That with his servant Trompart hoverd there,

Sith late he fled from his too earnest foe: Whom such whenas Malbecco spyed clere, He turned backe, and would have fled arere, Till Trompart, ronning hastely, him did stay, And bad before his soveraine Lord appere. That was him loth, yet durst he not gainesay, And comming him before low louted on the lay.

The Boaster at him sternely bent his browe, As if he could have kild him with his looke, That to the ground him meekely made to bowe, And awfull terror deepe into him strooke, That every member of his body quooke. Said he, “Thou man of nought, what doest thou here Unfitly furnisht with thy bag and booke, Where I expected one with shield and spere To prove some deeds of armes upon an equall pere?”

The wretched man at his imperious speach Was all abasht, and low prostrating said: “Good Sir, let not my rudenes be no breach Unto your patience, ne be ill ypaid; For I unwares this way by fortune straid, A silly Pilgrim driven to distresse, That seeke a Lady”—There he suddein staid, And did the rest with grievous sighes suppresse, While teares stood in his eies, few drops of bitternesse.

“What Lady, man?” (said Trompart) “take good hart, And tell thy griefe, if any hidden lye: Was never better time to shew thy smart Then now that noble succor is thee by, That is the whole worlds commune remedy.” That chearful word his weak heart much did cheare, And with vaine hope his spirits faint supply, That bold he sayd; “O most redoubted Pere! Vouchsafe with mild regard a wretches cace to heare.”

Then sighing sore, “It is not long,” (saide hee) “Sith I enjoyd the gentlest Dame alive; Of whom a knight, no knight at all perdee, But shame of all that doe for honor strive, By treacherous deceipt did me deprive: Through open outrage he her bore away, And with fowle force unto his will did drive; Which al good knights, that armes doe bear this day, Are bownd for to revenge, and punish if they may.

“And you, most noble Lord, that can and dare Redresse the wrong of miserable wight, Cannot employ your most victorious speare In better quarell then defence of

right, And for a Lady gainst a faithlesse knight: So shall your glory bee advaunced much, And all faire Ladies magnify your might, And eke my selfe, albee I simple such, Your worthy paine shall wel reward with guerdon rich."

With that out of his bouget forth he drew Great store of treasure, therewith him to tempt; But he on it lookt scornefully askew, As much disdeigning to be so misdempt, Or a war-monger to be basely nempt; And sayd; "Thy offers base I greatly loth, Arid eke thy words uncourteous and unkempt: I tread in dust thee and thy money both, That, were it not for shame"—So turned from him wroth.

But Trompart, that his maistres humor knew In lofty looks to hide an humble minde, Was inly tickled with that golden vew, And in his eare him rownded close behinde: Yet stoupt he not, but lay still in the winde, Waiting advauntage on the pray to sease, Till Trompart, lowly to the grownd inclinde, Besought him his great corage to appease, And pardon simple man that rash did him displease.

Big looking like a doughty Doucepere, At last he thus; "Thou clod of vilest clay, I pardon yield, and with thy rudenes beare; But weete henceforth, that all that golden pray, And all that els the vaine world vaunten may, I loath as doung, ne deeme my dew reward: Fame is my meed, and glory vertues pay: But minds of mortall men are muchell mard And mov'd amisse with massy mucks unmeet regard.

"And more: I graunt to thy great misery Gratious respect; thy wife shall backe be sent: And that vile knight, who ever that he bee, Which hath thy lady reft and knighthood shent, By Sanglamort my sword, whose deadly dent The blood hath of so many thousands shedd, I sweare, ere long shall dearely it repent; Ne he twixt heven and earth shall hide his hedd, But soone he shal be fownd, and shortly doen be dedd."

The foolish man thereat woxe wondrous blith, As if the word so spoken were halfe donne, And humbly thanked him a thousand sith That had from death to life him newly wonne. Tho forth the Boaster marching brave begonne His stolen steed to

thunder furiously, As if he heaven and hell would overronne, And all the world confound with cruelty; That much Malbecco joyed in his jollity.

Thus long they three together traveiled, Through many a wood and many an uncouth way, To seeke his wife that was far wandered: But those two sought nought but the present pray, To weete, the treasure which he did bewray, On which their eies and harts were wholly sett, With purpose how they might it best betray; For, sith the howre that first he did them lett The same behold, therwith their keene desires were whett.

It fortuned, as they together far'd, They spide where Paridell came pricking fast Upon the plaine; the which him selfe prepar'd To giust with that brave straunger knight a cast, As on adventure by the way he past. Alone he rode without his Paragone; For, having, filcht her bells, her up he cast To the wide world, and lett her fly alone: He nould be clogd. So had he served many one.

The gentle Lady, loose at randon lefte, The greenewood long did walke, and wander wide At wilde adventure, like a forlorne wefte; Till on a day the Satyres her espide Straying alone withouten groome or guide: Her up they tooke, and with them home her ledd, With them as housewife ever to abide, To milk their gotes, and make them cheese and bredd; And every one as commune good her handeled:

That shortly she Malbecco has forgott, And eke Sir Paridell, all were he deare; Who from her went to seeke another lott, And now by fortune was arrived here, Where those two guilers with Malbecco were. Soone as the old man saw Sir Paridell, He fainted, and was almost dead with feare, Ne word he had to speake his griefe to tell, But to him louted low, and greeted goodly well;

And, after, asked him for Hellenore: "I take no keepe of her," (sayd Paridell) "She wonneth in the forrest there before." So forth he rode as his adventure fell; The whiles the Boaster from his loftie sell Faynd to alight, something amisse to mend; But the fresh Swayne would not his leasure dwell, But went his way: whom when he

passed kend, He up remounted light, and after faind to wend.

“Perdy, nay,” (said Malbecco) “shall ye not; But let him passe as lightly as he came: For litle good of him is to be got, And mickle perill to bee put to shame. But let us goe to seeke my dearest Dame, Whom he hath left in yonder forest wyld; For of her safety in great doubt I ame, Least salvage beastes her person have despoyld: Then all the world is lost, and we in vaine have toyld.”

They all agree, and forward them addresse: “Ah! but,” (said crafty Trompart) “weete ye well, That yonder in that wastefull wildernesse Huge monsters haunt, and many dangers dwell; Dragons, and Minotaures, and feendes of hell, And many wilde woodmen which robbe and rend All traveilers: therefore advise ye well Before ye enterprise that way to wend: One may his journey bring too soone to evill end.”

Malbecco stopt in great astonishment, And with pale eyes fast fixed on the rest, Their counsell crav’d in daunger imminent. Said Trompart; “You, that are the most opprest With burdein of great treasure, I thinke best Here for to stay in safetie behynd: My Lord and I will search the wide forest.” That counsell pleased not Malbeccoes mynd, For he was much afraid him selfe alone to fynd.

“Then is it best,” (said he) “that ye doe leave Your treasure here in some security, Either fast closed in some hollow greave, Or buried in the ground from jeopardy, Till we returne againe in safety: As for us two, least doubt of us ye have, Hence farre away we will blyndfolded ly, Ne privy bee unto your treasures grave.” It pleased; so he did. Then they march forward brave.

Now, when amid the thickest woodes they were, They heard a noyse of many bagpipes shrill, And shrieking Hububs them approching nere, Which all the forest did with horrour fill. That dreadfull sound the bosters hart did thrill With such amazment, that in hast he fledd, Ne ever looked back for good or ill; And after him eke fearefull Trompart spedd: The old man could not fly, but fell to ground half dedd.

Yet afterwardes, close creeping as he might, He in a bush did hyde his fearefull hedd. The jolly Satyres, full of fresh delight, Came dauncing forth, and with them nimbly ledd Faire Helenore with girlonds all bespredd, Whom their May-lady they had newly made: She, proude of that new honour which they redd, And of their lovely fellowship full glade, Daunst lively, and her face did with a Lawrell shade.

The silly man that in the thickett lay Saw all this goodly sport, and grieved sore; Yet durst he not against it doe or say, But did his hart with bitter thoughts engore, To see th'unkindnes of his Hellenore. All day they daunced with great lusty-hedd, And with their horned feet the greene gras wore, The whiles their Gotes upon the brouzes fedd, Till drouping Phœbus gan to hyde his golden hedd.

Tho up they gan their mery pypes to trusse, And all their goodly heardes did gather rownd; But every Satyre first did give a busse To Hellenore; so busses did abound. Now gan the humid vapour shed the grownd With perly deaw, and th'Earthes gloomy shade Did dim the brightnesse of the welkin rownd, That every bird and beast awarned made To shrowd themselves, whiles sleepe their sences did invade.

Which when Malbecco saw, out of the bush Upon his handes and feete he crept full light, And like a Gote emongst the Gotes did rush; That, through the helpe of his faire hornes on hight, And misty dampe of misconceyving night, And eke through likenesse of his gotish beard, He did the better counterfeite aright: So home he marcht emongst the horned heard, That none of all the Satyres him espyde or heard.

At night, when all they went to sleepe, he vewd Whereas his lovely wife emongst them lay, Embraced of a Satyre rough and rude, Who all the night did minde his joyous play: Nine times he heard him come aloft ere day, That all his hart with gealosy did swell; But yet that nights ensample did bewray That not for nought his wife them loved so well, When one so oft a night did ring his matins bell.

So closely as he could he to them crept, When wearie of their sport to sleepe they fell, And to his wife, that now full soundly slept, He whispered in her eare, and did

her tell That it was he which by her side did dwell; And therefore prayd her wake to heare him plaine. As one out of a dreame not waked well She turnd her, and returned backe againe; Yet her for to awake he did the more constraine.

At last with irkesom trouble she abrayd; And then perceiving that it was indeed Her old Malbecco, which did her upbrayd With loosenesse of her love and loathly deed, She was astonisht with exceeding dreed, And would have wakt the Satyre by her syde; But he her prayd, for mercy or for meed, To save his life, ne let him be descryde, But hearken to his lore, and all his counsell hyde.

Tho gan he her perswade to leave that lewd And loathsom life, of God and man abhord, And home returne, where all should be renewd With perfect peace and bandes of fresh accord, And she receivd againe to bed and bord, As if no trespas ever had beene donne: But she it all refused at one word, And by no meanes would to his will be wonne, But chose emongst the jolly Satyres still to wonne.

He wooed her till day-spring he espyde, But all in vaine; and then turnd to the heard, Who butted him with hornes on every syde, And trode downe in the durt, where his hore beard Was fowly dight, and he of death afeard. Early, before the heavens fairest light Out of the ruddy East was fully reard, The heardes out of their foldes were loosed quight, And he emongst the rest crept forth in sory plight.

So soone as he the Prison-dore did pas, He ran as fast as both his feet could beare, And never looked who behind him was, Ne scarsely who before: like as a Beare, That creeping close amongst the hives to reare An hony-combe, the wakefull dogs espy, And him assayling sore his carkas teare, That hardly he with life away does fly, Ne stayes, till safe him selfe he see from jeopardy.

Ne stayd he, till he came unto the place Where late his treasure he entombed had; Where when he found it not, (for Trompart bace Had it purloyned for his maister bad) With extreme fury he became quite mad, And ran away, ran with him selfe away; That who so straungely had him seene bestadd, With upstart haire and staring

eyes dismay, From Limbo lake him late escaped sure would say.

High over hilles and over dales he fledd, As if the wind him on his winges had borne; Ne banck nor bush could stay him, when he spedd His nimble feet, as treading still on thorne: Griefe, and despight, and gealosy, and scorne, Did all the way him follow hard behynd; And he himselfe himselfe loath'd so forlorne, So shamefully forlorne of womankynd, That, as a Snake, still lurked in his wounded mynd.

Still fled he forward, looking backward still; Ne stayd his flight nor fearefull agony, Till that he came unto a rocky hill Over the sea suspended dreadfully, That living creature it would terrify To looke adowne, or upward to the hight: From thence he threw him selfe despiteously, All desperate of his fore-damned spright, That seemd no help for him was left in living sight.

But through long anguish and selfe-murdring thought, He was so wasted and forpined quight, That all his substance was consum'd to nought, And nothing left but like an aery Spright, That on the rockes he fell so flit and light, That he thereby receiv'd no hurt at all; But chaunced on a craggy cliff to light, Whence he with crooked clawes so long did crall, That at the last he found a cave with entrance small.

Into the same he creepes, and thenceforth there Resolv'd to build his balefull mansion In drery darkenes and continuall feare Of that rocks fall, which ever and anon Threates with huge ruine him to fall upon, That he dare never sleepe, but that one eye Still ope he keepes for that occasion; Ne ever rests he in tranquillity, The roring billowes beat his bowre so boystrously.

Ne ever is he wont on ought to feed But todes and frogs, his pasture poysonous, Which in his cold complexion doe breed A filthy blood, or humour rancorous, Matter of doubt and dread suspitious, That doth with curelesse care consume the hart, Corrupts the stomacke with gall vitious, Cros-cuts the liver with internall

smart, And doth transfixe the soule with deathes eternall dart.

Yet can he never dye, but dying lives, And doth himselfe with sorrow new sustaine, That death and life attonce unto him gives, And painefull pleasure turnes to pleasing paine. There dwels he ever, miserable swaine, Hatefull both to him selfe and every wight; Where he, through privy griefe and horrour vaine, Is woxen so deform'd that he has quight Forgot he was a man, and Gelosy is hight.

Canto XI

Britomart chaceth Ollyphant; Findes Scudamour distrest: Assayes the house of Busyrane, Where Loves spoyles are exprest.

O hatefull hellish Snake! what furie furst Brought thee from balefull house of Proserpine, Where in her bosome she thee long had nurst, And fostred up with bitter milke of tine, Fowle Gealosy! that turnest love divine To joylesse dread, and mak'st the loving hart With hatefull thoughts to languish and to pine, And feed it selfe with selfe-consuming smart? Of all the passions in the mind thou vilest art!

O! let him far be banished away, And in his stead let Love for ever dwell; Sweete Love, that doth his golden wings embay In blessed Nectar and pure Pleasures well, Untroubled of vile feare or bitter fell. And ye, faire Ladies, that your kingdomes make In th'harts of men, them governe wisely well, And of faire Britomart ensample take, That was as trew in love as Turtle to her make.

Who with Sir Satyrane, as earst ye red, Forth ryding from Malbeccoes hostlesse hous, Far off aspyde a young man, the which fled From an huge Geaunt, that with hideous And hatefull outrage long him chaced thus; It was that Ollyphant, the brother deare Of that Argantè vile and vitious, From whom the Squyre of Dames was reft whylere; This all as bad as she, and worse, if worse ought were.

For as the sister did in feminine And filthy lust exceede all womankinde, So he surpassed his sex masculine, In beastly use, all that I ever finde: Whom when as

Britomart beheld behinde The fearefull boy so greedily poursew, She was emmoved in her noble minde, T'employ her puissaunce to his reskew, And pricked fiercely forward where she did him vew.

Ne was Sir Satyrane her far behinde, But with like fiercenesse did ensew the chace. Whom when the Gyaunt saw, he soone resinde His former suit, and from them fled apace: They after both, and boldly bad him bace, And each did strive the other to outgoe; But he them both outran a wondrous space, For he was long, and swift as any Roe, And now made better speed t'escape his feared foe.

It was not Satyrane, whom he did feare, But Britomart the flowre of chastity; For he the powre of chaste hands might not beare, But alwayes did their dread encounter fly: And now so fast his feet he did apply, That he has gotten to a forrest neare, Where he is shrowded in security. The wood they enter, and search everie where; They searched diversely, so both divided were.

Fayre Britomart so long him followed, That she at last came to a fountaine sheare, By which there lay a knight all wallowed Upon the grassy ground, and by him neare His haberjeon, his helmet, and his speare: A little off his shield was rudely throwne, On which the winged boy in colours cleare Depeincted was, full easie to be knowne, And he thereby, where ever it in field was showne.

His face upon the grownd did groveling ly, As if he had beene slombring in the shade; That the brave Mayd would not for courtesy Out of his quiet slomber him abrade, Nor seeme too suddeinly him to invade. Still as she stood, she heard with grievous throb Him grone, as if his hart were peeces made, And with most painefull pangs to sigh and sob, That pitty did the Virgins hart of patience rob.

At last forth breaking into bitter plaintes He sayd; "O soverayne Lord! that sit'st on hye And raignst in blis emongst thy blessed Saintes, How suffrest thou such shamefull cruelty So long unwreaked of thine enimy? Or hast thou, Lord, of good mens cause no heed? Or doth thy justice sleepe and silent ly? What booteth then the

good and righteous deed, If goodnesse find no grace, nor righteousnes no meed?

“If good find grace, and righteousnes reward, Why then is Amoret in caytive band, Sith that more bounteous creature never far’d On foot upon the face of living land? Or if that hevenly justice may withstand The wrongfull outrage of unrighteous men, Why then is Busirane with wicked hand Suffred, these seven monethes day, in secret den My Lady and my love so cruelly to pen!

“My Lady and my love is cruelly pend In dolefull darkenes from the vew of day, Whilest deadly torments doe her chast brest rend, And the sharpe steele doth rive her hart in tway, All for she Scudamore will not denay. Yet thou, vile man, vile Scudamore, art sound, Ne canst her ayde, ne canst her foe dismay; Unworthy wretch to tread upon the ground, For whom so faire a Lady feeles so sore a wound!”

There an huge heape of singults did oppresse His strugling soule, and swelling throbs empeach His foltring toung with pangs of drerinesse, Choking the remnant of his plaintife speach, As if his dayes were come to their last reach: Which when she heard, and saw the ghastly fit Threatning into his life to make a breach, Both with great ruth and terrour she was smit, Fearing least from her cage the wearie soule would flit.

Tho stouping downe she him amoved light; Who, therewith somewhat starting, up gan looke, And seeing him behind a stranger knight, Whereas no living creature he mistooke, With great indignaunce he that sight forsooke, And, downe againe himselfe disdainfully Abjecting, th’earth with his faire forhead strooke: Which the bold Virgin seeing gan apply Fit medcine to his griefe, and spake thus courtesly:—

“Ah gentle knight! whose deepe conceived griefe Well seemes t’exceede the powre of patience, Yet, if that hevenly grace some goode reliefe You send, submit you to high providence; And ever in your noble hart prepense, That all the sorrow in the world is lesse Then vertues might and values confidence: For who nill bide the burden of distresse, Must not here thinke to live; for life is wretchednesse.

“Therefore, faire Sir, doe comfort to you take, And freely read what wicked felon so Hath outrag’d you, and thrald your gentle make. Perhaps this hand may helpe to ease your woe, And wreake your sorrow on your cruell foe; At least it faire endevour will apply.” Those feeling words so neare the quicke did goe, That up his head he reared easily, And, leaning on his elbowe, these few words lett fly.

“What boots it plaine that cannot be redrest, And sow vaine sorrow in a fruitlesse eare, Sith powre of hand, nor skill of learned brest, Ne worldly price, cannot redeeme my deare Out of her thraldome and continuall feare: For he, the tyrant, which her hath in ward By strong enchauntments and blacke Magicke leare, Hath in a dungeon deepe her close embard, And many dreadfull feends hath pointed to her gard.

“There he tormenteth her most terribly And day and night afflicts with mortall paine, Because to yield him love she doth deny, Once to me yold, not to be yolde againe: But yet by torture he would her constraine Love to conceive in her disdainfull brest; Till so she doe, she must in doole remaine, Ne may by living meanes be thence relest: What boots it then to plaine that cannot be redrest?”

With this sad hersall of his heavy stresse The warlike Damzell was empassiond sore, And sayd; “Sir knight, your cause is nothing lesse Then is your sorrow certes, if not more; For nothing so much pitty doth implore As gentle Ladyes helplesse misery: But yet, if please ye listen to my lore, I will, with proofe of last extremity, Deliver her fro thence, or with her for you dy.”

“Ah! gentlest knight alive,” (sayd Scudamore) “What huge heroicke magnanimity Dwells in thy bounteous brest! what couldst thou more, If shee were thine, and thou as now am I? O! spare thy happy daies, and them apply To better boot; but let me die that ought: More is more losse; one is enough to dy.” “Life is not lost,” (said she) “for which is bought Endlesse renowm, that, more then death, is to be sought.”

Thus shee at length persuaded him to rise, And with her wend to see what new

successe Mote him befall upon new enterprise. His armes, which he had vowed to disprofesse, She gathered up and did about him dresse, And his forwandred steed unto him gott: So forth they forth yfere make their progresse, And march not past the mountenaunce of a shott, Till they arriv'd whereas their purpose they did plott.

There they dismounting drew their weapons bold, And stoutly came unto the Castle gate, Whereas no gate they found them to withhold, Nor ward to waite at morne and evening late; But in the Porch, that did them sore amate, A flaming fire, ymixt with smouldry smoke And stinking sulphure, that with griesly hate And dreadfull horror did all entraunce choke, Enforced them their forward footing to revoke.

Greatly thereat was Britomart dismayd, Ne in that stownd wist how her selfe to beare; For daunger vaine it were to have assayd That cruell element, which all things feare, Ne none can suffer to approchen neare: And, turning backe to Scudamour, thus sayd: "What monstrous enmity provoke we heare? Foolhardy as th'Earthes children, the which made Batteill against the Gods, so we a God invade.

"Daunger without discretion to attempt Inglorious, beastlike is: therefore, Sir knight, A read what course of you is safest dempt, And how we with our foe may come to fight." "This is" (quoth he) "the dolorous despight, Which earst to you I playnd: for neither may This fire be quencht by any witt or might, Ne yet by any meanes remov'd away; So mighty be th'enchauntments which the same do stay.

"What is there ells but cease these fruitlesse paines, And leave me to my former languishing? Faire Amorett must dwell in wicked chaines, And Scudamore here die with sorrowing." "Perdy not so," (saide shee) "for shameful thing Yt were t'abandon noble chevisaunce For shewe of perill, without venturing: Rather let try extremities of chaunce, Then enterprised praise for dread to disavaunce."

Therewith, resolv'd to prove her utmost might, Her ample shield she threw before her face, And her swords point directing forward right Assayld the flame; the which eftesoones gave place, And did it selfe divide with equall space, That through she

passed, as a thonder bolt Perceth the yielding ayre, and doth displace The soring clouds into sad showres ymolt; So to her yold the flames, and did their force revolt.

Whom whenas Scudamour saw past the fire Safe and untoucht, he likewise gan assay With greedy will and envious desire, And bad the stubborne flames to yield him way: But cruell Mulciber would not obay His threatfull pride, but did the more augment His mighty rage, and with imperious sway Him forst, (maulgre) his fercenes to relent, And backe retire, all scorcht and pittifully brent.

With huge impatience he inly swelt, More for great sorrow that he could not pas Then for the burning torment which he felt; That with fell woodnes he effierced was, And wilfully him throwing on the gras Did beat and bounse his head and brest ful sore: The whiles the Championesse now entred has The utmost rowme, and past the foremost dore; The utmost rowme abounding with all precious store:

For round about the walls yclothed were With goodly arras of great majesty, Woven with gold and silke, so close and nere That the rich metall lurked privily, As faining to be hidd from envious eye; Yet here, and there, and every where, unwares It shewd it selfe and shone unwillingly; Like a discolourd Snake, whose hidden snares Through the greene gras his long bright burnisht back declares.

And in those Tapets weren fashioned Many faire pourtraicts, and many a faire feate; And all of love, and al of lustyhed, As seemed by their semblaunt, did entreat: And eke all Cupids warres they did repeate, And cruell battailes, which he whilome fought Gainst all the Gods to make his empire great; Besides the huge massacres, which he wrought On mighty kings and kesars into thraldome brought.

Therein was writt how often thondring Jove Had felt the point of his hart-percing dart, And, leaving heavens kingdome, here did rove In straunge disguize, to slake his scalding smart; Now, like a Ram, faire Helle to pervart, Now, like a Bull, Europa to withdraw: Ah! how the fearefull Ladies tender hart Did lively seeme to tremble, when she saw The huge seas under her t’obay her servaunts law.

Soone after that, into a golden showre Him selfe he chaung'd, faire Danaë to vew; And through the roofe of her strong brasen towre Did raine into her lap an hony dew; The whiles her foolish garde, that litle knew Of such deceipt, kept th'yron dore fast bard, And watcht that none should enter nor issew: Vaine was the watch, and bootlesse all the ward, Whenas the God to golden hew him selfe transfard.

Then was he turnd into a snowy Swan, To win faire Leda to his lovely trade: O wondrous skill! and sweet wit of the man, That her in daffadillies sleeping made From scorching heat her daintie limbes to shade; Whiles the proud Bird, ruffing his fethers wyde And brushing his faire brest, did her invade: She slept; yet twixt her eielids closely spyde How towards her he rusht, and smiled at his pryde.

Then shewd it how the Thebane Semelee, Deceivd of gealous Juno, did require To see him in his soverayne majestee Armd with his thunderbolts and lightning fire, Whens dearely she with death bought her desire. But faire Alcmena better match did make, Joying his love in likenes more entire: Three nights in one, they say, that for her sake He then did put, her pleasures lenger to partake.

Twise was he seene in soaring Eagles shape, And with wide winges to beat the buxome ayre: Once, when he with Asterie did scape; Againe, when as the Trojane boy so fayre He snatcht from Ida hill, and with him bare: Wondrous delight it was there to behould How the rude Shepheards after him did stare, Trembling through feare least down he fallen should, And often to him calling to take surer hould.

In Satyres shape Antiopa he snatcht; And like a fire, when he Aegin' assayd: A shepeheard, when Mnemosyne he catcht; And like a Serpent to the Thracian mayd. Whyles thus on earth great Jove these pageaunts playd, The winged boy did thrust into his throne, And scoffing thus unto his mother sayd: "Lo! now the hevens obey to me alone, And take me for their Jove, whiles Jove to earth is gone."

And thou, faire Phœbus, in thy colours bright Wast there enwoven, and the sad distresse In which that boy thee plonged, for despight That thou bewray'dst his

mothers wantonnesse, When she with Mars was meynt in joyfulnesse: Forthy he thrild thee with a leaden dart To love faire Daphne, which thee loved lesse; Lesse she thee lov'd then was thy just desart, Yet was thy love her death, and her death was thy smart.

So lovedst thou the lusty Hyacinct; So lovedst thou the faire Coronis deare; Yet both are of thy haplesse hand extinct, Yet both in flowres doe live, and love thee beare, The one a Paunce, the other a sweet-breare: For griefe whereof, ye mote have lively seene The God himselfe rending his golden heare, And breaking quite his garlond ever greene, With other signes of sorrow and impatient teene.

Both for those two, and for his owne deare sonne, The sonne of Climene, he did repent; Who, bold to guide the charet of the Sunne, Himselfe in thousand peeces fondly rent, And all the world with flashing fire brent; So like, that all the walles did seeme to flame: Yet cruell Cupid, not herewith content, Forst him eftsoones to follow other game, And love a Shephards daughter for his dearest Dame.

He loved Isse for his dearest Dame, And for her sake her cattell fedd awhile, And for her sake a cowheard vile became: The servant of Admetus, cowheard vile, Whiles that from heaven he suffered exile. Long were to tell each other lovely fitt; Now, like a Lyon hunting after spoile; Now, like a stag; now, like a faulcon flit: All which in that faire arras was most lively writ.

Next unto him was Neptune pictured, In his divine resemblance wondrous lyke: His face was rugged, and his hoarie hed Dropped with brackish deaw; his threeforkt Pyke He stearnly shooke, and therewith fierce did stryke The raging billowes, that on every syde They trembling stood, and made a long broad dyke, That his swift charet might have passage wyde Which foure great Hippodames did draw in temewise tyde.

His seahorses did seeme to snort amayne, And from their nosethrilles blow the brynie streame, That made the sparckling waves to smoke agayne, And flame with

gold; but the white fomy creame Did shine with silver, and shoot forth his beame. The God himselfe did pensive seeme and sad, And hong adowne his head as he did dreame; For privy love his brest empierced had, Ne ought but deare Bisaltis ay could make him glad.

He loved eke Iphimedia deare, And Æolus faire daughter, Arnè hight, For whom he turnd him selfe into a Steare, And fedd on fodder to beguile her sight. Also to win Deucalions daughter bright, He turnd him selfe into a Dolphin fayre; And like a winged horse he tooke his flight To snaky-locke Medusa to repayre, On whom he got faire Pegasus that flitteth in the ayre.

Next Saturne was, (but who would ever weene That sullein Saturne ever weend to love? Yet love is sullein, and Saturnlike seene, As he did for Erigone it prove) That to a Centaure did him selfe transmove. So proov'd it eke that gratious God of wine, When for to compasse Philliras hard love, He turnd himselfe into a fruitfull vine, And into her faire bosome made his grapes decline.

Long were to tell the amorous assayes, And gentle pangues, with which he maked meeke The mightie Mars, to learne his wanton playes; How oft for Venus, and how often eek For many other Nymphes, he sore did shreek, With womanish teares, and with unwarlike smarts, Privily moystening his horrid cheeke: There was he painted full of burning dartes, And many wide woundes launched through his inner partes.

Ne did he spare (so cruell was the Elfe) His owne deare mother, (ah! why should he so?) Ne did he spare sometime to pricke himselfe, That he might taste the sweet consuming woe, Which he had wrought to many others moe. But, to declare the mournfull Tragedyes And spoiles wherewith he all the ground did strow, More eath to number with how many eyes High heven beholdes sad lovers nightly theeveryes.

Kings, Queenes, Lords, Ladies, knights, and Damsels gent, Were heap'd together with the vulgar sort, And mingled with the raskall rablement, Without respect of person or of port, To shew Dan Cupids powre and great effort: And round about a

border was entrayld Of broken bowes and arrowes shivered short; And a long bloody river through them rayld, So lively and so like that living sence it fayld.

And at the upper end of that faire rowme There was an Altar built of pretious stone Of passing valew and of great renowme, On which there stood an Image all alone Of massy gold, which with his owne light shone; And winges it had with sondry colours dight, More sondry colours then the proud Pavone Beares in his boasted fan, or Iris bright, When her discolourd bow she spreds through hevens hight.

Blyndfold he was; and in his cruell fist A mortall bow and arrowes keene did hold, With which he shot at randon, when him list, Some headed with sad lead, some with pure gold; (Ah man! beware how thou those dartes behold.) A wounded Dragon under him did ly, Whose hideous tayle his lefte foot did enfold, And with a shaft was shot through either eye, That no man forth might draw, ne no man remedye.

And underneath his feet was written thus, Unto the Victor of the Gods this bee: And all the people in that ample hous Did to that image bowe their humble knee, And oft committed fowle Idolatree. That wondrous sight faire Britomart amazd, Ne seeing could her wonder satisfie, But ever more and more upon it gazd, The whiles the passing brightnes her fraile sences dazd.

Tho, as she backward cast her busie eye To search each secrete of that goodly sted, Over the dore thus written she did spye, Bee bold: she oft and oft it over-red, Yet could not find what sence it figured: But what so were therein or writ or ment, She was no whit thereby discouraged From prosecuting of her first intent, But forward with bold steps into the next roome went.

Much fayrer then the former was that roome, And richlier by many partes arayd; For not with arras made in painefull loome, But with pure gold it all was overlayd, Wrought with wilde Antickes, which their follies playd In the rich metall as they living were. A thousand monstrous formes therein were made, Such as false love doth oft upon him weare; For love in thousand monstrous formes doth oft appeare.

And all about the glistring walles were hong With warlike spoiles and with victorious prayes Of mightie Conquerours and Captaines strong, Which were whilome captived in their dayes To cruell love, and wrought their owne decayes. Their swerds and speres were broke, and hauberques rent, And their proud girlonds of tryumphant bayes Troden in dust with fury insolent, To shew the victors might and mercilesse intent.

The warlike Mayd, beholding earnestly The goodly ordinaunce of this rich Place, Did greatly wonder; ne could satisfy Her greedy eyes with gazing a long space: But more she mervaild that no footings trace Nor wight appeard, but wastefull emptinesse And solemne silence over all that place: Straunge thing it seem'd, that none was to possesse So rich purveyaunce, ne them keepe with carefulnesse.

And, as she lookt about, she did behold How over that same dore was likewise writ, Be bolde, be bolde, and every where, Be bold; That much she muz'd, yet could not construe it By any ridling skill, or commune wit. At last she spyde at that rowmes upper end Another yron dore, on which was writ, Be not too bold; whereto though she did bend Her earnest minde, yet wist not what it might intend.

Thus she there wayted untill eventyde, Yet living creature none she saw appeare. And now sad shadowes gan the world to hyde From mortall vew, and wrap in darkenes dreare; Yet nould she d'off her weary armes, for feare Of secret daunger, ne let sleepe oppresse Her heavy eyes with natures burdein deare, But drew her selfe aside in sickernesse, And her wel-pointed wepons did about her dresse.

Canto XII

The maske of Cupid, and th'enchaunted Chamber are displayd; Whence Britomart redeemes faire Amoret, through charmes decayd.

Tho, whenas cheerelesse Night ycovered had Fayre heaven with an universall clowd, That every wight dismayd with darkenes sad In silence and in sleepe

themselves did shrowd, She heard a shrilling Trompet sound alowd, Signe of nigh battaill, or got victory: Nought therewith daunted was her courage prowd, But rather stird to cruell enmity, Expecting ever when some foe she might descry.

With that an hideous storme of winde arose, With dreadfull thunder and lightning atwixt, And an earthquake, as if it streight would lose The worlds foundations from his centre fixt: A direfull stench of smoke and sulphure mixt Ensewd, whose noyaunce fild the fearefull sted From the fourth howre of night untill the sixt; Yet the bold Britonesse was nought ydred, Though much emmov'd, but stedfast still persevered.

All suddeinly a stormy whirlwind blew Throughout the house, that clapped every dore, With which that yron wicket open flew, As it with mighty levers had bene tore; And forth yssewd, as on the readie flore Of some Theatre, a grave personage That in his hand a braunch of laurell bore, With comely haveour and count'nance sage, Yclad in costly garments fit for tragicke Stage.

Proceeding to the midst he stil did stand, As if in minde he somewhat had to say; And to the vulgare beckning with his hand, In signe of silence, as to heare a play, By lively actions he gan bewray Some argument of matter passioned: Which doen, he backe retyred soft away, And, passing by, his name discovered, Ease, on his robe in golden letters cyphered.

The noble Mayd still standing all this vewd, And merveild at his straunge intendiment. With that a joyous fellowship issewd Of Minstrales making goodly meriment, With wanton Bardes, and Rymers impudent; All which together song full chearefully A lay of loves delight with sweet concent: After whom marcht a jolly company, In manner of a maske, enranged orderly.

The whiles a most delitious harmony In full straunge notes was sweetly heard to sound, That the rare sweetnesse of the melody The feeble sences wholy did confound, And the frayle soule in deepe delight nigh drownd: And, when it ceast,

shrill trompets lowd did bray, That their report did far away rebound; And, when they ceast, it gan againe to play, The whiles the maskers marched forth in trim aray.

The first was Fansy, like a lovely Boy Of rare aspect, and beautie without peare, Matchable ether to that ympe of Troy, Whom Jove did love and chose his cup to beare; Or that same daintie lad, which was so deare To great Alcides, that, when as he dyde, He wailed womanlike with many a teare, And every wood and every valley wyde He filld with Hylas name; the Nymphes eke Hylas cryde.

His garment nether was of silke nor say, But paynted plumes in goodly order dight, Like as the sunburnt Indians do aray Their tawney bodies in their proudest plight: As those same plumes so seemd he vaine and light, That by his gate might easily appeare; For still he far'd as dauncing in delight, And in his hand a windy fan did beare, That in the ydle ayre he mov'd still here and theare.

And him beside marcht amorous Desyre, Who seemd of ryper yeares then th'other Swayne, Yet was that other swayne this elders syre, And gave him being, commune to them twayne: His garment was disguysed very vayne, And his embrodered Bonet sat awry: Twixt both his hands few sparks he close did strayne, Which still he blew and kindled busily, That soone they life conceiv'd, and forth in flames did fly.

Next after him went Doubt, who was yclad In a discolour'd cote of straunge disguyse, That at his backe a brode Capuccio had, And sleeves dependaunt Albanesè-wyse: He lookt askew with his mistrustfull eyes, And nycely trode, as thornes lay in his way, Or that the flore to shrinke he did avyse; And on a broken reed he still did stay His feeble steps, which shrunck when hard thereon he lay.

With him went Daunger, cloth'd in ragged weed Made of Beares skin, that him more dreadfull made; Yet his owne face was dreadfull, ne did need Straunge horrour to deforme his griesly shade: A net in th'one hand, and a rusty blade In th'other was; this Mischiefe, that Mishap: With th'one his foes he threatned to invade, With th'other he his friends ment to enwrap; For whom he could not kill he practizd to

entrap.

Next him was Feare, all arm'd from top to toe, Yet thought himselfe not safe enough thereby, But feard each shadow moving too or froe; And, his owne armes when glittering he did spy Or clashing heard, he fast away did fly, As ashes pale of hew, and winged heeld, And evermore on Daunger fixt his eye, Gainst whom he alwayes bent a brasen shield, Which his right hand unarmed fearefully did wield.

With him went Hope in rancke, a handsome Mayd, Of chearefull looke and lovely to behold: In silken samite she was light arayd, And her fayre lockes were woven up in gold: She alway smyld, and in her hand did hold An holy-water-sprinckle, dipt in deowe, With which she sprinckled favours manifold On whom she list, and did great liking sheowe, Great liking unto many, but true love to feowe.

And after them Dissemblaunce and Suspect Marcht in one rancke, yet an unequall paire; For she was gentle and of milde aspect, Courteous to all and seeming debonaire, Goodly adorned and exceeding faire: Yet was that all but paynted and pourloynd, And her bright browes were deckt with borrowed haire; Her deeds were forged, and her words false coynd, And alwaies in her hand two clewes of silke she twynd.

But he was fowle, ill favoured, and grim, Under his eiebrowes looking still askaunce; And ever, as Dissemblaunce laught on him, He lowrd on her with daungerous eyeglaunce, Shewing his nature in his countenaunce: His rolling eies did never rest in place, But walkte each where for feare of hid mischaunce, Holding a lattis still before his face, Through which he stil did peep as forward he did pace.

Next him went Griefe and Fury, matcht yfere; Griefe all in sable sorrowfully clad, Downe hanging his dull head with heavy chere, Yet inly being more then seeming sad: A paire of Pincers in his hand he had, With which he pinched people to the hart, That from thenceforth a wretched life they ladd, In wilfull languor and consuming smart, Dying each day with inward wounds of dolours dart.

But Fury was full ill appareiled In rags, that naked nigh she did appeare, With ghastly looks and dreadfull drerihed; And from her backe her garments she did teare, And from her head ofte rente her snarled heare: In her right hand a firebrand shee did tosse About her head, still roming here and there; As a dismayed Deare in chace embost, Forgetfull of his safety, hath his right way lost.

After them went Displeasure and Pleasaunce, He looking lompish and full sullein sad, And hanging downe his heavy countenaunce; She chearfull, fresh, and full of joyaunce glad, As if no sorrow she ne felt ne drad; That evill matched paire they seemd to bee: An angry Waspe th'one in a viall had, Th'other in hers an hony-laden Bee. Thus marched these six couples forth in faire degree.

After all these there marcht a most faire Dame, Led of two grysie Villeins, th'one Despight, The other cleped Cruelty by name: She, dolefull Lady, like a dreary Spright Cald by strong charmes out of eternall night, Had Deathes owne ymage figurd in her face, Full of sad signes, fearfull to living sight; Yet in that horror shewd a seemely grace, And with her feeble feete did move a comely pace.

Her brest all naked, as nett yvory Without adorne of gold or silver bright, Wherewith the Craftesman wonts it beautify, Of her dew honour was despoyled quight; And a wide wound therein (O ruefull sight!) Entrenched deep with knyfe accursed keene, Yet freshly bleeding forth her fainting spright, (The worke of cruell hand) was to be seene, That dyde in sanguine red her skin all snowy cleene.

At that wide orifice her trembling hart Was drawne forth, and in silver basin layd, Quite through transfixed with a deadly dart, And in her blood yet steeming fresh embayd: And those two villeins, which her steps upstayd, When her weake feete could scarcely her sustaine, And fading vitall powres gan to fade, Her forward still with torture did constraine, And evermore encreased her consuming paine.

Next after her, the winged God him selfe Came riding on a Lion ravenous, Taught to obay the menage of that Elfe That man and beast with powre imperious Subdeweth

to his kingdome tyrannous. His blindfold eies he bad awhile unbinde, That his proud spoile of that same dolorous Faire Dame he might behold in perfect kinde; Which seene, he much rejoyced in his cruell minde.

Of which ful prowd, him selfe up rearing hye He looked round about with sterne disdayne, And did survay his goodly company; And, marshalling the evill-ordered trayne, With that the darts which his right hand did straine Full dreadfully he shooke, that all did quake, And clapt on hye his coulourd winges twaine, That all his many it affraide did make: Tho, blinding him againe, his way he forth did take.

Behinde him was Reproch, Repentaunce, Shame; Reproch the first, Shame next, Repent behinde: Kepentaunce feeble, sorrowfull, and lame; Reproch despightfull, carelesse, and unkinde; Shame most ill-favourd, bestiall, and blinde: Shame lowrd, Repentaunce sighd, Reproch did scould; Reproch sharpe stings, Repentaunce whips entwinde, Shame burning brond-yrons in her hand did hold: All three to each unlike, yet all made in one mould.

And after them a rude confused rout Of persons flockt, whose names is hard to read: Emongst them was Sterne Strife, and Anger stout; Unquiet Care, and fond Unthriftyhead; Lewd Losse of Time, and Sorrow seeming dead; Inconstant Chaunge, and false Disloyalty; Consuming Riotise, and guilty Dread Of heavenly vengeaunce; faint Infirmity; Vile Poverty; and, lastly, Death with infamy.

There were full many moe like maladies, Whose names and natures I note readen well; So many moe, as there be phantasies In wavering wemens witt, that none can tell, Or paines in love, or punishments in hell: All which disguized marcht in masking wise About the chamber by the Damozell; And then returned, having marched thrise, Into the inner rowme from whence they first did rise.

So soone as they were in, the dore streightway Fast locked, driven with that stormy blast Which first it opened, and bore all away. Then the brave Maid, which al this while was plast In secret shade, and saw both first and last, Issewed forth, and went

unto the dore To enter in, but fownd it locked fast: It vaine she thought with rigorous uprore For to efforce, when charmes had closed it afore.

Where force might not availe, there sleights and art She cast to use, both fitt for hard emprize: Forthy from that same rowme not to depart Till morrow next shee did her selfe avize, When that same Maske againe should forth arize. The morrowe next appeard with joyous cheare, Calling men to their daily exercize: Then she, as morrow fresh, her selfe did reare Out of her secret stand that day for to outweare.

All that day she outwore in wandering And gazing on that Chambers ornament, Till that againe the second evening Her covered with her sable vestiment, Wherewith the worlds faire beautie she hath blent: Then, when the second watch was almost past, That brasen dore flew open, and in went Bold Britomart, as she had late forecast, Nether of ydle showes, nor of false charmes aghast.

So soone as she was entred, rownd about Shee cast her eies to see what was become Of all those persons which she saw without: But lo! they streight were vanisht all and some; Ne living wight she saw in all that roome, Save that same woefull Lady, both whose hands Were bounden fast, that did her ill become, And her small waste girt rownd with yron bands Upon a brasen pillour, by the which she stands.

And her before the vile Enchaunter sate, Figuring straunge characters of his art: With living blood he those characters wrate, Dreadfully dropping from her dying hart, Seeming transfixed with a cruell dart; And all perforce to make her him to love. Ah! who can love the worker of her smart? A thousand charmes he formerly did prove, Yet thousand charmes could not her stedfast hart remove.

Soone as that virgin knight he saw in place, His wicked bookes in hast he overthrew, Not caring his long labours to deface; And, fiercely running to that Lady trew, A murdrous knife out of his pocket drew, The which he thought, for villeinous despight, In her tormented bodie to embrew: But the stout Damzell, to him leaping light, His cursed hand withheld, and maistered his might.

From her, to whom his fury first he ment, The wicked weapon rashly he did wrest, And, turning to herselfe, his fell intent, Unwares it strooke into her snowie chest, That litle drops empurpled her faire brest. Exceeding wroth therewith the virgin grew, Albe the wound were nothing deepe imprest, And fiercely forth her mortall blade she drew, To give him the reward for such vile outrage dew.

So mightily she smote him, that to ground He fell halfe dead: next stroke him should have slaine, Had not the Lady, which by him stood bound, Dernly unto her called to abstaine From doing him to dy: For else her paine Should be remedilesse; sith none but hee Which wrought it could the same recure againe. Therewith she stayd her hand, loth stayd to bee; For life she him envyde, and long'd revenge to see:

And to him said: "Thou wicked man, whose meed For so huge mischiefe and vile villany Is death, or if that ought doe death exceed; Be sure that nought may save thee from to dy But if that thou this Dame do presently Restore unto her health and former state: This doe, and live, els dye undoubtedly." He, glad of life, that lookt for death but late, Did yield him selfe right willing to prolong his date:

And, rising up, gan streight to overlooke Those cursed leaves, his charmes back to reverse. Full dreadfull thinges out of that balefull booke He red, and measur'd many a sad verse, That horrour gan the virgins hart to perse, And her faire locks up stared stiffe on end, Hearing him those same bloody lynes reherse; And, all the while he red, she did extend Her sword high over him, if ought he did offend.

Anon she gan perceive the house to quake, And all the dores to rattle round about: Yet all that did not her dismaied make, Nor slack her threatfull hand for daungers dout: But still with stedfast eye and courage stout Abode, to weet what end would come of all. At last that mightie chaine, which round about Her tender waste was wound, adowne gan fall, And that great brasen pillour broke in peeces small.

The cruell steele, which thrild her dying hart, Fell softly forth, as of his owne accord, And the wyde wound, which lately did dispart Her bleeding brest, and riven

bowels gor'd, Was closed up, as it had not beene bor'd; And every part to safety full sownd, As she were never hurt, was soone restord. Tho, when she felt her selfe to be unbownd And perfect hole, prostrate she fell unto the grownd.

Before faire Britomart she fell prostrate, Saying; "Ah noble knight! what worthy meede Can wretched Lady, quitt from wofull state, Yield you in lieu of this your gracious deed? Your vertue selfe her owne reward shall breed, Even immortal prayse and glory wyde, Which I your vassall, by your prowesse freed, Shall through the world make to be notifyde, And goodly well advaunce that goodly well was tryde."

But Britomart, uprearing her from grownd, Said: "Gentle Dame, reward enough I weene, For many labours more then I have found, This, that in safetie now I have you seene, And meane of your deliverance have beene. Henceforth, faire Lady, comfort to you take, And put away remembrance of late teene; Insted thereof, know that your loving Make Hath no lesse griefe endured for your gentle sake."

She much was chear'd to heare him mentiond, Whom of all living wightes she loved best. Then laid the noble Championesse strong hond Upon th'enchaunter which had her distrest So sore, and with foule outrages opprest. With that great chaine, wherewith not long ygoe He bound that pitteous Lady prisoner, now relest, Himselfe she bound, more worthy to be so, And captive with her led to wretchednesse and wo.

Returning back, those goodly rowmes, which erst She saw so rich and royally arayd, Now vanisht utterly and cleane subverst She found, and all their glory quite decayd; That sight of such a chaunge her much dismayd. Thence forth descending to that perlous porch, Those dreadfull flames she also found delayd And quenched quite like a consumed torch, That erst all entrers wont so cruelly to scorch.

More easie issew now then entrance late She found; for now that fained dreadfull flame, Which chokt the porch of that enchaunted gate And passage bard to all that thither came, Was vanisht quite, as it were not the same, And gave her leave at

pleasure forth to passe. Th’Enchaunter selfe, which all that fraud did frame To have efforst the love of that faire lasse, Seeing his worke now wasted, deepe engrieved was.

But when the Victoresse arrived there Where late she left the pensife Scudamore With her own trusty Squire, both full of feare, Neither of them she found where she them lore: Thereat her noble hart was stonisht sore; But most faire Amoret, whose gentle spright Now gan to feede on hope, which she before Conceived had, to see her own deare knight, Being thereof beguyld, was fild with new affright.

But he, sad man, when he had long in drede Awayted there for Britomarts returne, Yet saw her not, nor signe of her good speed, His expectation to despaire did turne, Misdeeming sure that her those flames did burne; And therefore gan advize with her old Squire, Who her deare nourslings losse no lesse did mourne, Thence to depart for further aide t’enquire: Where let them wend at will, whilest here I doe respire.

Book IV

The Legend of Cambel and Triamond, or of Friendship

The rugged forhead, that with grave foresight Welds kingdomes causes and affaires of state, My looser rimes (I wote) doth sharply wite For praising love as I have done of late, And magnifying lovers deare debate; By which fraile youth is oft to follie led, Through false allurement of that pleasing baite, That better were in vertues discipled, Then with vaine poemes weeds to have their fancies fed.

Such ones ill judge of love that cannot love, Ne in their frosen hearts feele kindly flame: Forthy they ought not thing unknowne reprove, Ne naturall affection faultlesse blame For fault of few that have abusd the same; For it of honor and all vertue is The roote, and brings forth glorious flowres of fame, That crowne true lovers with immortall blis, The meed of them that love, and do not live amisse.

Which who so list looke backe to former ages, And call to count the things that then

were donne, Shall find that all the workes of those wise sages, And brave exploits which great Heroës wonne, In love were either ended or begunne: Witnesse the father of Philosophie, Which to his Critias, shaded oft from sunne, Of love full manie lessons did apply, The which these Stoicke censours cannot well deny.

To such therefore I do not sing at all; But to that sacred Saint my soveraigne Queene, In whose chast brest all bountie naturall And treasures of true love enlocked beene, Bove all her sexe that ever yet was seene: To her I sing of love, that loveth best, And best is lov'd of all alive, I weene; To her this song most fitly is addrest, The Queene of love, and Prince of peace from heaven blest.

Which that she may the better deigne to heare, Do thou, dred infant, Venus dearling dove, From her high spirit chase imperious feare, And use of awfull Majestie remove: Insted thereof with drops of melting love, Deawd with ambrosiall kisses, by thee gotten From thy sweete smyling mother from above, Sprinckle her heart, and haughtie courage soften, That she may hearke to love, and reade this lesson often.

Canto I

Fayre Britomart saves Amoret: Duessa discord breedes 'Twixt Scudamour and Blandamour: Their fight and warlike deedes.

Of lovers sad calamities of old Full many piteous stories doe remaine, But none more piteous ever was ytold Then that of Amorets hart-binding chaine, And this of Florimels unworthie paine: The deare compassion of whose bitter fit My softened heart so sorely doth constraine, That I with teares full oft doe pittie it, And oftentimes doe wish it never had bene writ.

For from the time that Scudamour her bought In perilous fight she never joyed day; A perilous fight, when he with force her brought From twentie Knights that did him all assay; Yet fairely well he did them all dismay, And with great glorie both the shield of love And eke the Ladie selfe he brought away; Whom having wedded, as

did him behove, A new unknowen mischiefe did from him remove.

For that same vile Enchauntour Busyran, The very selfe same day that she was wedded, Amidst the bridale feast, whilest every man, Surcharg'd with wine, were heedlesse and ill-hedded, All bent to mirth before the bride was bedded, Brought in that mask of love which late was showen; And there the Ladie, ill of friends bestedded, By way of sport, as oft in maskes is knowen, Conveyed quite away to living wight unknowen.

Seven moneths he so her kept in bitter smart, Because his sinfull lust she would not serve, Untill such time as noble Britomart Released her, that else was like to sterve Through cruell knife that her deare heart did kerve: And now she is with her upon the way Marching in lovely wise, that could deserve No spot of blame, though spite did oft assay To blot her with dishonor of so faire a pray.

Yet should it be a pleasant tale, to tell The diverse usage, and demeanure daint, That each to other made, as oft befell: For Amoret right fearefull was and faint Lest she wtih blame her honor should attaint, That everie word did tremble as she spake, And everie looke was coy and wondrous quaint, And everie limbe that touched her did quake; Yet could she not but curteous countenance to her make.

For well she wist, as true it was indeed, That her lives Lord and patrone of her health Right well deserved, as his duefull meed, Her love, her service, and her utmost wealth: All is his justly that all freely dealth. Nathlesse her honor, dearer then her life, She sought to save, as thing reserv'd from stealth. Die had she lever with Enchanters knife Then to be false in love, profest a virgine wife.

Thereto her feare was made so much the greater Through fine abusion of that Briton mayd; Who, for to hide her fained sex the better And maske her wounded mind, both did and sayd Full many things so doubtfull to be wayd, That well she wist not what by them to gesse: For otherwhiles to her she purpos made Of love, and otherwhiles of lustfulnesse, That much she feard his mind would grow to some

excesse.

His will she feard; for him she surely thought To be a man, such as indeed he seemed; And much the more by that he lately wrought, When her from deadly thraldome he redeemed, For which no service she too much esteemed, Yet dread of shame and doubt of fowle dishonor Made her not yeeld so much as due she deemed. Yet Britomart attended duly on her, As well became a knight, and did to her all honor.

It so befell one evening, that they came Unto a Castell, lodged there to bee, Where many a knight, and many a lovely Dame, Was then assembled deeds of armes to see: Amongst all which was none more faire then shee, That many of them mov'd to eye her sore. The custome of that place was such, that hee, Which had no love nor lemman there in store, Should either winne him one, or lye without the dore.

Amongst the rest there was a jolly knight, Who, being asked for his love, avow'd That fairest Amoret was his by right, And offred that to justifie alowd. The warlike virgine, seeing his so prowd And boastfull chalenge, wexed inlie wroth; But for the present did her anger shrowd, And sayd, her love to lose she was full loth, But either he should neither of them have, or both.

So foorth they went, and both together giusted; But that same younker soone was overthrowne, And made repent that he had rashly lusted For thing unlawfull, that was not his owne: Yet since he seemed valiant, though unknowne, She, that no lesse was courteous then stout, Cast how to salve, that both the custome showne Were kept, and yet that Knight not locked out; That seem'd full hard t'accord two things so far in dout.

The Seneschall was cal'd to deeme the right: Whom she requir'd, that first fayre Amoret Might be to her allow'd, as to a Knight That did her win and free from chalenge set: Which straight to her was yeelded without let. Then, since that strange Knights love from him was quitted, She claim'd that to her selfe, as Ladies det, He

as a Knight might justly be admitted; So none should be out shut, sith all of loves were fitted.

With that, her glistring helmet she unlaced; Which doft, her golden lockes, that were upbound Still in a knot, unto her heeles downe traced, And like a silken veile in compasse round About her backe and all her bodie wound: Like as the shining skie in summers night, What time the dayes with scorching heat abound, Is creasted all with lines of firie light, That it prodigious seemes in common peoples sight.

Such when those Knights and Ladies all about Beheld her, all were with amazement smit, And every one gan grow in secret dout Of this and that, according to each wit: Some thought that some enchantment faygned it; Some, that Bellona in that warlike wise To them appear'd, with shield and armour fit; Some, that it was a maske of strange disguise: So diversely each one did sundrie doubts devise.

But that young Knight, which through her gentle deed Was to that goodly fellowship restor'd, Ten thousand thankes did yeeld her for her meed, And, doubly overcommen, her ador'd. So did they all their former strife accord; And eke fayre Amoret, now freed from feare, More franke affection did to her afford, And to her bed, which she was wont forbeare, Now freely drew, and found right safe assurance theare.

Where all that night they of their loves did treat, And hard adventures, twixt themselves alone, That each the other gan with passion great And griefull pittie privately bemone. The morow next, so soone as Titan shone, They both uprose and to their waies them dight: Long wandred they, yet never met with none That to their willes could them direct aright, Or to them tydings tell that mote their harts delight.

Lo! thus they rode, till at the last they spide Two armed Knights that toward them did pace, And ech of them had ryding by his side A Ladie, seeming in so farre a space: But Ladies none they were, albee in face And outward shew faire semblance they did beare; For under maske of beautie and good grace Vile treason and fowle

falshood hidden were, That mote to none but to the warie wise appeare.

The one of them the false Duessa hight, That now had chang'd her former wonted hew; For she could d'on so manie shapes in sight, As ever could Cameleon colours new; So could she forge all colours, save the trew. The other no whit better was then shee, But that such as she was she plaine did shew; Yet otherwise much worse, if worse might bee, And dayly more offensive unto each degree.

Her name was Atè, mother of debate And all dissention which doth dayly grow Amongst fraile men, that many a publike state, And many a private oft doth overthrow. Her false Duessa, who full well did know To be most fit to trouble noble knights Which hunt for honor, raised from below Out of the dwellings of the damned sprights, Where she in darknes wastes her cursed daies and nights.

Hard by the gates of hell her dwelling is; There, whereas all the plagues and harmes abound Which punish wicked men that walke amisse: It is a darksome delve farre under ground, With thornes and barren brakes environd round, That none the same may easily out-win: Yet many waies to enter may be found, But none to issue forth when one is in; For discord harder is to end then to begin.

And all within, the riven walls were hung With ragged monuments of times forepast, All which the sad effects of discord sung: There were rent robes and broken scepters plast; Altars defyld, and holy things defast; Disshivered speares, and shields ytorne in twaine; Great cities ransackt, and strong castles rast; Nations captived, and huge armies slaine: Of all which ruines there some relicks did remaine.

There was the signe of antique Babylon; Of fatall Thebes; of Rome that raigned long; Of sacred Salem; and sad Ilion, For memorie of which on high there hong The golden Apple, cause of all their wrong, For which the three faire Goddesses did strive: There also was the name of Nimrod strong; Of Alexander, and his Princes five Which shar'd to them the spoiles that he had got alive.

And there the relicks of the drunken fray, The which amongst the Lapithees befell;

And of the bloodie feast, which sent away So many Centaures drunken soules to hell, That under great Alcides furie fell; And of the dreadfull discord, which did drive The noble Argonauts to outrage fell; That each of life sought others to deprive, All mindlesse of the Golden fleece, which made them strive.

And eke of private persons many moe, That were too long a worke to count them all; Some, of sworne friends that did their faith forgoe; Some, of borne brethren prov'd unnaturall; Some, of deare lovers foes perpetuall: Witnesse their broken bandes there to be seene, Their girlonds rent, their bowres despoyled all; The moniments whereof there byding beene, As plaine as at the first when they were fresh and greene.

Such was her house within; but all without, The barren ground was full of wicked weedes, Which she her selfe had sowen all about, Now growen great, at first of little seedes, The seedes of evill wordes and factious deedes; Which, when to ripenesse due they growen arre, Bring foorth an infinite increase, that breedes Tumultuous trouble, and contentious jarre, The which most often end in bloudshed and in warre.

And those same cursed seedes doe also serve To her for bread, and yeeld her living food: For life it is to her, when others sterve Through mischievous debate and deadly feood, That she may sucke their life, and drinke their blood, With which she from her childhood had bene fed; For she at first was borne of hellish brood, And by infernall furies nourished; That by her monstrous shape might easily be red.

Her face most fowle and filthy was to see, With squinted eyes contrarie wayes intended, And loathly mouth, unmeete a mouth to bee, That nought but gall and venim comprehended, And wicked wordes that God and man offended. Her lying tongue was in two parts divided, And both the parts did speake, and both contended; And as her tongue so was her hart discided, That never thoght one thing, but doubly stil was guided.

Als as she double spake, so heard she double, With matchlesse eares deformed and

distort, Fild with false rumors and seditious trouble, Bred in assemblies of the vulgar sort, That still are led with every light report: And as her eares, so eke her feet were odde, And much unlike; th'one long, the other short, And both misplast; that, when th'one forward yode, The other backe retired and contrarie trode.

Likewise unequall were her handes twaine; That one did reach the other pusht away; That one did make the other mard againe, And sought to bring all things unto decay; Whereby great riches, gathered manie a day, She in short space did often bring to nought, And their possessours often did dismay: For all her studie was and all her thought How she might overthrow the things that Concord wrought.

So much her malice did her might surpas, That even th'Almightie selfe she did maligne, Because to man so mercifull he was, And unto all his creatures so benigne, Sith she her selfe was of his grace indigne; For all this worlds faire workmanship she tride Unto his last confusion to bring, And that great golden chaine quite to divide, With which it blessed Concord hath together tide.

Such was that hag which with Duessa roade; And, serving her in her malitious use To hurt good knights, was, as it were, her baude To sell her borrowed beautie to abuse: For though, like withered tree that wanteth juyce, She old and crooked were, yet now of late As fresh and fragrant as the floure-deluce She was become, by chaunge of her estate, And made full goodly joyance to her newfound mate.

Her mate, he was a jollie youthfull knight That bore great sway in armes and chivalrie, And was indeed a man of mickle might; His name was Blandamour, that did descrie His fickle mind full of inconstancie: And now himselfe he fitted had right well With two companions of like qualitie, Faithlesse Duessa, and false Paridell, That whether were more false full hard it is to tell.

Now when this gallant with his goodly crew From farre espide the famous Britomart, Like knight adventurous in outward vew, With his faire paragon, his conquests part, Approching nigh, eftsoones his wanton hart Was tickled with

delight, and jesting sayd; “Lo! there, Sir Paridel, for your desart Good lucke presents you with yond lovely mayd, For pitie that ye want a fellow for your ayd.”

By that the lovely paire drew nigh to hond: Whom when as Paridel more plaine beheld, Albee in heart he like affection fond, Yet mindfull how he late by one was feld That did those armes and that same scutchion weld, He had small lust to buy his love so deare, But answered; “Sir, him wise I never held, That, having once escaped perill neare, Would afterwards afresh the sleeping evill reare.

“This knight too late his manhood and his might I did assay, that me right dearely cost; Ne list I for revenge provoke new fight, Ne for light Ladies love that soone is lost.” That hot-spurre youth so scorning to be crost, “Take then to you this Dame of mine,” (quoth hee) “And I, without your perill or your cost, Will chalenge yond same other for my fee.” So forth he fiercely prickt that one him scarce could see.

The warlike Britonesse her soone addrest, And with such uncouth welcome did receave Her fayned Paramour, her forced guest, That being forst his saddle soone to leave, Him selfe he did of his new love deceave; And made him selfe thensample of his follie. Which done, she passed forth, not taking leave, And left him now as sad, as whilome jollie, Well warned to beware with whom he dar’d to dallie.

Which when his other companie beheld, They to his succour ran with readie ayd; And, finding him unable once to weld, They reared him on horsebacke and upstayd, Till on his way they had him forth convayd: And all the way, with wondrous griefe of mynd And shame, he shewd him selfe to be dismayd More for the love which he had left behynd, Then that which he had to Sir Paridel resynd.

Nathlesse he forth did march, well as he might, And made good semblance to his companie, Dissembling his disease and evill plight; Till that ere long they chaunced to espie Two other knights, that towards them did ply With speedie course, as bent to charge them new: Whom when as Blandamour approching nie Perceiv’d to be such as they seemd in vew, He was full wo, and gan his former griefe renew.

For th’one of them he perfectly descride To be Sir Scudamour, by that he bore The God of love with wings displayed wide, Whom mortally he hated evermore, Both for his worth, that all men did adore, And eke because his love he wonne by right: Which when he thought, it grieved him full sore, That, through the bruses of his former fight, He now unable was to wreake his old despight.

Forthy he thus to Paridel bespake: “Faire Sir, of friendship let me now you pray, That as I late adventured for your sake, The hurts whereof me now from battell stay, Ye will me now with like good turne repay, And justifie my cause on yonder knight.” “Ah! Sir,” (said Paridell) “do not dismay Your selfe for this; my selfe will for you fight, As ye have done for me: the left hand rubs the right.”

With that he put his spurres unto his steed, With speare in rest, and toward him did fare, Like shaft out of a bow preventing speed: But Scudamour was shortly well aware Of his approch, and gan him selfe prepare Him to receive with entertainment meete. So furiously they met, that either bare The other downe under their horses feete, That what of them became themselves did scarsly weete.

As when two billowes in the Irish sowndes, Forcibly driven with contrarie tydes, Do meete together, each abacke rebowndes With roaring rage; and dashing on all sides, That filleth all the sea with fome, divydes The doubtfull current into divers wayes. So fell those two in spight of both their prydes; But Scudamour himselfe did soone uprayse, And, mounting light, his foe for lying long upbrayes:

Who, rolled on an heape, lay still in swound All carelesse of his taunt and bitter rayle; Till that the rest him seeing lie on ground Ran hastily, to weete what did him ayle. Where finding that the breath gan him to fayle, With busie care they strove him to awake, And doft his helmet, and undid his mayle: So much they did, that at the last they brake His slomber, yet so mazed that he nothing spake.

Which when as Blandamour beheld, he sayd; “False faitour Scudamour, that hast by slight And foule advantage this good Knight dismayd, A Knight much better then

thy selfe behight, Well falles it thee that I am not in plight This day to wreake the dammage by thee donne. Such is thy wont, that still when any Knight Is weakned, then thou doest him overronne: So hast thou to thy selfe false honour often wonne."

He little answer'd, but in manly heart His mightie indignation did forbeare; Which was not yet so secret, but some part Thereof did in his frouning face appeare: Like as a gloomie cloud, the which doth beare An hideous storme, is by the Northerne blast Quite overblowne, yet doth not passe so cleare, But that it all the skie doth overcast With darknes dred, and threatens all the world to wast.

"Ah gentle knight!" then false Duessa sayd, "Why do ye strive for Ladies love so sore, Whose chiefe desire is love and friendly aid Mongst gentle Knights to nourish evermore? Ne be ye wroth, Sir Scudamour, therefore That she, your love, list love another knight, Ne do your selfe dislike a whit the more; For Love is free, and led with selfe delight, Ne will enforced be with maisterdome or might."

So false Duessa; but vile Atè thus: "Both foolish knights! I can but laugh at both, That strive and storme with stirre outrageous For her, that each of you alike doth loth, And loves another, with whom now she goth In lovely wise, and sleepes, and sports, and playes; Whilest both you here with many a cursed oth Sweare she is yours, and stirre up bloudie frayes, To win a willow bough, whilest other weares the bayes.

"Vile hag!" (sayd Scudamour) "why dost thou lye, And falsly seekst a vertuous wight to shame?" "Fond knight," (sayd she) "the thing that with this eye I saw, why should I doubt to tell the same?" "Then tell," (quoth Blandamour) "and feare no blame: Tell what thou saw'st, maulgre who so it heares." "I saw" (quoth she) "a stranger knight, whose name I wote not well, but in his shield he beares (That well I wote) the heads of many broken speares;

"I saw him have your Amoret at will; I saw him kisse; I saw him her embrace; I saw him sleepe with her all night his fill; All manie nights; and manie by in place That

present were to testifie the case." Which when as Scudamour did heare, his heart Was thrild with inward griefe: as when in chace The Parthian strikes a stag with shivering dart, The beast astonisht stands in middest of his smart.

So stood Sir Scudamour when this he heard, Ne word had he to speake for great dismay, But lookt on Glaucè grim; who woxe afeard Of outrage for the words which she heard say, Albee untrue she wist them by assay. But Blandamour, whenas he did espie His chaunge of cheere that anguish did bewray, He woxe full blithe, as he had got thereby, And gan thereat to triumph without victorie.

"Lo! recreant," (sayd he) "the fruitlesse end Of thy vaine boast, and spoile of love misgotten, Whereby the name of knighthood thou dost shend, And all true lovers with dishonor blotten: All things not rooted well will soone be rotten." "Fy, fy! false knight," (then false Duessa cryde) "Unworthy life, that love with guile hast gotten; Be thou, where ever thou do go or ryde, Loathed of ladies all, and of all knights defyde!"

But Scudamour, for passing great despight, Staid not to answer; scarcely did refraine But that in all those knights and ladies sight He for revenge had guiltlesse Glaucè slaine: But, being past, he thus began amaine: "False traitour squire! false squire of falsest knight! Why doth mine hand from thine avenge abstaine, Whose Lord hath done my love this foule despight? Why do I not it wreake on thee, now in my might?

"Discourteous, disloyall Britomart, Untrue to God, and unto man unjust! What vengeance due can equall thy desart, That hast with shamefull spot of sinfull lust Defil'd the pledge committed to thy trust? Let ugly shame and endlesse infamy Colour thy name with foule reproaches rust! Yet thou, false Squire, his fault shalt deare aby, And with thy punishment his penance shalt supply."

The aged Dame, him seeing so enraged, Was dead with feare; nathlesse, as neede required, His flaming furie sought to have assuaged With sober words, that sufferance desired, Till time the tryall of her truth expyred; And evermore sought

Britomart to cleare: But he the more with furious rage was fyred, And thrise his hand to kill her did upreare, And thrise he drew it backe; so did at last forbeare.

Canto II

Blandamour winnes false Florimell; Paridell for her strives; They are accorded: Agape Doth lengthen her Sonnes lives.

Firebrand of hell, first tynd in Phlegeton By thousand furies, and from thence out throwen Into this world to worke confusion, And set it all on fire by force unknowen, Is wicked discord; whose small sparkes once blowen None but a God or godlike man can slake; Such as was Orpheus, that, when strife was growen Amongst those famous ympes of Greece, did take His silver Harpe in hand and shortly friends them make:

Or such as that celestiall Psalmist was, That, when the wicked feend his Lord tormented, With heavenly notes, that did all other pas The outrage of his furious fit relented. Such Musicke is wise words, with time concented, To moderate stiffe mindes disposd to strive: Such as that prudent Romane well invented, What time his people into partes did rive, Them reconcyld againe, and to their homes did drive.

Such us'd wise Glaucè to that wrathfull knight, To calme the tempest of his troubled thought: Yet Blandamour with termes of foule despight, And Paridell her scornd, and set at nought, As old and crooked and not good for ought. Both they unwise, and warelesse of the evill That by themselves unto themselves is wrought Through that false witch, and that foule aged drevill; The one a feend, the other an incarnate devill.

With whom as they thus rode accompanide, They were encountred of a lustie Knight That had a goodly Ladie by his side, To whom he made great dalliance and delight: It was to weete the bold Sir Ferraugh hight, He that from Braggadocchio whilome reft The snowy Florimell, whose beautie bright Made him seeme happie for so

glorious theft; Yet was it in due triall but a wandring weft.

Which when as Blandamour, whose fancie light Was alwaies flitting as the wavering wind After each beautie that appeard in sight, Beheld, eftsoones it prickt his wanton mind With sting of lust that reasons eye did blind, That to Sir Paridell these words he sent: “Sir knight, why ride ye dumpish thus behind, Since so good fortune doth to you present So fayre a spoyle, to make you joyous meriment?”

But Paridell, that had too late a tryall Of the bad issue of his counsell vaine, List not to hearke, but made this faire denyall: “Last turne was mine, well proved to my paine; This now be yours; God send you better gaine!” Whose scoffed words he taking halfe in scorne, Fiercely forth prickt his steed as in disdaine Against that Knight, ere he him well could torne; By meanes whereof he hath him lightly overborne.

Who, with the sudden stroke astonisht sore, Upon the ground awhile in slomber lay; The whiles his love away the other bore, And, shewing her, did Paridell upbray; “Lo! sluggish Knight, the victors happie pray! So fortune friends the bold:” whom Paridell Seeing so faire indeede, as he did say, His hart with secret envie gan to swell, And inly grudge at him that he had sped so well.

Nathlesse proud man himselfe the other deemed, Having so peerelesse paragon ygot: For sure the fayrest Florimell him seemed To him was fallen for his happie lot, Whose like alive on earth he weened not: Therefore he her did court, did serve, did wooe, With humblest suit that he imagine mot, And all things did devise, and all things dooe, That might her love prepare, and liking win theretoo.

She, in regard thereof, him recompenst With golden words and goodly countenance, And such fond favours sparingly dispenst: Sometimes him blessing with a light eye-glance, And coy lookes tempring with loose dalliance; Sometimes estranging him in sterner wise; That having cast him in a foolish trance, He seemed brought to bed in Paradise, And prov’d himselfe most foole in what he seem’d most wise.

So great a mistresse of her art she was, And perfectly practiz'd in womans craft, That though therein himselfe he thought to pas, And by his false allurements wylie draft Had thousand women of their love beraft, Yet now he was surpriz'd: for that false spright, Which that same witch had in this forme engraft, Was so expert in every subtile slight, That it could overreach the wisest earthly wight.

Yet he to her did dayly service more, And dayly more deceived was thereby; Yet Paridell him envied therefore, As seeming plast in sole felicity: So blind is lust false colours to descry. But Atè soone discovering his desire, And finding now fit opportunity To stirre up strife twixt love and spight and ire, Did privily put coles unto his secret fire.

By sundry meanes thereto she prickt him forth; Now with remembrance of those spightfull speaches, Now with opinion or his owne more worth, Now with recounting of like former breaches Made in their friendship, as that Hag him teaches: And ever when his passion is allayd, She it revives, and new occasion reaches; That on a time, as they together way'd, He made him open chalenge, and thus boldly sayd;

"Too boastfull Blandamoure! too long I beare The open wrongs thou doest me day by day: Well know'st thou, when we friendship first did sweare, The covenant was, that every spoyle or pray Should equally be shard betwixt us tway. Where is my part then of this Ladie bright, Whom to thy selfe thou takest quite away? Render therefore therein to me my right, Or answere for thy wrong as shall fall out in fight."

Exceeding wroth thereat was Blandamour, And gan this bitter answere to him make: "Too foolish Paridell! that fayrest floure Wouldst gather faine, and yet no paines wouldst take: But not so easie will I her forsake; This hand her wonne, this hand shall her defend." With that they gan their shivering speares to shake, And deadly points at eithers breast to bend, Forgetfull each to have bene ever others frend.

Their firie steedes with so untamed forse Did beare them both to fell avenges end,

That both their speares with pitilesse remorse Through shield and mayle and haberjeon did wend, And in their flesh a griesly passage rend, That with the furie of their owne affret Each other horse and man to ground did send; Where, lying still awhile, both did forget The perilous present stownd in which their lives were set.

As when two warlike Brigandines at sea, With murdrous weapons arm'd to cruell fight, Do meete together on the watry lea, They stemme ech other with so fell despight, That with the shocke of their owne heedlesse might Their wooden ribs are shaken nigh asonder. They which from shore behold the dreadfull sight Of flashing fire, and heare the ordenance thonder, Do greatly stand amaz'd at such unwonted wonder.

At length they both upstarted in amaze, As men awaked rashly out of dreme, And round about themselves awhile did gaze; Till seeing her, that Florimell did seme, In doubt to whom she victorie should deeme, Therewith their dulled sprights they edgd anew, And, drawing both their swords, with rage extreme, Like two mad mastiffes, each on other flew, And shields did share, and mailes did rash, and helmes did hew.

So furiously each other did assayle, As if their soules they would attonce have rent Out of their brests, that streames of bloud did rayle Adowne, as if their springs of life were spent; That all the ground with purple bloud was sprent, And all their armours staynd with bloudie gore; Yet scarcely once to breath would they relent, So mortall was their malice, and so sore Become, of fayned friendship which they vow'd afore.

And that which is for Ladies most besitting, To stint all strife and foster friendly peace, Was from those Dames so farre and so unfitting, As that, instead of praying them surcease, They did much more their cruelty encrease; Bidding them fight for honour of their love, And rather die then Ladies cause release: With which vaine termes so much they did them move, That both resolv'd the last extremities to prove.

There they, I weene, would fight untill this day, Had not a Squire, even he the Squire

of Dames, By great adventure travelled that way; Who seeing both bent to so bloudy games, And both of old well knowing by their names, Drew nigh, to weete the cause of their debate: And first laide on those Ladies thousand blames, That did not seeke t'appease their deadly hate, But gazed on their harmes, not pittying their estate.

And then those Knights he humbly did beseech To stay their hands, till he awhile had spoken; Who lookt a little up at that his speech, Yet would not let their battell so be broken, Both greedie fiers on other to be wroken: Yet he to them so earnestly did call, And them conjur'd by some well knowen token, That they at last their wrothfull hands let fall, Content to heare him speake, and glad to rest withall.

First he desir'd their cause of strife to see: They said, it was for love of Florimell. "Ah gentle Knights!" (quoth he) "how may that bee, And she so farre astray, as none can tell?" "Fond Squire," full angry then sayd Paridell, "Seest not the Ladie there before thy face?" He looked backe, and, her avizing well, Weend, as he said, by that her outward grace That fayrest Florimell was present there in place.

Glad man was he to see that joyous sight, For none alive but joy'd in Florimell, And lowly to her lowting thus behight: "Fayrest of faire, that fairenesse doest excell, This happie day I have to greete you well, In which you safe I see, whom thousand late Misdoubted lost through mischiefe that befell. Long may you live in health and happie state!" She litle answer'd him, but lightly did aggrate.

Then, turning to those Knights, he gan anew: "And you, Sir Blandamour, and Paridell, That for this Ladie, present in your vew, Have rays'd this cruell warre and outrage fell, Certes, me seemes, bene not advised well; But rather ought in friendship for her sake To joyne your force, their forces to repell That seeke perforce her from you both to take, And of your gotten spoyle their owne triumph to make."

Thereat Sir Blandamour, with countenance sterne All full of wrath, thus fiercely him bespake: "Aread, thou Squire, that I the man may learne, That dare fro me thinke Florimell to take!" "Not one," (quoth he) "but many doe partake Herein; as thus: It

lately so befell, That Satyran a girdle did uptake Well knowne to appertaine to Florimell, Which for her sake he wore, as him beseemed well.

“But, when as she her selfe was lost and gone, Full many knights, that loved her like deare, Thereat did greatly grudge, that he alone That lost faire Ladies ornament should weare, And gan therefore close spight to him to beare; Which he to shun, and stop vile envies sting, Hath lately caus’d to be proclaim’d each where A solemne feast, with publike turneying, To which all knights with them their Ladies are to bring:

“And of them all she, that is fayrest found, Shall have that golden girdle for reward; And of those Knights, who is most stout on ground, Shall to that fairest Ladie be prefard. Since therefore she her selfe is now your ward, To you that ornament of hers pertaines Against all those that chalenge it to gard And save her honour with your ventrous paines: That shall you win more glory than ye here find gaines.”

When they the reason of his words had hard, They gan abate the rancour of their rage, And with their honours and their loves regard The furious flames of malice to asswage. Tho each to other did his faith engage, Like faithfull friends thenceforth to joyne in one With all their force, and battell strong to wage Gainst all those knights, as their professed fone, That chaleng’d ought in Florimell, save they alone.

So, well accorded, forth they rode together In friendly sort that lasted but a while; And of all old dislikes they made faire weather; Yet all was forg’d and spred with golden foyle, That under it hidde hate and hollow guyle. Ne certes can that friendship long endure, However gay and goodly be the style, That doth ill cause or evill end enure; For vertue is the band that bindeth harts most sure.

Thus as they marched all in close disguise Of fayned love, they chaunst to overtake Two knights that lincked rode in lovely wise, As if they secret counsels did partake; And each not farre behinde him had his make, To weete, two Ladies of most goodly hew, That twixt themselves did gentle purpose make, Unmindfull both of that

discordfull crew, The which with speedie pace did after them pursew.

Who, as they now approched nigh at hand, Deeming them doughtie, as they did appeare, They sent that Squire afore, to understand What mote they be: who, viewing them more neare, Returned readie newes, that those same weare Two of the prowest Knights in Faery lond, And those two Ladies their two lovers deare; Couragious Cambell, and stout Triamond, With Canacee and Cambine linckt in lovely bond.

Whylome, as antique stories tellen us, Those two were foes the fellonest on ground, And battell made the dreddest daungerous That ever shrilling trumpet did resound; Though now their acts be no where to be found, As that renowmed Poet them compyled With warlike numbers and Heroicke sound, Dan Chaucer, well of English undefyled, On Fames eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled.

But wicked Time that all good thoughts doth waste, And workes of noblest wits to nought outweare, That famous moniment hath quite defaste, And robd the world of threasure endlesse deare, The which mote have enriched all us heare. O cursed Eld! the cankerworme of writs, How may these rimes, so rude as doth appeare, Hope to endure, sith workes of heavenly wits Are quite devourd, and brought to nought by little bits?

Then pardon, O most sacred happie spirit! That I thy labours lost may thus revive, And steale from thee the meede of thy due merit, That none durst ever whilest thou wast alive, And being dead in vaine yet many strive: Ne dare I like; but, through infusion sweete Of thine owne spirit which doth in me survive, I follow here the footing of thy feete, That with thy meaning so I may the rather meete.

Cambelloes sister was fayre Canacee, That was the learnedst Ladie in her dayes, Well seene in everie science that mote bee, And every secret worke of natures wayes; In wittie riddles, and in wise soothsayes; In power of herbes, and tunes of beasts and burds; And, that augmented all her other prayse, She modest was in all

her deedes and words, And wondrous chast of life, yet lov'd of Knights and Lords.

Full many Lords and many Knights her loved, Yet she to none of them her liking lent, Ne ever was with fond affection moved, But rul'd her thoughts with goodly governement, For dread of blame and honours blemishment; And eke unto her lookes a law she made, That none of them once out of order went, But like to warie Centonels well stayd, Still watcht on every side, of secret foes affrayd.

So much the more as she refusd to love, So much the more she loved was and sought, That oftentimes unquiet strife did move Amongst her lovers, and great quarrels wrought, That oft for her in bloudie armes they fought. Which whenas Cambell, that was stout and wise, Perceiv'd would breede great mischiefe, he bethought How to prevent the perill that mote rise, And turne both him and her to honour, in this wise.

One day, when all that troupe of warlike wooers Assembled were to weet whose she should bee, All mightie men and dreadfull derring-dooers, (The harder it to make them well agree) Amongst them all this end he did decree; That, of them all which love to her did make, They by consent should chose the stoutest three That with himselfe should combat for her sake, And of them all the victour should his sister take.

Bold was the chalenge, as himselfe was bold, And courage full of haughtie hardiment, Approved oft in perils manifold, Which he atchiev'd to his great ornament; But yet his sisters skill unto him lent Most confidence and hope of happie speed, Conceived by a ring which she him sent, That, mongst the manie vertues which we reed, Had power to staunch al wounds that mortally did bleed.

Well was that rings great vertue knowen to all; That dread thereof and his redoubted might Did all that youthly rout so much appall, That none of them durst undertake the fight: More wise they weend to make of love delight Then life to hazard for faire Ladies looke; And yet uncertaine by such outward sight, Though for her sake they

all that perill tooke, Whether she would them love, or in her liking brooke.

Amongst those knights there were three brethren bold, Three bolder brethren never were yborne, Borne of one mother in one happie mold, Borne at one burden in one happie morne; Thrise happie mother, and thrise happie morne, That bore three such, three such not to be fond! Her name was Agapè, whose children werne All three as one; the first hight Priamond, The second Dyamond, the youngest Triamond.

Stout Priamond, but not so strong to strike; Strong Diamond, but not so stout a knight; But Triamond was stout and strong alike: On horsebacke used Triamond to fight, And Priamond on foote had more delight; But horse and foote knew Diamond to wield: With curtaxe used Diamond to smite, And Triamond to handle speare and shield, But speare and curtaxe both usd Priamond in field.

These three did love each other dearely well, And with so firme affection were allyde, As if but one soule in them all did dwell, Which did her powre into three parts divyde; Like three faire branches budding farre and wide, That from one roote deriv'd their vitall sap: And like that roote that doth her life divide, Their mother was; and had full blessed hap These three so noble babes to bring forth at one clap.

Their mother was a Fay, and had the skill Of secret things, and all the powres of nature, Which she by art could use unto her will, And to her service bind each living creature, Through secret understanding of their feature. Thereto she was right faire, whenso her face She list discover, and of goodly stature: But she, as Fayes are wont, in privie place Did spend her dayes, and lov'd in forests wyld to space.

There on a day a noble youthly knight, Seeking adventures in the salvage wood, Did by great fortune get of her the sight, As she sate carelesse by a cristall flood Combing her golden lockes, as seernd her good; And unawares upon her laying hold, That strove in vaine him long to have withstood, Oppressed her, and there (as it is told) Got these three lovely babes, that prov'd three champions bold.

Which she with her long fostred in that wood, Till that to ripenesse of mans state

they grew: Then shewing forth signes of their fathers blood, They loved armes, and knighthood did ensew, Seeking adventures where they anie knew. Which when their mother saw, she gan to dout Their safetie; least by searching daungers new, And rash provoking perils all about, Their days mote be abridged through their corage stout.

Therefore desirous th'end of all their dayes To know, and them t'enlarge with long extent, By wondrous skill and many hidden wayes To the three fatall sisters house she went. Farre under ground from tract of living went, Downe in the bottome of the deepe Abysse, Where Demogorgon, in dull darknesse pent Farre from the view of gods and heavens bliss, The hideous Chaos keepes, their dreadfull dwelling is.

There she them found all sitting round about, The direfull distaffe standing in the mid, And with unwearied fingers drawing out The lines of life, from living knowledge hid. Sad Clotho held the rocke, the whiles the thrid By griesly Lachesis was spun with paine, That cruell Atropos eftsoones undid, With cursed knife cutting the twist in twaine. Most wretched men, whose dayes depend on thrids so vaine!

She, them saluting, there by them sate still Beholding how the thrids of life they span: And when at last she had beheld her fill, Trembling in heart, and looking pale and wan, Her cause of comming she to tell began. To whom fierce Atropos: "Bold Fay, that durst Come see the secret of the life of man, Well worthie thou to be of Jove accurst, And eke thy childrens thrids to be asunder burst!"

Whereat she sore affrayd, yet her besought To graunt her boone, and rigour to abate, That she might see her childrens thrids forth brought, And know the measure of their utmost date To them ordained by eternall fate: Which Clotho graunting shewed her the same. That when she saw, it did her much amate To see their thrids so thin as spiders frame, And eke so short, that seemd their ends out shortly came.

She then began them humbly to intreate To draw them longer out, and better twine, That so their lives might be prolonged late: But Lachesis thereat gan to repine, And

sayd; “Fond dame, that deem’st of things divine As of humane, that they may altred bee, And chaung’d at pleasure for those impes of thine! Not so; for what the Fates do once decree, Not all the gods can chaunge, nor Jove him self can free!”

“Then since” (quoth she) “the terme of each mans life For nought may lessened nor enlarged bee, Graunt this; that when ye shred with fatall knife His line, which is the eldest of the three, Which is of them the shortest, as I see, Eftsoones his life may passe into the next: And, when the next shall likewise ended bee, That both their lives may likewise be annext Unto the third, that his may so be trebly wext.

They graunted it; and then that carefull Fay Departed thence with full contented mynd; And, comming home, in warlike fresh aray Them found all three according to their kynd: But unto them what destinie was assynd, Or how their lives were eekt, she did not tell; But evermore, when she fit time could fynd, She warned them to tend their safeties well, And love each other deare, what ever them befell.

So did they surely during all their dayes, And never discord did amongst them fall, Which much augmented all their other praise; And now, t’increase affection naturall, In love of Canacee they joyned all: Upon which ground this same great battell grew, Great matter growing of beginning small, The which, for length, I will not here pursew, But rather will reserve it for a Canto new.

Canto III

The Battell twixt three Brethren with Cambell for Canacee: Cambina with true friendships bond Doth their long strife agree.

O! why doe wretched men so much desire To draw their dayes unto the utmost date, And doe not rather wish them soone expire, Knowing the miserie of their estate, And thousand perills which them still awate, Tossing them like a boate amid the mayne, That every houre they knocke at deathes gate? And he that happie seemes, and least in payne, Yet is as nigh his end as he that most doth playne.

Therefore this Fay I hold but fond and vaine, The which, in seeking for her children three Long life, thereby did more prolong their paine: Yet whilest they lived none did ever see More happie creatures then they seem'd to bee; Nor more ennobled for their courtesie, That made them dearely lov'd of each degree; Ne more renowmed for their chevalrie, That made them dreaded much of all men farre and nie.

These three that hardie chalenge tooke in hand, For Canacee with Cambell for to fight. The day was set, that all might understand, And pledges pawnd the same to keepe aright: That day, the dreddest day that living wight Did ever see upon this world to shine. So soone as heavens window shewed light, These warlike Champions, all in armour shine, Assembled were in field the chalenge to define.

The field with listes was all about enclos'd, To barre the prease of people farre away; And at th'one side sixe judges were dispos'd, To view and deeme the deedes of armes that day: And on the other side, in fresh aray, Fayre Canacee upon a stately stage Was set, to see the fortune of that fray, And to be seene, as his most worthie wage That could her purchase with his lives adventur'd gage.

Then entred Cambell first into the list, With stately steps and fearelesse countenance, As if the conquest his he surely wist. Soone after did the brethren three advance In brave aray and goodly amenance, With scutchins gilt and banners broad displayd; And, marching thrise in warlike ordinance, Thrise lowted lowly to the noble Mayd. The whiles shril trompets and loud clarions sweetly playd.

Which doen, the doughty chalenger came forth, All arm'd to point, his chalenge to abet: Gainst whom Sir Priamond, with equall worth And equall armes, himselfe did forward set. A trompet blew; they both together met With dreadfull force and furious intent, Carelesse of perill in their fiers affret, As if that life to losse they had forelent, And cared not to spare that should be shortly spent.

Right practicke was Sir Priamond in fight, And throughly skild in use of shield and speare; Ne lesse approved was Cambelloes might, Ne lesse his skill in weapons did

appeare; That hard it was to weene which harder were. Full many mightie strokes on either side Were sent, that seemed death in them to beare; But they were both so watchfull and well eyde, That they avoyded were, and vainely by did slyde.

Yet one, of many, was so strongly bent By Priamond, that with unluckie glaunce Through Cambels shoulder it unwarely went, That forced him his shield to disadvaunce. Much was he grieved with that gracelesse chaunce; Yet from the wound no drop of bloud there fell, But wondrous paine, that did the more enhaunce His haughtie courage to avengement fell: Smart daunts not mighty harts, but makes them more to swell.

With that, his poynant speare he fierce aventred With doubled force close underneath his shield, That through the mayles into his thigh it entred, And, there arresting, readie way did yield For bloud to gush forth on the grassie field; That he for paine himselfe n'ote right upreare, But too and fro in great amazement reel'd; Like an old Oke, whose pith and sap is seare, At puffe of every storme doth stagger here and theare.

Whom so dismayd when Cambell had espide, Againe he drove at him with double might, That nought mote stay the steele, till in his side The mortall point most cruelly empight; Where fast infixed, whilest he sought by slight It forth to wrest, the staffe asunder brake, And left the head behinde: with which despight He all enrag'd his shivering speare did shake, And charging him afresh thus felly him bespake.

"Lo! faitour, there thy meede unto thee take, The meede of thy mischalenge and abet. Not for thine owne, but for thy sisters sake, Have I thus long thy life unto thee let: But to forbeare doth not forgive the det." The wicked weapon heard his wrathfull vow, And, passing forth with furious affiret, Pierst through his bever quite into his brow, That with the force it backward forced him to bow.

Therewith asunder in the midst it brast, And in his hand nought but the troncheon left; The other halfe, behind yet sticking fast, Out of his headpeece Cambell fiercely

reft, And with such furie backe at him it heft, That making way unto his dearest life, His weasand-pipe it through his gorget cleft. Thence streames of purple bloud issuing rife Let forth his wearie ghost, and made an end of strife.

His wearie ghost assoyld from fleshly band Did not, as others wont, directly fly Unto her rest in Plutoes griesly land; Ne into ayre did vanish presently, Ne chaunged was into a starre in sky; But through traduction was eftsoones derived, Like as his mother prayd the Destinie, Into his other brethren that survived, In whom he liv'd anew, of former life deprived.

Whom when on ground his brother next beheld, Though sad and sorie for so heavy sight, Yet leave unto his sorrow did not yeeld, But rather stir'd to vengeance and despight, Through secret feeling of his generous spright, Rusht fiercely forth the battell to renew, As in reversion of his brothers right; And chalenging the Virgin as his dew, His foe was soone addrest: the trompets freshly blew.

With that they both together fiercely met, As if that each ment other to devoure; And with their axes both so sorely bet, That neither plate nor mayle, where as their powre They felt, could once sustaine the hideous stowre, But rived were like rotten wood asunder; Whilest through their rifts the ruddie bloud did showre, And fire did flash, like lightning after thunder, That fild the lookers on attonce with ruth and wonder.

As when two Tygers prickt with hungers rage Have by good fortune found some beasts fresh spoyle, On which they weene their famine to asswage, And gaine a feastfull guerdon of their toyle, Both falling out doe stirre up strifefull broyle, And cruell battell twixt themselves doe make, Whiles neither lets the other touch the soyle, But either sdeignes with other to partake: So cruelly these Knights strove for that Ladies sake.

Full many strokes, that mortally were ment, The whiles were enterchaunged twixt them two; Yet they were all with so good wariment Or warded, or avoyded and let goe, That still the life stood fearelesse of her foe; Till Diamond, disdeigning long

delay Of doubtfull fortune wavering to and fro, Resolv'd to end it one or other way, And heav'd his murdrous axe at him with mighty sway.

The dreadfull stroke, in case it had arrived Where it was ment, (so deadly it was ment) The soule had sure out of his bodie rived, And stinted all the strife incontinent: But Cambels fate that fortune did prevent; For, seeing it at hand, he swarv'd asyde, And so gave way unto his fell intent; Who, missing of the marke which he had eyde, Was with the force nigh feld, whilst his right foot did slyde.

As when a Vulture greedie of his pray, Through hunger long that hart to him doth lend, Strikes at an Heron with all his bodies sway, That from his force seemes nought may it defend; The warie fowle, that spies him toward bend His dreadfull souse, avoydes it, shunning light, And maketh him his wing in vaine to spend; That with the weight of his owne weeldlesse might He falleth nigh to ground, and scarse recovereth flight.

Which faire adventure when Cambello spide, Full lightly, ere himselfe he could recower From daungers dread to ward his naked side, He can let drive at him with all his power, And with his axe him smote in evill hower, That from his shoulders quite his head he reft: The headlesse tronke, as heedlesse of that stower, Stood still awhile, and his fast footing kept, Till, feeling life to fayle, it fell, and deadly slept.

They which that piteous spectacle beheld Were much amaz'd the headlesse tronke to see Stand up so long, and weapon vaine to weld, Unweeting of the Fates divine decree For lifes succession in those brethren three. For notwithstanding that one soule was reft, Yet had the bodie not dismembred bee, It would have lived, and revived eft; But, finding no fit seat, the lifelesse corse it left.

It left; but that same soule which therein dwelt Streight entring into Triamond him fild With double life and griefe; which when he felt, As one whose inner parts had bene ythrild With point of steele that close his hartbloud spild, He lightly lept out of his place of rest, And rushing forth into the emptie field, Against Cambello fiercely

him addrest; Who, him affronting soone, to fight was readie prest.

Well mote ye wonder how that noble Knight, After he had so often wounded beene, Could stand on foot now to renew the fight: But had ye then him forth advauncing seene, Some newborne wight ye would him surely weene; So fresh he seemed and so fierce in sight: Like as a Snake, whom wearie winters teene Hath worne to nought, now feeling sommers might, Casts off his ragged skin and freshly doth him dight.

All was through vertue of the ring he wore; The which not onely did not from him let One drop of bloud to fall, but did restore His weakned powers, and dulled spirits whet, Through working of the stone therein yset. Else how could one of equall might with most, Against so many no lesse mightie met, Once thinke to match three such on equall cost, Three such as able were to match a puissant host?

Yet nought thereof was Triamond adredde, Ne desperate of glorious victorie; But sharpely him assayld, and sore bestedde With heapes of strokes, which he at him let flie As thicke as hayle forth poured from the skie: He stroke, he soust, he foynd, he hewd, he lasht, And did his yron brond so fast applie, That from the same the fierie sparkles flasht, As fast as water-sprinkles gainst a rocke are dasht.

Much was Cambello daunted with his blowes: So thicke they fell, and forcibly were sent, That he was forst from daunger of the throwes Backe to retire, and somewhat to relent, Till th'heat of his fierce furie he had spent; Which when for want of breath gan to abate, He then afresh with new encouragement Did him assayle, and mightily amate, As fast as forward erst now backward to retrate.

Like as the tide, that comes fro th'Ocean mayne, Flowes up the Shenan with contrarie forse, And over-ruling him in his owne rayne, Drives backe the current of his kindly course, And makes it seeme to have some other sourse; But when the floud is spent, then backe againe, His borrowed waters forst to redisbourse, He sends the sea his owne with double gaine, And tribute eke withall, as to his Soveraine.

Thus did the battell varie to and fro, With diverse fortune doubtfull to be deemed: Now this the better had, now had his fo; Then he halfe vanquisht, then the other seemed, Yet victors both them selves alwayes esteemed: And all the while the disentrayled blood Adowne their sides like litle rivers stremed, That with the wasting of his vitall flood, Sir Triamond at last full faint and feeble stood.

But Cambell still more strong and greater grew, Ne felt his blood to wast, ne powres emperisht, Through that rings vertue, that with vigour new Still when as he enfeebled was, him cherisht, And all his wounds, and all his bruses guarisht; Like as a withered tree, through husbands toyle, Is often seene full freshly to have florisht, And fruitfull apples to have borne awhile, As fresh as when it first was planted in the soyle.

Through which advantage, in his strength he rose, And smote the other with so wondrous might, That through the seame, which did his hauberk close, Into his throate and life it pierced quight, That downe he fell as dead in all mens sight; Yet dead he was not, yet he sure did die, As all men do, that lose the living spright. So did one soule out of his bodie flie Unto her native home from mortall miserie.

But nathelesse, whilst all the lookers-on Him dead behight, as he to all appeard, All unawares he started up anon, As one that had out of a dreame bene reard, And fresh assayld his foe: who halfe affeard Of th'uncouth sight, as he some ghost had seene, Stood still amaz'd, holding his idle sweard; Till, having often by him stricken beene, He forced was to strike, and save himselfe from teene.

Yet from thenceforth more warily he fought, As one in feare the Stygian gods t'offend, Ne followd on so fast, but rather sought Him selfe to save, and daunger to defend, Then life and labour both in vaine to spend. Which Triamond perceiving weened sure He gan to faint toward the battels end, And that he should not long on foote endure, A signe which did to him the victorie assure.

Whereof full blith eftsoones his mightie hand He heav'd on high, in mind with that

same blow To make an end of all that did withstand: Which Cambell seeing come was nothing slow Him selfe to save from that so deadly throw; And at that instant reaching forth his sweard Close underneath his shield, that scarce did show, Stroke him, as he his hand to strike upreard, In th'arm-pit full, that through both sides the wound appeard.

Yet still that direfull stroke kept on his way, And, falling heavie on Cambelloes crest, Strooke him so hugely that in swowne he lay, And in his head an hideous wound imprest: And sure, had it not happily found rest Upon the brim of his brode-plated shield, It would have cleft his braine downe to his brest. So both at once fell dead upon the field, And each to other seemd the victorie to yield.

Which when as all the lookers-on beheld, They weened sure the warre was at an end; And Judges rose, and Marshals of the field Broke up the listes, their armes away to rend; And Canacee gan wayle her dearest frend. All suddenly they both upstarted light, The one out of the swownd, which him did blend, The other breathing now another spright, And fiercely each assayling gan afresh to fight.

Long while they then continued in that wize, As if but then the battell had begonne: Strokes, wounds, wards, weapons, all they did despise, Ne either car'd to ward, or perill shonne, Desirous both to have the battell donne; Ne either cared life to save or spill, Ne which of them did winne, ne which were wonne. So wearie both of fighting had their fill, That life it selfe seemd loathsome, and long safetie ill.

Whilst thus the case in doubtfull ballance hong, Unsure to whether side it would incline, And all mens eyes and hearts, which there among Stood gazing, filled were with rufull tine And secret feare, to see their fatall fine, All suddenly they heard a troublous noyes, That seemd some perilous tumult to desine, Confusd with womens cries and shouts of boyes, Such as the troubled Theatres oftimes annoyes.

Thereat the Champions both stood still a space, To weeten what that sudden clamour ment: Lo! where they spyde with speedie whirling pace, One in a charet of straunge

furniment Towards them driving, like a storme out sent. The charet decked was in wondrous wize With gold and many a gorgeous ornament, After the Persian Monarks antique guize, Such as the maker selfe could best by art devize.

Much more of price and of more gratious powre, Is this, then that same water of Ardenne, The which Rinaldo drunck in happie howre, Described by that famous Tuscane penne: For that had might to change the hearts of men Fro love to hate, a change of evill choise: But this doth hatred make in love to brenne, And heavy heart with comfort doth rejoyce. Who would not to this vertue rather yeeld his voice?

At last arriving by the listes side, Shee with her rod did softly smite the raile, Which straight flew ope, and gave her way to ride. Eftsoones out of her Coch she gan availe, And pacing fairely forth did bid all haile, First to her brother, whom she loved deare, That so to see him made her heart to quaile; And next to Cambell, whose sad ruefull cheare Made her to change her hew, and hidden love t'appeare.

They lightly her requit, (for small delight They had as then her long to entertaine) And eft them turned both againe to fight: Which when she saw, downe on the bloudy plaine Her selfe she threw, and teares gan shed amaine; Amongst her teares immixing prayers meeke, And with her prayers reasons, to restraine From blouddy strife, and blessed peace to seeke, By all that unto them was deare, did them beseeke.

But when as all might nought with them prevaile, Shee smote them lightly with her powrefull wand. Then suddenly, as if their hearts did faile, Their wrathfull blades downe fell out of their hand, And they, like men astonisht, still did stand. Thus whilest their minds were doubtfully distraught, And mighty spirites bound with mightier band, Her golden cup to them for drinke she raught, Whereof, full glad for thirst, ech drunk an harty draught;

Of which so soone as they once tasted had, Wonder it is that sudden change to see: Instead of strokes, each other kissed glad, And lovely haulst, from feare of treason

free, And plighted hands for ever friends to be. When all men saw this sudden change of things, So mortall foes so friendly to agree, For passing joy, which so great marvaile brings, They all gan shout aloud, that all the heaven rings.

All which when gentle Canacee beheld, In hast she from her lofty chaire descended, To weet what sudden tidings was befeld: Where when she saw that cruell war so ended, And deadly foes so faithfully affrended, In lovely wise she gan that Lady greet, Which had so great dismay so well amended: And, entertaining her with curt'sies meet, Profest to her true friendship and affection sweet.

Thus when they all accorded goodly were, The trumpets sounded, and they all arose, Thence to depart with glee and gladsome chere. Those warlike champions both together chose Homeward to march, themselves there to repose: And wise Cambina, taking by her side Faire Canacee, as fresh as morning rose, Unto her Coch remounting, home did ride, Admir'd of all the people and much glorifide.

Where making joyous feast theire daies they spent In perfect love, devoide of hatefull strife, Allide with bands of mutuall couplement; For Triamond had Canacee to wife, With whom he ledd a long and happie life; And Cambel tooke Cambina to his fere, The which as life were to each other liefe. So all alike did love, and loved were, That since their dayes such lovers were not found elswhere.

Canto IV

Satyrane makes a Turneyment For love of Florimell: Britomart winnes the prize from all, And Artegall doth quell.

It often fals, (as here it earst befell) That mortall foes doe turne to faithfull frends, And friends profest are chaungd to foemen fell: The cause of both, of both their minds depends, And th'end of both likewise of both their ends: For enmitie, that of no ill proceeds But of occasion, with th'occasion ends; And friendship, which a faint affection breeds Without regard of good, dyes like ill grounded seeds.

That well (me seemes) appeares, by that of late Twixt Cambell and Sir Triamond befell, As als by this, that now a new debate Stird up twixt Blandamour and Paridell, The which by course befals me here to tell: Who having those two other Knights espide Marching afore, as ye remember well, Sent forth their Squire to have them both descride, And eke those masked Ladies riding them beside.

Who backe returning told, as he had seene, That they were doughtie knights of dreaded name, And those two Ladies their two loves unseene; And therefore wisht them without blot or blame To let them passe at will, for dread of shame. But Blandamour full of vainglorious spright, And rather stird by his discordfull Dame, Upon them gladly would have prov'd his might, But that he yet was sore of his late lucklesse fight.

Yet nigh approching he them fowle bespake, Disgracing them, him selfe thereby to grace, As was his wont: so weening way to make To Ladies love, where so he came in place, And with lewd termes their lovers to deface. Whose sharpe provokement them incenst so sore, That both were bent t'avenge his usage base, And gan their shields addresse them selves afore: For evill deedes may better then bad words be bore.

But faire Cambina with perswasions myld Did mitigate the fiercenesse of their mode, That for the present they were reconcyld, And gan to treate of deeds of armes abrode, And strange adventures, all the way they rode: Amongst the which they told, as then befell, Of that great turney which was blazed brode, For that rich girdle of faire Florimell, The prize of her which did in beautie most excell.

To which folke-mote they all with one consent, Sith each of them his Ladie had him by, Whose beautie each of them thought excellent, Agreed to travell, and their fortunes try. So as they passed forth they did espy One in bright armes, with ready speare in rest, That toward them his course seem'd to apply: Gainst whom Sir Paridell himselfe addrest, Him weening, ere he nigh approcht, to have represt.

Which th'other seeing gan his course relent, And vaunted speare eftsoones to disadvaunce, As if he naught but peace and pleasure ment, Now falne into their fellowship by chance: Whereat they shewed curteous countenaunce. So as he rode with them accompanide, His roving eie did on the Lady glaunce Which Blandamour had riding by his side: Whom sure he weend, that he some-wher tofore had eide.

It was to weete that snowy Florimell, Which Ferrau late from Braggadochio wonne: Whom he now seeing, her remembred well, How having reft her from the witches sonne, He soone her lost: wherefore he now begunne To challenge her anew, as his owne prize, Whom formerly he had in battell wonne, And proffer made by force her to reprize: Which scornefull offer Blandamour gan soone despize;

And said, "Sir Knight, sith ye this Lady clame, Whom he that hath were loth to lose so light, (For so to lose a Lady were great shame) Yee shall her winne, as I have done, in fight: And lo! shee shall be placed here in sight, Together with this Hag beside her set, That who so winnes her may her have by right; But he shall have the Hag that is ybet, And with her alwaies ride, till he another get."

That offer pleased all the company: So Florimell with Atè forth was brought, At which they all gan laugh full merrily; But Braggadochio said, he never thought For such an Hag, that seemed worse then nought, His person to emperill so in fight; But if to match that Lady they had sought Another like, that were like faire and bright, His life he then would spend to justifie his right.

At which his vaine excuse they all gan smile, As scorning his unmanly cowardize; And Florimell him fowly gan revile, That for her sake refus'd to enterprize The battell, offred in so knightly wize: And Atè eke provokt him privily With love of her, and shame of such mesprize, But nought he car'd for friend or enemy; For in base mind nor friendship dwels nor enmity.

But Cambell thus did shut up all in jest: "Brave Knights and Ladies, certes, ye doe wrong To stirre up strife, when most us needeth rest, That we may us reserve both

fresh and strong Against the Turneiment which is not long, When who so list to fight may fight his fill: Till then your challenges ye may prolong; And then it shall be tried, if ye will, Whether shall have the Hag, or hold the Lady still."

They all agreed: so, turning all to game And pleasaunt bord, they past forth on their way; And all that while, where so they rode or came, That masked Mock-knight was their sport and play. Till that at length, upon th'appointed day Unto the place of turneyment they came; Where they before them found in fresh aray Manie a brave knight and manie a daintie dame, Assembled for to get the honour of that game.

There this faire crewe arriving did divide Them selves asunder: Blandamour with those Of his on th'one, the rest on th'other side. But boastful Braggadochio rather chose, For glorie vaine, their fellowship to lose, That men on him the more might gaze alone. The rest themselves in troupes did else dispose, Like as it seemed best to every one; The knights in couples marcht with ladies linckt attone.

Then first of all forth came Sir Satyrane, Bearing that precious relicke in an arke Of gold, that bad eyes might it not prophane: Which drawing softly forth out of the darke, He open shewd, that all men it mote marke: A gorgeous girdle, curiously embost With pearle and precious stone, worth many a marke; Yet did the workmanship farre passe the cost: It was the same which lately Florimel had lost.

The same aloft he hung in open vew, To be the prize of beautie and of might; The which eftsoones discovered, to it drew The eyes of all, allur'd with close delight, And hearts quite robbed with so glorious sight, That all men threw out vowes and wishes vaine. Thrise happie Ladie, and thrise happie knight, Them seemd that could so goodly riches gaine, So worthie of the perill, worthy of the paine.

Then tooke the bold Sir Satyrane in hand An huge great speare, such as he wont to wield, And, vauncing forth from all the other band Of knights, addrest his maiden-headed shield, Shewing him selfe all ready for the field. Gainst whom there singled from the other side A Painim knight that well in armes was skild, And had in

many a battell oft bene tride, Right Bruncheval the bold, who fiersly forth did ride.

So furiously they both together met, That neither could the others force sustaine; As two fierce Buls, that strive the rule to get Of all the heard, meete with so hideous maine, That both rebutted tumble on the plaine: So these two champions to the ground were feld, Where in a maze they both did long remaine, And in their hands their idle troncheons held, Which neither able were to wag, or once to weld.

Which when the noble Ferramont espide, He pricked forth in ayd of Satyran; And him against Sir Blandamour did ride With all the strength and stifnesse that he can. But the more strong and stiffely that he ran, So much more sorely to the ground he fell, That on an heape were tumbled horse and man: Unto whose rescue forth rode Paridell; But him likewise with that same speare he eke did quell.

Which Braggadocchio seeing had no will To hasten greatly to his parties ayd, Albee his turne were next; but stood there still, As one that seemed doubtfull or dismayd. But Triamond, halfe wroth to see him staid, Sternly stept forth and raught away his speare, With which so sore he Ferramont assaid, That horse and man to ground he quite did beare, That neither could in hast themselves againe upreare.

Which to avenge Sir Devon him did dight, But with no better fortune then the rest; For him likewise he quickly downe did smight, And after him Sir Douglas him addrest, And after him Sir Palimord forth prest: But none of them against his strokes could stand, But, all the more, the more his praise increst: For either they were left uppon the land, Or went away sore wounded of his haplesse hand.

And now by this Sir Satyrane abraid Out of the swowne, in which too long he lay; And looking round about, like one dismaid, When as he saw the mercilesse affray Which doughty Triamond had wrought that day Unto the noble Knights of Maidenhead, His mighty heart did almost rend in tway, For very gall, that rather wholly dead Himselfe he wisht have beene, then in so bad a stead.

Eftsoones he gan to gather up around His weapons which lay scattered all abrode,

And, as it fell, his steed he ready found; On whom remounting fiercely forth he rode, Like sparke of fire that from the andvile glode, There where he saw the valiant Triamond Chasing, and laying on them heavy lode, That none his force were able to withstond, So dreadfull were his strokes, so deadly was his hond.

With that, at him his beam-like speare he aimed, And thereto all his power and might applide: The wicked steele, for mischiefe first ordained, And having now misfortune got for guide, Staid not till it arrived in his side, And therein made a very griesly wound, That streames of blood his armour all bedide. Much was he daunted with that direfull stound, That scarse he him upheld from falling in a swound.

Yet, as he might, himselfe he soft withdrew Out of the field, that none perceiv'd it plaine; Then gan the part of Chalengers anew To range the field, and victorlike to raine, That none against them battell durst maintaine: By that the gloomy evening on them fell, That forced them from fighting to refraine, And trumpets sound to cease did them compell: So Satyrane that day was judg'd to beare the bell.

The morrow next the Turney gan anew: And with the first the hardy Satyrane Appear'd in place, with all his noble crew: On th'other side full many a warlike swaine Assembled were, that glorious prize to gaine. But mongst them all was not Sir Triamond, Unable he new battell to darraine, Through grievaunce of his late received wound, That doubly did him grieve when so himselfe he found.

Which Cambell seeing, though he could not salve, Ne done undoe, yet, for to salve his name And purchase honour in his friends behalve, This goodly counterfesaunce he did frame: The shield and armes, well knowne to be the same Which Triamond had worne, unwares to wight And to his friend unwist, for doubt of blame If he misdid, he on himselfe did dight, That none could him discerne; and so went forth to fight.

There Satyrane Lord of the field he found, Triumphing in great joy and jolity, Gainst whom none able was to stand on ground; That much he gan his glorie to envy, And

cast t’avenge his friends indignity. A mightie speare eftsoones at him he bent; Who, seeing him come on so furiously, Met him mid-way with equall hardiment, That forcibly to ground they both together went.

They up againe them selves can lightly reare, And to their tryed swords them selves betake; With which they wrought such wondrous marvels there, That all the rest it did amazed make, Ne any dar’d their perill to partake; Now cuffing close, now chacing to and fro, Now hurtling round advantage for to take: As two wild Boares together grapling go, Chaufing and foming choler each against his fo.

So as they courst, and turneyd here and theare, It chaunst Sir Satyrane his steed at last, Whether through foundring or through sodein feare, To stumble, that his rider nigh he cast; Which vauntage Cambell did pursue so fast, That, ere him selfe he had recovered well, So sore he sowst him on the compast creast, That forced him to leave his loftie sell, And rudely tumbling downe under his horse-feete fell.

Lightly Cambello leapt downe from his steed For to have rent his shield and armes away, That whylome wont to be the victors meed; When all unwares he felt an hideous sway Of many swords that lode on him did lay. An hundred knights had him enclosed round, To rescue Satyrane out of his pray, All which at once huge strokes on him did pound, In hope to take him prisoner, where he stood on ground.

He with their multitude was nought dismayd, But with stout courage turnd upon them all, And with his brondiron round about him layd; Of which he dealt large almes, as did befall: Like as a Lion, that by chaunce doth fall Into the hunters toile, doth rage and rore, In royall heart disdaining to be thrall. But all in vaine: for what might one do more? They have him taken captive, though it grieve him sore.

Whereof when newes to Triamond was brought There as he lay, his wound he soone forgot, And starting up streight for his armour sought: In vaine he sought, for there he found it not; Cambello it away before had got. Cambelloes armes therefore he on him threw, And lightly issewd forth to take his lot. There he in troupe found all that

warlike crew, Leading his friend away, full sorie to his vew.

Into the thickest of that knightly preasse He thrust, and smote downe all that was betweene, Caried with fervent zeale: ne did he ceasse, Till that he came where he had Cambell seene Like captive thral two other Knights atweene: There he amongst them cruell havocke makes, That they, which lead him, soone enforced beene To let him loose to save their proper stakes, Who, being freed, from one a weapon fiercely takes.

With that he drives at them with dreadfull might, Both in remembrance of his friends late harme, And in revengement of his owne despight; So both together give a new allarme, As if but now the battell wexed warme. As when two greedy Wolves doe breake by force Into an heard, farre from the husband farme, They spoile and ravine without all remorse; So did these two through all the field their foes enforce.

Fiercely they followd on their bolde emprize, Till trumpets sound did warne them all to rest; Then all with one consent did yeeld the prize To Triamond and Cambell as the best. But Triamond to Cambell it relest, And Cambell it to Triamond transferd, Each labouring t'advance the others gest, And make his praise before his owne preferd: So that the doome was to another day differd.

The last day came, when all those knightes againe Assembled were their deedes of armes to shew. Full many deedes that day were shewed plaine: But Satyrane, bove all the other crew, His wondrous worth declared in all mens view, For from the first he to the last endured: And though some while Fortune from him withdrew, Yet evermore his honour he recured, And with unwearied powre his party still assured.

Ne was there Knight that ever thought of armes, But that his utmost prowesse there made knowen; That, by their many wounds and carelesse harmes, By shivered speares, and swords all under strowen, By scattered shields, was easie to be showen. There might ye see loose steeds at randon ronne, Whose lucklesse riders late were overthrowen; And squiers make hast to helpe their Lords fordonne. But still the

Knights of Maidenhead the better wonne;

Till that there entered on the other side A straunger knight, from whence no man could reed, In quyent disguise, full hard to be descride: For all his armour was like salvage weed With woody mosse bedight, and all his steed With oaken leaves attrapt, that seemed fit For salvage wight; and thereto well agreed His word, which on his ragged shield was writ, Salvagesse sans finesse, shewing secret wit.

He, at his first incomming, charg'd his spere At him that first appeared in his sight; That was to weet the stout Sir Sangliere, Who well was knowen to be a valiant Knight, Approved oft in many a perlous fight. Him at the first encounter downe he smote, And overbore beyond his crouper quight; And after him another Knight, that hote Sir Brianor, so sore that none him life behote.

Then, ere his hand he reard, he overthrew Seven Knights, one after other as they came: And, when his speare was brust, his sword he drew, The instrument of wrath, and with the same Far'd like a lyon in his bloodie game, Hewing and slashing shields and helmets bright, And beating downe what ever nigh him came, That every one gan shun his dreadfull sight, No lesse then death it selfe, in daungerous affright.

Much wondred all men what or whence he came, That did amongst the troupes so tyrannize, And each of other gan inquire his name. But when they could not learne it by no wize, Most answerable to his wyld disguize It seemed him to terme the Salvage Knight; But certes his right name was otherwize, Though knowne to few, that Arthegall he hight, The doughtiest knight that liv'd that day, and most of might.

Thus was Sir Satyrane with all his band By his sole manhood and atchievement stout Dismay'd, that none of them in field durst stand, But beaten were and chased all about. So he continued all that day throughout, Till evening that the Sunne gan downward bend. Then rushed forth out of the thickest rout A stranger knight, that did his glorie shend: So nought may be esteemed happie till the end.

He at his entrance charg'd his powrefull speare At Artegall, in middest of his pryde,

And therewith smote him on his Umbriere So sore, that tombling backe he downe did slyde Over his horses taile above a stryde; Whence litle lust he had to rise againe: Which Cambell seeing much the same envyde, And ran at him with all his might and maine; But shortly was likewise seene lying on the plaine.

Whereat full inly wroth was Triamond, And cast t'avenge the shame doen to his freend: But by his friend himselfe eke soone he fond In no lesse neede of helpe then him, he weend. All which when Blandamour from end to end Beheld, he woxe therewith displeased sore, And thought in mind it shortly to amend: His speare he feutred, and at him it bore, But with no better fortune then the rest afore.

Full many others at him likewise ran, But all of them likewise dismounted were; Ne certes wonder, for no powre of man Could bide the force of that enchaunted speare, The which this famous Britomart did beare; With which she wondrous deeds of arms atchieved, And overthrew what ever came her neare, That all those stranger knights full sore agrieved, And that late weaker band of chalengers relieved.

Like as in sommers day, when raging heat Doth burne the earth and boyled rivers drie, That all brute beasts, forst to refraine fro meat, Doe hunt for shade, where shrowded they may lie, And, missing it, faine from themselves to flie; All travellers tormented are with paine: A watry cloud doth overcast the skie, And poureth forth a sudden shoure of raine, That all the wretched world recomforteth againe.

So did the warlike Britomart restore The prize to knights of Maydenhead that day, Which else was like to have bene lost, and bore The prayse of prowesse from them all away. Then shrilling trompets loudly gan to bray, And bad them leave their labours and long toyle To joyous feast and other gentle play, Where beauties prize shold win that pretious spoyle: Where I with sound of trompe will also rest a whyle.

Canto V

The Ladies for the girdle strive Of famous Florimell: Scudamour; comming to Cares

House. Doth sleepe from him expell.

It hath bene through all ages ever seene, That with the praise of armes and chevalrie The prize of beautie still hath joyned beene; And that for reasons speciall privitie, For either doth on other much relie. For he, me seemes, most fit the faire to serve, That can her best defend from villenie; And she most fit his service doth deserve, That fairest is, and from her faith will never swerve.

So fitly now here commeth next in place, After the proofe of prowesse ended well, The controverse of beauties soveraine grace; In which, to her that doth the most excell, Shall fall the girdle of faire Florimell: That many wish to win for glorie vaine, And not for vertuous use, which some doe tell That glorious belt did in it selfe containe, Which Ladies ought to love, and seeke for to obtaine.

That girdle gave the vertue of chast love, And wivehood true, to all that did it beare; But whosoever contrarie doth prove, Might not the same about her middle weare, But it would loose, or else asunder teare. Whilome it was (as Faeries wont report) Dame Venus girdle, by her steemed deare What time she usd to live in wively sort, But layd aside when so she usd her looser sport.

Her husband Vulcan whylome for her sake, When first he loved her with heart entire, This pretious ornament, they say, did make, And wrought in Lemno with unquenched fire; And afterwards did for her loves first hire Give it to her, for ever to remaine, Therewith to bind lascivious desire, And loose affections streightly to restraine; Which vertue it for ever after did retaine.

The same one day, when she her selfe disposd To visite her beloved Paramoure, The God of warre, she from her middle loosd, And left behind her in her secret bowre On Acidalian mount, where many an howre She with the pleasant Graces wont to play. There Florimell, in her first ages flowre, Was fostered by those Graces, (as they say) And brought with her from thence that goodly belt away.

That goodly belt was Cestus hight by name, And as her life by her esteemed deare.

No wonder then, if that to winne the same So many Ladies sought, as shall appeare; For pearelesse she was thought that did it beare. And now by this their feast all being ended, The judges, which thereto selected were, Into the Martian field adowne descended To deeme this doutfull case, for which they all contended.

But first was question made, which of those Knights That lately turneyd had the wager wonne: There was it judged, by those worthie wights, That Satyrane the first day best had donne: For he last ended, having first begonne. The second was to Triamond behight, For that he sav'd the victour from fordonne: For Cambell victour was in all mens sight, Till by mishap he in his foemens hand did light.

The third dayes prize unto that straunger Knight, Whom all men term'd Knight of the Hebene speare, To Britomart was given by good right; For that with puissant stroke she downe did beare The Salvage Knight that victour was whileare, And all the rest which had the best afore, And to the last unconquer'd did appeare; For last is deemed best. To her therefore The fayrest Ladie was adjudgd for Paramore.

But thereat greatly grudged Arthegall, And much repynd, that both of victors meede And eke of honour she did him forestall. Yet mote he not withstand what was decreede, But inly thought of that despightfull deede Fit time t'awaite avenged for to bee. This being ended thus, and all agreed, Then next ensew'd the Paragon to see Of beauties praise, and yeeld the fayrest her due fee.

Then first Cambello brought into their view His faire Cambina, covered with a veale; Which, being once withdrawne, most perfect hew And passing beautie did eftsoones reveale, That able was weake harts away to steale. Next did Sir Triamond unto their sight The face of his deare Canacee unheale; Whose beauties beame eftsoones did shine so bright, That daz'd the eyes of all as with exceeding light.

And after her did Paridell produce His false Duessa, that she might be seene; Who with her forged beautie did seduce The hearts of some that fairest her did weene, As diverse wits affected divers beene. Then did Sir Ferramont unto them shew His

Lucida, that was full faire and sheene: And after these an hundred Ladies moe Appear'd in place, the which each other did outgoe.

All which who so dare thinke for to enchace, Him needeth sure a golden pen, I weene, To tell the feature of each goodly face: For, since the day that they created beene, So many heavenly faces were not seene Assembled in one place: ne he that thought For Chian folke to pourtraict beauties Queene, By view of all the fairest to him brought, So many faire did see as here he might have sought.

At last, the most redoubted Britonesse Her lovely Amoret did open shew; Whose face, discovered, plainely did expresse The heavenly pourtraict of bright Angels hew. Well weened all, which her that time did vew, That she should surely beare the bell away; Till Blandamour, who thought he had the trew And very Florimell, did her display, The sight of whom once seene did all the rest dismay.

For all afore that seemed fayre and bright, Now base and contemptible did appeare, Compar'd to her that shone as Phebes light Amongst the lesser starres in evening cleare. All that her saw with wonder ravisht weare, And weend no mortall creature she should bee, But some celestiall shape that flesh did beare: Yet all were glad there Florimell to see, Yet thought that Florimell was not so faire as shee.

As guilefull Goldsmith that by secret skill With golden foyle doth finely overspred Some baser metall, which commend he will Unto the vulgar for good gold insted, He much more goodly glosse thereon doth shed To hide his falshood, then if it were trew: So hard this Idole was to be ared, That Florimell her selfe in all mens vew She seem'd to passe: so forged things do fairest shew.

Then was that golden belt by doome of all Graunted to her, as to the fayrest Dame. Which being brought, about her middle small They thought to gird, as best it her became, But by no meanes they could it thereto frame; For, ever as they fastned it, it loos'd And fell away, as feeling secret blame. Full oft about her wast she it enclos'd, And it as oft was from about her wast disclos'd:

That all men wondred at the uncouth sight, And each one thought as to their fancies came. But she her selfe did thinke it doen for spight, And touched was with secret wrath and shame Therewith, as thing deviz'd her to defame. Then many other Ladies likewise tride About their tender loynes to knit the same; But it would not on none of them abide, But when they thought it fast, eftsoones it was untide.

Which when that scornefull Squire of Dames did vew, He lowdly gan to laugh, and thus to jest; "Alas! for pittie that so faire a crew, As like can not be seene from East to West, Cannot find one this girdle to invest. Fie on the man that did it first invent To shame us all with this Ungirt unblest! Let never Ladie to his love assent, That hath this day so many so unmanly shent."

Thereat all Knights gan laugh, and Ladies lowre: Till that at last the gentle Amoret Likewise assayd to prove that girdles powre; And, having it about her middle set, Did find it fit withouten breach or let. Whereat the rest gan greatly to envie, But Florimell exceedingly did fret, And snatching from her hand halfe angrily The belt againe, about her body gan it tie.

Yet nathemore would it her bodie fit; Yet nathelesse to her, as her dew right, It yielded was by them that judged it: And she her selfe adjudged to the Knight That bore the Hebene speare, as wonne in fight. But Britomart would not thereto assent, Ne her owne Amoret forgoe so light For that strange Dame, whose beauties wonderment She lesse esteem'd then th'others vertuous government.

Whom when the rest did see her to refuse, They were full glad, in hope themselves to get her: Yet at her choice they all did greatly muse. But, after that, the judges did arret her Unto the second best that lov'd her better; That was the Salvage Knight: but he was gone, In great displeasure that he could not get her. Then was she judged Triamond his one; But Triamond lov'd Canacee, and other none.

Tho unto Satyran she was adjudged, Who was right glad to gaine so goodly meed: But Blandamour thereat full greatly grudged, And litle prays'd his labours evill

speed, That for to winne the saddle lost the steed. Ne lesse thereat did Paridell complaine, And thought t'appeale from that which was decreed To single combat with Sir Satyrane: Thereto him Atè stird, new discord to maintaine.

And eke, with these, full many other Knights She through her wicked working did incense Her to demaund and chalenge as their rights, Deserved for their perils recompense. Amongst the rest, with boastfull vaine pretense, Stept Braggadochio forth, and as his thrall Her claym'd, by him in battell wonne long sens: Whereto her selfe he did to witnesse call; Who, being askt, accordingly confessed all.

Thereat exceeding wroth was Satyran; And wroth with Satyran was Blandamour; And wroth with Blandamour was Erivan; And at them both Sir Paridell did loure. So all together stird up strifull stoure, And readie were new battell to darraine. Each one profest to be her paramoure, And vow'd with speare and shield it to maintaine; Ne Judges powre, ne reasons rule, mote them restraine.

Which troublous stirre when Satyrane aviz'd, He gan to cast how to appease the same, And to accord them all this meanes deviz'd: First in the midst to set that fayrest Dame, To whom each one his chalenge should disclame, And he himselfe his right would eke releasse: Then, looke to whom she voluntarie came, He should without disturbance her possesse: Sweete is the love that comes alone with willingnesse.

They all agreed: and then that snowy Mayd Was in the middest plast among them all; All on her gazing wisht, and vowd, and prayd, And to the Queene of beautie close did call, That she unto their portion might befall. Then, when she long had lookt upon each one, As though she wished to have pleasd them all, At last to Braggadochio selfe alone She came of her accord, in spight of all his fone.

Which when they all beheld they chaft, and rag'd, And woxe nigh mad for very harts despight, That from revenge their willes they scarce asswag'd Some thought from him her to have reft by might; Some proffer made with him for her to fight.

But he nought car'd for all that they could say, For he their words as wind esteemed light. Yet not fit place he thought it there to stay, But secretly from thence that night her bore away.

They which remaynd, so soone as they perceiv'd That she was gone, departed thence with speed, And follow'd them, in mind her to have reav'd From wight unworthie of so noble meed. In which poursuit how each one did succeede, Shall else be told in order, as it fell. But now of Britomart it here doth neede The hard adventures and strange haps to tell, Since with the rest she went not after Florimell.

For soone as she them saw to discord set, Her list no longer in that place abide; But, taking with her lovely Amoret, Upon her first adventure forth did ride, To seeke her lov'd, making blind love her guide. Unluckie Mayd, to seeke her enimie! Unluckie Mayd, to seeke him farre and wide, Whom, when he was unto her selfe most nie, She through his late disguizement could him not descrie!

So much the more her griefe, the more her toyle: Yet neither toyle nor griefe she once did spare, In seeking him that should her paine assoyle; Whereto great comfort in her sad misfare Was Amoret, companion of her care: Who likewise sought her lover long miswent, The gentle Scudamour, whose heart whileare That stryfull hag with gealous discontent Had fild, that he to fell reveng was fully bent:

Bent to revenge on blamelesse Britomart The crime which cursed Atè kindled earst, The which like thornes did pricke his gealous hart, And through his soule like poysned arrow perst, That by no reason it might be reverst, For ought that Glaucè could or doe or say. For, aye the more that she the same reherst, The more it gauld and griev'd him night and day, That nought but dire revenge his anger mote defray.

So as they travelled, the drouping night, Covered with cloudie storme and bitter showre, That dreadfull seem'd to every living wight, Upon them fell, before her timely howre; That forced them to seeke some covert bowre, Where they might hide their heads in quiet rest, And shrowd their persons from that stormie stowre. Not

farre away, not meet for any guest, They spide a little cottage, like some poore mans nest.

Under a steepe hilles side it placed was, There where the mouldred earth had cav'd the banke; And fast beside a little brooke did pas Of muddie water, that like puddle stanke, By which few crooked sallowes grew in ranke: Whereto approaching nigh they heard the sound Of many yron hammers beating ranke, And answering their wearie turnes around, That seemed some blacksmith dwelt in that desert ground.

There entring in, they found the goodman selfe Full busily unto his worke ybent; Who was to weet a wretched wearish elfe, With hollow eyes and rawbone cheekes forspent, As if he had in prison long bene pent: Full blacke and griesly did his face appeare, Besmeard with smoke that nigh his eye-sight blent; With rugged beard, and hoarie shagged heare, The which he never wont to combe, or comely sheare.

Rude was his garment, and to rags all rent, Ne better had he, ne for better cared: With blistred hands emongst the cinders brent, And fingers filthie with long nayles unpared, Right fit to rend the food on which he fared. His name was Care; a blacksmith by his trade, That neither day nor night from working spared, But to small purpose yron wedges made; Those be unquiet thoughts that carefull minds invade.

In which his worke he had sixe servants prest, About the Andvile standing evermore With huge great hammers, that did never rest From heaping stroakes which thereon soused sore: All sixe strong groomes, but one then other more; For by degrees they all were disagreed; So likewise did the hammers which they bore, Like belles in greatnesse orderly succeed, That he which was the last the first did farre exceede.

He like a monstrous Gyant seem'd in sight, Farre passing Bronteus or Pyracmon great, The which in Lipari doe day and night Frame thunderbolts for Joves avengefull threate. So dreadfully he did the and vile beat, That seem'd to dust he shortly would it drive: So huge his hammer, and so fierce his heat, That seem'd a

rocke of Diamond it could rive And rend asunder quite, if he thereto list strive.

Sir Scudamour there entring much admired The manner of their worke and wearie paine; And, having long beheld, at last enquired The cause and end thereof, but all in vaine; For they for nought would from their worke refraine, Ne let his speeches come unto their eare. And eke the breathfull bellowes blew amaine, Like to the Northern winde, that none could heare: Those Pensifenesse did move; and Sighes the bellows weare.

Which when that warriour saw, he said no more, But in his armour layd him down to rest: To rest he layd him downe upon the flore, (Whylome for ventrous Knights the bedding best) And thought his wearie limbs to have redrest. And that old aged Dame, his faithfull Squire, Her feeble joynts layd eke adowne to rest; That needed much her weake age to desire, After so long a travell which them both did tire.

There lay Sir Scudamour long while expecting When gentle sleepe his heavie eyes would close; Oft chaunging sides, and oft new place electing, Where better seem'd he mote himselfe repose; And oft in wrath he thence againe uprose, And oft in wrath he layd him downe againe. But wheresoever he did himselfe dispose, He by no meanes could wished ease obtaine: So every place seem'd painefull, and ech changing vaine.

And evermore, when he to sleepe did thinke, The hammers sound his senses did molest, And evermore, when he began to winke, The bellowes noyse disturb'd his quiet rest, Ne suffred sleepe to settle in his brest: And all the night the dogs did barke and howle About the house, at sent of stranger guest: And now the crowing Cocke, and now the Owle Lowde shriking, him afflicted to the very sowle.

And, if by fortuneany litle nap Upon his heavie eyelids chaunst to fall, Eftsoones one of those villeins him did rap Upon his headpeece with his yron mall; That he was soone awaked therewithall, And lightly started up as one affrayd, Or as if one him suddenly did call: So oftentimes he out of sleepe abrayd, And then lay musing

long on that him ill apayd.

So long he muzed, and so long he lay, That at the last his wearie sprite, opprest With fleshly weaknesse, which no creature may Long time resist, gave place to kindly rest, That all his senses did full soone arrest: Yet in his soundest sleepe his dayly feare His ydle braine gan busily molest, And made him dreame those two disloyall were: The things, that day most minds, at night doe most appeare.

With that the wicked carle, the maister Smith, A paire of red-whot yron tongs did take Out of the burning cinders, and therewith Under his side him nipt; that, forst to wake, He felt his hart for very paine to quake, And started up avenged for to be On him the which his quiet slomber brake: Yet, looking round about him, none could see; Yet did the smart remaine, though he himselfe did flee.

In such disquiet and hart-fretting payne He all that night, that too long night, did passe. And now the day out of the Ocean mayne Began to peepe above this earthly masse, With pearly dew sprinkling the morning grasse: Then up he rose, like heavie lumpe of lead, That in his face, as in a looking glasse, The signes of anguish one mote plainely read, And ghesse the man to be dismayd with gealous dread.

Unto his lofty steede he clombe anone, And forth upon his former voiage fared, And with him eke that aged Squire attone; Who, whatsoever perill was prepared, Both equall paines and equall perill shared; The end whereof and daungerous event Shall for another canticle be spared: But here my wearie teeme, nigh over spent, Shall breath it selfe awhile after so long a went.

Canto VI

Both Scudamour and Arthegall Doe fight with Britomart: He sees her face: doth fall in love, And soone from her depart.

What equall torment to the griefe of mind And pyning anguish hid in gentle hart, That inly feeds it selfe with thoughts unkind, And nourisheth her owne consuming

smart? What medicine can any Leaches art Yeeld such a sore, that doth her grievance hide, And will to none her maladie impart? Such was the wound that Scudamour did gride, For which Dan Phebus selfe cannot a salve provide.

Who having left that restlesse house of Care, The next day, as he on his way did ride, Full of melancholic and sad misfare Through misconceipt, all unawares espide An armed Knight under a forrest side Sitting in shade beside his grazing steede; Who, soone as them approaching he descride, Gan towards them to pricke with eger speede, That seem'd he was full bent to some mischievous deede.

Which Scudamour perceiving forth issewed To have rencountred him in equall race; But soone as th'other nigh approaching vewed The armes he bore, his speare he gan abase And voide his course: at which so suddain case He wondred much. But th'other thus can say: "Ah, gentle Scudamour! unto your grace I me submit, and you of pardon pray, That almost had against you trespassed this day."

Whereto thus Scudamour: "Small harme it were For any knight upon a ventrous knight Without displeasance for to prove his spere. But reade you, Sir, sith ye my name have hight, What is your owne, that I mote you requite?" "Certes," (sayd he) "ye mote as now excuse Me from discovering you my name aright, For time yet serves that I the same refuse; But call ye me the Salvage Knight, as others use."

"Then this, Sir Salvage Knight," (quoth he) "areede: Or doe you here within this forrest wonne, That seemeth well to answere to your weede, Or have ye it for some occasion donne? That rather seemes, sith knowen armes ye shonne." "This other day" (sayd he) "a stranger knight Shame and dishonour hath unto me donne, On whom I waite to wreake that foule despight, When ever he this way shall passe by day or night."

"Shame be his meede," (quoth he) "that meaneth shame! But what is he by whom ye shamed were?" "A stranger knight," sayd he, "unknowne by name, But knowne by fame, and by an Hebene speare, With which he all that met him downe did beare.

He, in an open Turney lately held, Fro me the honour of that game did reare; And having me, all wearie earst, downe feld, The fayrest Ladie reft, and ever since withheld."

When Scudamour heard mention of that speare, He wist right well that it was Britomart, The which from him his fairest love did beare. Tho gan he swell in every inner part For fell despight, and gnaw his gealous hart, That thus he sharply sayd: "Now, by my head, Yet is not this the first unknightly part, Which that same knight, whom by his launce I read, Hath doen to noble knights, that many makes him dread:

"For lately he my love hath fro me reft, And eke defiled with foule villanie The sacred pledge which in his faith was left, In shame of knighthood and fidelitie; The which ere long full deare he shall abie: And if to that avenge by you decreed This hand may helpe, or succour ought supplie, It shall not fayle when so ye shall it need." So both to wreake their wrathes on Britomart agreed.

Whiles thus they communed, lo! farre away A Knight soft ryding towards them they spyde, Attyr'd in forraine armes and straunge aray: Whom, when they nigh approcht, they plaine descryde To be the same for whom they did abyde. Sayd then Sir Scudamour: "Sir Salvage knight, Let me this crave, sith first I was defyde, That first I may that wrong to him requite; And, if I hap to fayle, you shall recure my right."

Which being yeelded, he his threatfull speare Gan fewter, and against her fiercely ran. Who soone as she him saw approching neare With so fell rage, her selfe she lightly gan To dight, to welcome him well as she can; But entertaind him in so rude a wise, That to the ground she smote both horse and man; Whence neither greatly hasted to arise, But on their common harmes together did devise.

But Artegall, beholding his mischaunce, New matter added to his former fire; And, eft aventring his steeleheaded launce, Against her rode, full of despiteous ire, That nought but spoyle and vengeance did require: But to himselfe his felonous intent

Returning disappointed his desire, Whiles unawares his saddle he forwent, And found himselfe on ground in great amazement.

Lightly he started up out of that stound, And snatching forth his direfull deadly blade Did leape to her, as doth an eger hound Thrust to an Hynd within some covert glade, Whom without perill he cannot invade. With such fell greedines he her assayled, That though she mounted were, yet he her made To give him ground, (so much his force prevayled) And shun his mightie strokes, gainst which no armes avayled.

So, as they coursed here and there, it chaunst That, in her wheeling round, behind her crest So sorely he her strooke, that thence it glaunst Adowne her backe, the which it fairely blest From foule mischance; ne did it ever rest, Till on her horses hinder parts it fell; Where byting deepe so deadly it imprest, That quite it chynd his backe behind the sell, And to alight on foote her algates did compell:

Like as the lightning brond from riven skie, Throwne out by angry Jove in his vengeance, With dreadfull force falles on some steeple hie; Which battring downe, it on the church doth glance, And teares it all with terrible mischance. Yet she no whit dismayd her steed forsooke, And, casting from her that enchaunted launce, Unto her sword and shield her soone betooke; And therewithall at him right furiously she strooke.

So furiously she strooke in her first heat, Whiles with long fight on foot he breathlesse was, That she him forced backward to retreat, And yeeld unto her weapon way to pas: Whose raging rigour neither steele nor bras Could stay, but to the tender flesh it went, And pour'd the purple bloud forth on the gras; That all his mayle yriv'd, and plates yrent, Shew'd all his bodie bare unto the cruell dent.

At length, when as he saw her hastie heat Abate, and panting breath begin to fayle, He, through long sufferance growing now more great, Rose in his strength, and gan her fresh assayle, Heaping huge strokes as thicke as showre of hayle, And lashing

dreadfully at every part, As if he thought her soule to disentrayle. Ah, cruell hand! and thrise more cruell hart, That workst such wrecke on her to whom thou dearest art!

What yron courage ever could endure To worke such outrage on so faire a creature; And in his madnesse thinke with hands impure To spoyle so goodly workmanship of nature, The maker selfe resembling in her feature! Certes some hellish furie or some feend This mischiefe framd for their first loves defeature, To bath their hands in bloud of dearest freend, Thereby to make their loves beginning their lives end.

Thus long they trac'd and traverst to and fro, Sometimes pursewing, and sometimes pursewed, Still as advantage they espyde thereto: But toward th'end Sir Arthegall renewed His strength still more, but she still more decrewed. At last his lucklesse hand he heav'd on hie, Having his forces all in one accrewed, And therewith stroke at her so hideouslie, That seemed nought but death mote be her destinie.

The wicked stroke upon her helmet chaunst, And with the force, whiche in it selfe it bore, Her ventayle shard away, and thence forth glaunst Adowne in vaine, ne harm'd her any more. With that her angels face, unseene afore, Like to the ruddie morne appeard in sight, Deawed with silver drops through sweating sore, But somewhat redder then beseem'd aright, Through toylesome heate and labour of her weary fight.

And round about the same her yellow heare, Having through stirring loosd their wonted band, Like to a golden border did appeare, Framed in goldsmithes forge with cunning hand: Yet goldsmithes cunning could not understand To frame such subtile wire, so shinie cleare; For it did glister like the golden sand, The which Pactolus with his waters shere Throwes forth upon the rivage round about him nere.

And as his hand he up againe did reare, Thinking to worke on her his utmost wracke, His powrelesse arme, benumbd with secret feare, From his revengefull purpose shronke abacke, And cruell sword out of his fingers slacke Fell downe to ground; as

if the steele had sence, And felt some ruth or sence his hand did lacke, Or both of them did thinke obedience To doe to so divine a beauties excellence.

And he himselfe, long gazing thereupon, At last fell humbly downe upon his knee, And of his wonder made religion, Weening some heavenly goddesse he did see, Or else unweeting what it else might bee; And pardon her besought his errour frayle, That had done outrage in so high degree: Whilest trembling horrour did his sense assayle, And made ech member quake, and manly hart to quayle.

Nathelesse she, full of wrath for that late stroke, All that long while upheld her wrathfull hand, With fell intent on him to bene ywroke; And, looking sterne, still over him did stand, Threatning to strike unlesse he would withstand: And bad him rise, or surely he should die. But, die or live, for nought he would upstand, But her of pardon prayd more earnestlie, Or wreake on him her will for so great injurie.

Which when as Scudamour, who now abrayd, Beheld, whereas he stood not farre aside, He was therewith right wondrously dismayd; And drawing nigh, when as he plaine descride That peerelesse paterne of Dame Natures pride And heavenly image of perfection, He blest himselfe as one sore terrifide: And, turning feare to faint devotion, Did worship her as some celestiall vision.

But Glaucè, seeing all that chaunced there, Well weeting how their errour to assoyle, Full glad of so good end, to them drew nere, And her salewd with seemely bel-accoyle, Joyous to see her safe after long toyle. Then her besought, as she to her was deare, To graunt unto those warriours truce a whyle; Which yeelded, they their bevers up did reare, And shew’d themselves to her such as indeed they were.

When Britomart with sharpe avizefull eye Beheld the lovely face of Artegall Tempred with sternesse and stout majestie, She gan eftsoones it to her mind to call To be the same which in her fathers hall Long since in that enchaunted glasse she saw; Therewith her wrathfull courage gan appall, And haughtie spirits meekely to adaw, That her enhaunced hand she downe Can soft withdraw.

Yet she it forst to have againe upheld, As fayning choler which was turn'd to cold: But ever when his visage she beheld, Her hand fell downe, and would no longer hold The wrathfull weapon gainst his countnance bold: But, when in vaine to fight she oft assayd, She arm'd her tongue, and thought at him to scold; Nathlesse her tongue not to her will obayd, But brought forth speeches myld when she would have missayd.

But Scudamour, now woxen inly glad That all his gealous feare he false had found, And how that Hag his love abused had With breach of faith and loyaltie unsound, The which long time his grieved hart did wound, Him thus bespake: "Certes, Sir Artegall, I joy to see you lout so low on ground, And now become to live a Ladies thrall, That whylome in your minde wont to despise them all."

Soone as she heard the name of Artegall, Her hart did leape, and all her hartstrings tremble, For sudden joy and secret feare withall; And all her vitall powres, with motion nimble To succour it, themselves gan there assemble; That by the swift recourse of flushing blood Right plaine appeard, though she it would dissemble, And fayned still her former angry mood, Thinking to hide the depth by troubling of the flood.

When Glaucè thus gan wisely all upknit: "Ye gentle Knights, whom fortune here hath brought To be spectators of this uncouth fit, Which secret fate hath in this Ladie wrought Against the course of kind, ne mervaile nought, Ne thenceforth feare the thing that hethertoo Hath troubled both your mindes with idle thought, Fearing least she your loves away should woo: Feared in vaine, sith meanes, ye see, there wants theretoo.

"And you, Sir Artegall, the salvage knight, Henceforth may not disdaine that womans hand Hath conquered you anew in second fight: For whylome they have conquerd sea and land, And heaven it selfe, that nought may them withstand. Ne henceforth be rebellious unto love, That is the crowne of knighthood, and the band

Of noble minds derived from above, Which, being knit with vertue, never will remove.

“And you, faire Ladie knight, my dearest Dame, Relent the rigour of your wrathfull will, Whose fire were better turn’d to other flame; And, wiping out remembrance of all ill, Graunt him your grace; but so that he fulfill The penance which ye shall to him empart: For lovers heaven must passe by sorrowes hell.” Thereat full inly blushed Britomart, But Artegall close smyling joy’d in secret hart.

Yet durst he not make love so suddenly, Ne thinke th’affection of her hart to draw From one to other so quite contrary: Besides her modest countenance he saw So goodly grave, and full of princely aw, That it his ranging fancie did refraine, And looser thoughts to lawfull bounds withdraw; Whereby the passion grew more fierce and faine, Like to a stubborne steede whom strong hand would restraine.

But Scudamour, whose hart twixt doubtfull feare And feeble hope hung all this while suspence, Desiring of his Amoret to heare Some gladfull newes and sure intelligence, Her thus bespake: “But, Sir, without offence Mote I request you tydings of my love, My Amoret, sith you her freed fro thence Where she, captived long, great woes did prove; That where ye left I may her seeke, as doth behove.”

To whom thus Britomart: “Certes, Sir knight, What is of her become, or whether reft, I can not unto you aread a right: For from that time I from enchaunters theft Her freed, in which ye her all hopelesse left, I her preserv’d from perill and from feare, And evermore from villenie her kept: Ne ever was there wight to me more deare Then she, ne unto whom I more true love did beare:

“Till on a day, as through a desert wyld We travelled, both wearie of the way We did alight, and sate in shadow myld, Where fearelesse I to sleepe me downe did lay: But when as I did out of sleepe abray, I found her not where I her left whyleare, But thought she wandred was, or gone astray: I cal’d her loud, I sought her farre and neare, But no where could her find, nor tydings of her heare.”

When Scudamour those heavie tydings heard, His hart was thrild with point of deadly feare, Ne in his face or bloud or life appeard; But senselesse stood, like to a mazed steare That yet of mortall stroke the stound doth beare, Till Glaucè thus: “Faire Sir, be nought dismayd With needlesse dread, till certaintie ye heare; For yet she may be safe though somewhat strayd: Its best to hope the best, though of the worst affrayd.”

Nathlesse he hardly of her chearefull speech Did comfort take, or in his troubled sight Shew’d change of better cheare: so sore a breach That sudden newes had made into his spright, Till Britomart him fairely thus behight: “Great cause of sorrow certes, Sir, ye have; But comfort take; for, by this heavens light, I vow you dead or living not to leave, Till I her find, and wreake on him that did her reave.”

Therewith he rested, and well pleased was: Peace being confirm’d amongst them all, They tooke their steeds, and forward thence did pas Unto some resting place, which mote befall, All being guided by Sir Artegall: Where goodly solace was unto them made, And dayly feasting both in bowre and hall, Untill that they their wounds well healed had, And wearie limmes recur’d after late usage bad.

In all which time Sir Artegall made way Unto the love of noble Britomart, And with meeke service and much suit did lay Continuall siege unto her gentle hart; Which, being whylome launcht with lovely dart, More eath was new impression to receive; How ever she her paynd with womanish art To hide her wound, that none might it perceive: Vaine is the art that seekes it selfe for to deceive.

So well he woo’d her, and so well he wrought her, With faire entreatie and sweet blandishment, That at the length unto a bay he brought her, So as she to his speeches was content To lend an eare, and softly to relent. At last, through many vowes which forth he pour’d, And many othes, she yeelded her consent To be his love, and take him for her Lord, Till they with mariage meet might finish that accord.

Tho, when they had long time there taken rest, Sir Artegall, who all this while was

bound Upon an hard adventure yet in quest, Fit time for him thence to depart it found, To follow that which he did long propound, And unto her his congee came to take; But her therewith full sore displeasd he found, And loth to leave her late betrothed make, Her dearest love full loth so shortly to forsake.

Yet he with strong perswasions her asswaged, And wonne her will to suffer him depart; For which his faith with her he fast engaged, And thousand vowes from bottome of his hart, That, all so soone as he by wit or art Could that atchieve whereto he did aspire, He unto her would speedily revert: No longer space thereto he did desire, But till the horned moone three courses did expire.

With which she for the present was appeased, And yeelded leave, how ever malcontent She inly were and in her mind displeased. So, early in the morrow next, he went Forth on his way to which he was ybent; Ne wight him to attend, or way to guide, As whylome was the custome ancient Mongst Knights when on adventures they did ride, Save that she algates him a while accompanide.

And by the way she sundry purpose found Of this or that, the time for to delay, And of the perils whereto he was bound, The feare whereof seem'd much her to affray; But all she did was but to weare out day. Full oftentimes she leave of him did take; And eft againe deviz'd some what to say, Which she forgot, whereby excuse to make; So loth she was his companie for to forsake.

At last, when all her speeches she had spent, And new occasion fayld her more to find, She left him to his fortunes government, And backe returned with right heavie mind To Scudamour, whom she had left behind: With whom she went to seeke faire Amoret, Her second care, though in another kind: For vertues onely sake, which doth beget True love and faithfull friendship, she by her did set.

Backe to that desert forrest they retyred, Where sorie Britomart had lost her late; There they her sought, and every where inquired Where they might tydings get of her estate; Yet found they none. But by what haplesse fate Or hard misfortune she

was thence convayd, And stolne away from her beloved mate, Were long to tell; therefore, I here will stay Untill another tyde that I it finish may.

Canto VII

Amoret rapt by greedie Lust Belphebe saves from death: The Squire her loves; and, being blam'd, His daies in dole doth lead.

Great God of love, that with thy cruell darts Doest conquer greatest conquerors on ground, And setst thy kingdome in the captive harts Of Kings and Keasars to thy service bound; What glorie, or what guerdon hast thou found In feeble Ladies tyranning so sore, And adding anguish to the bitter wound With which their lives thou lanchedst long afore, By heaping stormes of trouble on them daily more?

So whylome didst thou to faire Florimell, And so and so to noble Britomart: So doest thou now to her of whom I tell, The lovely Amoret, whose gentle hart Thou martyrest with sorow and with smart, In salvage forrests and in deserts wide With Beares and Tygers taking heavie part, Withouten comfort and withouten guide, That pittie is to heare the perils which she tride.

So soone as die with that brave Britonesse Had left that Turneyment for beauties prise, They travel'd long; that now for wearinesse, Both of the way and warlike exercise, Both through a forest ryding did devise T'alight, and rest their wearie limbs awhile. There heavie sleepe the eyelids did surprise Of Britomart, after long tedious toyle, That did her passed paines in quiet rest assoyle.

The whiles faire Amoret, of nought affeard, Walkt through the wood, for pleasure or for need; When suddenly behind her backe she heard One rushing forth out of the thickest weed, That, ere she backe could turne to taken heed, Had unawares her snatched up from ground: Feebly she shriekt, but so feebly indeed That Britomart heard not the shrilling sound, There where through weary travel she lay sleeping sound.

It was to weet a wilde and salvage man; Yet was no man, but onely like in shape, And eke in stature higher by a span; All overgrowne with haire, that could awhape An hardy hart; and his wide, mouth did gape With huge great teeth, like to a tusked Bore: For he liv'd all on ravin and on rape Of men and beasts; and fed on fleshly gore, The signe whereof yet stain'd his bloudy lips afore.

His neather lip was not like man nor beast, But like a wide deepe poke, downe hanging low, In which he wont the relickes of his feast And cruell spoyle, which he had spard, to stow: And over it his huge great nose did grow, Full dreadfully empurpled all with bloud; And downe both sides two wide long eares did glow, And raught downe to his waste when up he stood, More great then th'eares of Elephants by Indus flood.

His wast was with a wreath of yvie greene Engirt about, ne other garment wore, For all his haire was like a garment seene; And in his hand a tall young oake he bore, Whose knottie snags were sharpned all afore, And beath'd in fire for steele to be in sted. But whence he was, or of what wombe ybore, Of beasts, or of the earth, I have not red, But certes was with milke of Wolves and Tygres fed.

This ugly creature in his armes her snatcht, And through the forrest bore her quite away, With briers and bushes all to-rent and scratcht; Ne care he had, ne pittie of the pray, Which many a knight had sought so many a day. He stayed not, but in his armes her bearing Ran, till he came to th'end of all his way, Unto his cave farre from all peoples hearing, And there he threw her in, nought feeling, ne nought fearing.

For she, deare Ladie, all the way was dead, Whilest he in armes her bore; but, when she felt Her selfe downe soust, she waked out of dread Streight into griefe, that her deare hart nigh swelt, And eft gan into tender teares to melt. Then, when she lookt about, and nothing found But darknesse and dread horrour where she dwelt, She almost fell againe into a swound, Ne wist whether above she were or under ground.

With that she heard some one close by her side Sighing and sobbing sore, as if the paine Her tender hart in peeces would divide: Which she long listning, softly askt againe What mister wight it was that so did plaine? To whom thus aunswer'd was: "Ah, wretched wight! That seekes to know anothers griefe in vaine, Unweeting of thine owne like haplesse plight: Selfe to forget to mind another is oversight."

"Aye me!" (said she) "where am I, or with whom? Emong the living, or emong the dead? What shall of me, unhappy maid, become? Shall death be th'end, or ought else worse, aread?" "Unhappy mayd" (then answer'd she) "whose dread Untride is lesse then when thou shalt it try: Death is to him, that wretched life doth lead, Both grace and gaine; but he in hell doth lie, That lives a loathed life, and wishing cannot die.

"This dismall day hath thee a captive made, And vassall to the vilest wretch alive, Whose cursed usage and ungodly trade The heavens abhorre, and into darkenesse drive; For on the spoile of women he doth live, Whose bodies chast, when ever in his powre He may them catch unable to gainestrive, He with his shamefull lust doth first deflowre, And afterwardes themselves doth cruelly devoure.

"Now twenty daies, by which the sonnes of men Divide their works, have past through heven sheene, Since I was brought into this dolefull den; During which space these sory eies have seen Seaven women by him slaine, and eaten clene: And now no more for him but I alone, And this old woman, here remaining beene, Till thou cam'st hither to augment our mone; And of us three to morrow he will sure eate one."

"Ah, dreadfull tidings which thou doest declare," (Quoth she) "of all that ever hath bene knowen! Full many great calamities and rare This feeble brest endured hath, but none Equall to this, where ever I have gone. But what are you, whom like unlucky lot Hath linckt with me in the same chaine attone?" "To tell" (quoth she) "that what ye see, needs not; A wofull wretched maid, of God and man forgot!

“But what I was it irkes me to reherse; Daughter unto a Lord of high degree; That joyd in happy peace, till fates perverse With guilefull love did secretly agree To overthrow my state and dignitie. It was my lot to love a gentle swaine, Yet was he but a Squire of low degree; Yet was he meet, unless mine eye did faine, By any Ladies side for Leman to have laine.

“But for his meannesse and disparagement, My Sire, who me too dearely well did love, Unto my choise by no meanes would assent, But often did my folly fowle reprove: Yet nothing could my fixed mind remove, But, whether willed or nilled friend or foe, I me resolv’d the utmost end to prove; And, rather then my love abandon so, Both sire and friends and all for ever to forgo.

“Thenceforth I sought by secret meanes to worke Time to my will, and from his wrathfull sight To hide th’intent which in my heart did lurke, Till I thereto had all things ready dight. So on a day, unweeting unto wight, I with that Squire agreede away to flit, And in a privy place, betwixt us hight, Within a grove appointed him to meete; To which I boldly came upon my feeble feete.

“But ah! unhappy houre me thither brought, For in that place where I him thought to find, There was I found, contrary to my thought, Of this accursed Carle of hellish kind, The shame of men, and plague of womankind: Who trussing me, as Eagle doth his pray, Me hether brought with him as swift as wind, Where yet untouched till this present day, I rest his wretched thrall, the sad Æmylia.”

“Ah, sad Æmylia!” (then sayd Amoret) “Thy ruefull plight I pitty as mine owne. But read to me, by what devise or wit Hast thou in all this time, from him unknowne, Thine honor sav’d, though into thraldome throwne?” “Through helpe” (quoth she) “of this old woman here I have so done, as she to me hath showne; For, ever when he burnt in lustfull fire, She in my stead supplide his bestiall desire.”

Thus of their evils as they did discourse, And each did other much bewaile and mone, Loe! where the villaine selfe, their sorrowes sourse, Came to the cave; and

rolling thence the stone, Which wont to stop the mouth thereof, that none Might issue forth, came rudely rushing in, And, spredding over all the flore alone, Gan dight him selfe unto his wonted sinne; Which ended, then his bloudy banket should beginne.

Which when as fearefull Amoret perceived, She staid not th'utmost end thereof to try, But, like a ghastly Gelt whose wits are reaved, Ran forth in hast with hideous outcry, For horrour of his shamefull villany: But after her full lightly he uprose, And her pursu'd as fast as she did flie: Full fast she flies, and farre afore him goes, Ne feeles the thornes and thickets pricke her tender toes.

Nor hedge, nor ditch, nor hill, nor dale she staies, But overleapes them all, like Robucke light, And through the thickest makes her nighest waies; And evermore, when with regardfull sight She looking backe espies that griesly wight Approching nigh, she gins to mend her pace, And makes her feare a spur to hast her flight: More swift then Myrrh' or Daphne in her race, Or any of the Thracian Nimphes in salvage chase.

Long so she fled, and so he follow'd long; Ne living aide for her on earth appeares, But-if the heavens helpe to redresse her wrong, Moved with pity of her plenteous teares. It fortuned Belphebe with her peares, The woody Nimphs, and with that lovely boy, Was hunting then the Libbards and the Beares In these wild woods, as was her wonted joy, To banish sloth that oft doth noble mindes annoy.

It so befell, as oft it fals in chace, That each of them from other sundred were; And that same gentle bquire arriv'd in place Where this same cursed caytive did appeare Pursuing that faire Lady full of feare: And now he her quite overtaken had; And now he her away with him did beare Under his arme, as seeming wondrous glad, That by his grenning laughter mote farre off be rad.

Which drery sight the gentle Squire espying Doth hast to crosse him by the nearest way, Led with that wofull Ladies piteous crying, And him assailes with all the might

he may; Yet will not he the lovely spoile downe lay, But with his craggy club in his right hand Defends him selfe, and saves his gotten pray: Yet had it bene right hard him to withstand, But that he was full light and nimble on the land.

Thereto the villaine used craft in fight; For, ever when the Squire his javelin shooke, He held the Lady forth before him right, And with her body, as a buckler, broke The puissance of his intended stroke: And if it chaunst, (as needs it must in fight) Whilest he on him was greedy to be wroke, That any little blow on her did light, Then would he laugh aloud, and gather great delight.

Which subtill sleight did him encumber much, And made him oft, when he would strike, forbeare; For hardly could he come the carle to touch, But that he her must hurt, or hazard neare: Yet he his hand so carefully did beare, That at the last he did himselfe attaine, And therein left the pikehead of his speare: A streame of cole-blacke bloud thence gusht amaine, That all her silken garments did with bloud bestaine.

With that he threw her rudely on the flore, And, laying both his hands upon his glave, With dreadfull strokes let drive at him so sore, That forst him flie abacke, himselfe to save: Yet he therewith so felly still did rave, That scarse the Squire his hand could once upreare, But for advantage ground unto him gave, Tracing and traversing, now here, now there; For bootlesse thing it was to think such blowes to beare.

Whilest thus in battell they embusied were, Belphebe, raunging in that forrest wide, The hideous noise of their huge strokes did heare, And drew thereto, making her eare her guide: Whom when that theefe approching nigh espide With bow in hand and arrowes ready bent, He by his former combate would not bide, But fled away with ghastly dreriment, Well knowing her to be his deaths sole instrument.

Whom seeing flie she speedily poursewed With winged feete as nimble as the winde, And ever in her bow she ready shewed The arrow to his deadly marke

desynde. As when Latonaes daughter, cruell kynde, In vengement of her mothers great disgrace, With fell despight her cruell arrowes tynde Gainst wofull Niobes unhappy race, That all the gods did mone her miserable case.

So well she sped her, and so far she ventred, That, ere unto his hellish den he raught, Even as he ready was there to have entred, She sent an arrow forth with mighty draught, That in the very dore him overcaught, And, in his nape arriving, through it thrild His greedy throte, therewith in two distraught, That all his vitall spirites thereby spild, And all his hairy brest with gory bloud was fild.

Whom when on ground she groveling saw to rowle, She ran in hast his life to have bereft; But, ere she could him reach, the sinfull sowle Having his carrion corse quite sencelesse left Was fled to hell, surcharg'd with spoile and theft: Yet over him she there long gazing stood, And oft admir'd his monstrous shape, and oft His mighty limbs, whilest all with filthy bloud The place there overflowne seemd like a sodaine flood.

Thence forth she past into his dreadfull den, Where nought but darkesome drerinesse she found, Ne creature saw, but hearkned now and then Some litle whispering, and soft groning sound. With that she askt, what ghosts there under ground Lay hid in horrour of eternall night? And bad them, if so be they were not bound, To come and shew themselves before the light, Now freed from feare and danger of that dismall wight.

Then forth the sad Æmylia issewed, Yet trembling every joynt through former feare; And after her the Hag, there with her mewed, A foule and lothsome creature, did appeare, A leman fit for such a lover deare: That mov'd Belphebe her no lesse to hate, Then for to rue the others heavy cheare; Of whom she gan enquire of her estate, Who all to her at large, as hapned, did relate.

Thence she them brought toward the place where late She left the gentle Squire with Amoret: There she him found by that new lovely mate, Who lay the whiles in

swoune, full sadly set, From her faire eyes wiping the deawy wet Which softly stild, and kissing them atweene, And handling soft the hurts which she did get; For of that Carle she sorely bruz'd had beene, Als of his owne rash hand one wound was to be seene.

Which when she saw with sodaine glauncing eye, Her noble heart with sight thereof was fild With deepe disdaine and great indignity, That in her wrath she thought them both have thrild With that selfe arrow which the Carle had kild; Yet held her wrathfull hand from vengeance sore: But drawing nigh, ere he her well beheld, "Is this the faith?" she said—and said no more, But turnd her face, and fled away for evermore.

He seeing her depart arose up light, Right sore agrieved at her sharpe reproofe, And follow'd fast; but, when he came in sight, He durst not nigh approch, but kept aloofe, For dread of her displeasures utmost proofe: And evermore, when he did grace entreat, And framed speaches fit for his behoofe, Her mortall arrowes she at him did threat, And forst him backe with fowle dishonor to retreat.

At last, when long he follow'd had in vaine, Yet found no ease of griefe nor hope of grace, Unto those woods he turned backe againe, Full of sad anguish and in heavy case: And, finding there fit solitary place For wofull wight, chose out a gloomy glade, Where hardly eye mote see bright heavens face For mossy trees, which covered all with shade And sad melancholy: there he his cabin made.

His wonted warlike weapons all he broke And threw away, with vow to use no more, Ne thenceforth ever strike in battell stroke, Ne ever word to speake to woman more; But in that wildernesse, of men forlore, And of the wicked world forgotten quight, His hard mishap in dolor to deplore, And wast his wretched daies in wofull plight; So on him selfe to wreake his follies owne despight.

And eke his garment, to be thereto meet, He wilfully did cut and shape anew; And his faire lockes, that wont with ointment sweet To be embaulm'd, and sweat out

dainty dew, He let to grow and griesly to concrew, Uncomb'd, uncurl'd, and carelesly unshed; That in short time his face they overgrew, And over all his shoulders did dispred, That who he whilome was uneath was to be red.

There he continued in this carefull plight, Wretchedly wearing out his youthly yeares, Through wilfull penury consumed quight, That like a pined ghost he soone appeares: For other food then that wilde forrest beares, Ne other drinke there did he ever tast Then running water tempred with his teares, The more his weakened body so to wast, That out of all: mens knowledge he was worne at last.

For on a day, by fortune as it fell, His owne deare Lord Prince Arthure came that way, Seeking adventures where he mote heare tell; And, as he through the wandring wood did stray, Having espide this Cabin far away, He to it drew, to weet who there did wonne; Weening therein some holy Hermit lay, That did resort of sinfull people shonne, Or else some woodman shrowded there from scorching sunne.

Arriving there he found this wretched man Spending his daies in dolour and despaire, And through long fasting woxen pale and wan, All overgrowen with rude and rugged haire; That albeit his owne dear Squire he were, Yet he him knew not, ne aviz'd at all, But like strange wight, whom he had seene no where, Saluting him gan into speach to fall, And pitty much his plight, that liv'd like outcast thrall.

But to his speach he aunswered no whit, But stood still mute, as if he had beene dum, Ne signe of sence did shew, ne common wit, As one with griefe and anguishe overcum, And unto every thing did aunswere mum: And ever, when the Prince unto him spake, He louted lowly, as did him becum, And humble homage did unto him make, Midst sorrow shewing joyous semblance for his sake.

At which his uncouth guise and usage quaint The Prince did wonder much, yet could not ghesse The cause of that his sorrowfull constraint; Yet weend, by secret signes of manlinesse Which close appeard in that rude brutishnesse, That he whilome some gentle swaine had beene, Traind up in feats of armes and knightlinesse; Which he

observ'd, by that he him had seene To weld his naked sword, and try the edges keene.

And eke by that he saw on every tree, How he the name of one engraven had Which likly was his liefest love to be, From whom he now so sorely was bestad, Which was by him Belphebe rightly rad. Yet who was that Belphebe he ne wist; Yet saw he often how he wexed glad When he it heard, and how the ground he kist Wherein it written was, and how himselfe he blist.

Tho, when he long had marked his demeanor, And saw that all he said and did was vaine, Ne ought mote make him change his wonted tenor, Ne ought mote ease or mitigate his paine, He left him there in langour to remaine, Till time for him should remedy provide, And him restore to former grace againe: Which, for it is too long here to abide, I will deferre the end untill another tide.

Canto VIII

The gentle Squire recovers grace: Sclaunder her guests doth staine: Corflambo chaceth Placidas, And is by Arthur slaine.

Well said the Wiseman, now prov'd true by this Which to this gentle Squire did happen late, That the displeasure of the mighty is Then death it selfe more dread and desperate; For naught the same may calme ne mitigate, Till time the tempest doe thereof delay With sufferaunce soft, which rigour can abate, And have the sterne remembrance wypt away Of bitter thoughts, which deepe therein infixed lay.

Like as it fell to this unhappy boy, Whose tender heart the faire Belphebe had With one sterne looke so daunted, that no joy In all his life, which afterwards he lad, He ever tasted; but with penaunce sad And pensive sorrow pind and wore away, Ne ever laught, ne once shew'd countenance glad, But alwaies wept and wailed night and day, As blasted bloosme through heat doth languish and decay:

Till on a day, as in his wonted wise His doole he made, there chaunst a turtle Dove

To come where he his dolors did devise, That likewise late had lost her dearest love, Which losse her made like passion also prove: Who, seeing his sad plight, her tender heart With deare compassion deeply did emmove, That she gan mone his undeserved smart, And with her dolefull accent beare with him a part.

Shee sitting by him, as on ground he lay, Her mournefull notes full piteously did frame, And thereof made a lamentable lay, So sensibly compyld, that in the same Him seemed oft he heard his owne right name. With that he forth would poure so plenteous teares, And beat his breast unworthy of such blame, And knocke his head, and rend his rugged heares, That could have perst the hearts of Tigres and of Beares.

Thus, long this gentle bird to him did use Withouten dread of perill to repaire Unto his wonne, and with her mournefull muse Him to recomfort in his greatest care, That much did ease his mourning and misfare: And every day, for guerdon of her song, He part of his small feast to her would share; That, at the last, of all his woe and wrong Companion she became, and so continued long.

Upon a day as she him sate beside, By chance he certaine miniments forth drew, Which yet with him as relickes did abide Of all the bounty which Belphebe threw On him, whilst goodly grace she him did shew: Amongst the rest a Jewell rich he found, That was a Ruby of right perfect hew, Shap’d like a heart yet bleeding of the wound, And with a litle golden chaine about it bound.

The same he tooke, and with a riband new, In which his Ladies colours were, did bind About the turtles necke, that with the vew Did greatly solace his engrieved mind. All unawares the bird, when she did find Her selfe so deckt, her nimble wings displaid, And flew away as lightly as the wind: Which sodaine accident him much dismaid, And looking after long did mark which way she straid.

But when as long he looked had in vaine, Yet saw her forward still to make her flight, His weary eie returnd to him againe, Full of discomfort and disquiet plight, That both his juell he had lost so light, And eke his deare companion of his care. But

that sweet bird departing flew forthright, Through the wide region of the wastfull aire, Untill she came where wonned his Belphebe faire.

There found she her (as then it did betide) Sitting in covert shade of arbors sweet, After late wearie toile which she had tride In salvage chase, to rest as seem'd her meet. There she alighting fell before her feet, And gan to her her mournfull plaint to make, As was her wont, thinking to let her weet The great tormenting griefe that for her sake Her gentle Squire through her displeasure did pertake.

She, her beholding with attentive eye, At length did marke about her purple brest That precious juell, which she formerly Had knowne right well, with colourd ribbands drest: Therewith she rose in hast, and her addrest With ready hand it to have reft away; But the swift bird obayd not her behest, But swarv'd aside, and there againe did stay: She follow'd her, and thought againe it to assay.

And ever, when she nigh approcht, the Dove Would flit a litle forward, and then stay Till she drew neare, and then againe remove; So tempting her still to pursue the pray, And still from her escaping soft away: Till that at length into that forrest wide She drew her far, and led with slow delay. In th'end she her unto that place did guide, Whereas that wofull man in langour did abide.

Eftsoones she flew unto his fearelesse hand, And there a piteous ditty new deviz'd, As if she would have made her understand His sorrowes cause, to be of her despis'd: Whom when she saw in wretched weedes disguiz'd, With heary glib deform'd and meiger face, Like ghost late risen from his grave agryz'd, She knew him not, but pittied much his case, And wisht it were in her to doe him any grace.

He her beholding at her feet downe fell, And kist the ground on which her sole did tread, And washt the same with water which did well From his moist eies, and like two streames procead; Yet spake no word, whereby she might aread What mister wight he was, or what he ment; But, as one daunted with her presence dread, Onely few ruefull lookes unto her sent, As messengers of his true meaning and intent.

Yet nathemore his meaning she ared, But wondred much at his so selcouth case; And by his persons secret seemlyhed Well weend that he had beene some man of place, Before misfortune did his hew deface; That being mov'd with ruth she thus bespake: "Ah! wofull man, what heavens hard disgrace, Or wrath of cruell wight on thee ywrake, Or selfe-disliked life, doth thee thus wretched make?

"If heaven, then none may it redresse or blame, Sith to his powre we all are subject borne: If wrathfull wight, then fowle rebuke and shame Be theirs that have so cruell thee forlorne! But if through inward griefe or wilfull scorne Of life it be, then better doe advise: For he, whose daies in wilfull woe are worne, The grace of his Creator doth despise, That will not use his gifts for thanklesse nigardise."

When so he heard her say, eftsoones he brake His sodaine silence which he long had pent, And, sighing inly deepe, her thus bespake: "Then have they all themselves against me bent: For heaven, first author of my languishment, Envying my too great felicity, Did closely with a cruell one consent To cloud my daies in dolefull misery, And make me loath this life, still longing for to die.

"Ne any but your selfe, O dearest dred, Hath done this wrong, to wreake on worthlesse wight Your high displesure, through misdeeming bred: That, when your pleasure is to deeme aright, Ye may redresse, and me restore to light!" Which sory words her mightie hart did mate With mild regard to see his ruefull plight, That her inhuming wrath she gan abate, And him receiv'd againe to former favours state.

In which he long time afterwards did lead An happie life with grace and good accord, Fearlesse of fortunes chaunge or envies dread, And eke all mindlesse of his owne deare Lord The noble Prince, who never heard one word Of tydings what did unto him betide, Or what good fortune did to him afford; But through the endlesse world did wander wide, Him seeking evermore, yet no where him descride.

Till on a day, as through that wood he rode, He chaunst to come where those two Ladies late, Æmylia and Amoret, abode, Both in full sad and sorrowfull estate: The

one right feeble through the evill rate Of food which in her duresse she had found; The other almost dead and desperate Through her late hurts, and through that haplesse wound With which the Squire, in her defence, her sore astound.

Whom when the Prince beheld, he gan to rew The evill case in which those Ladies lay; But most was moved at the piteous vew Of Amoret, so neare unto decay, That her great daunger did him much dismay. Eftsoones that pretious liqueur forth he drew, Which he in store about him kept alway, And with few drops thereof did softly dew Her wounds, that unto strength restor'd her soone anew.

Tho, when they both recovered were right well, He gan of them inquire, what evill guide Them thether brought, and how their harmes befell? To whom they told all that did them betide, And how from thraldome vile they were untide, Of that same wicked Carle, by Virgins hond; Whose bloudie corse they shew'd him there beside, And eke his cave in which they both were bond: At which he wondred much when all those signes he fond.

And evermore he greatly did desire To know what Virgin did them thence unbind, And oft of them did earnestly inquire, Where was her won, and how he mote her find. But, when as nought according to his mind He could out-learne, he them from ground did reare, No service lothsome to a gentle kind, And on his warlike beast them both did beare, Himselfe by them on foot to succour them from feare.

So when that forrest they had passed well, A litle cotage farre away they spide, To which they drew ere night upon them fell; And entring in found none therein abide, But one old woman sitting there beside Upon the ground in ragged rude attyre, With filthy lockes about her scattered wide, Gnawing her nayles for felnesse and for yre, And there out sucking venime to her parts entyre.

A foule and loathly creature sure in sight, And in conditions to be loath'd no lesse; For she was stuft with rancour and despight Up to the throat, that oft with bitternesse It forth would breake, and gush in great excesse, Pouring out streames of poyson and

of gall Gainst all that truth or vertue doe professe; Whom she with leasings lewdly did miscall And wickedly backbite: Her name men Sclaunder call.

Her nature is all goodnesse to abuse, And causelesse crimes continually to frame, With which she guiltlesse persons may accuse, And steale away the crowne of their good name: Ne ever Knight so bold, ne ever Dame So chast and loyall liv'd, but she would strive With forged cause them falsely to defame; Ne ever thing so well was doen alive, But she with blame would blot, and of due praise deprive.

Her words were not, as common words are ment, T'expresse the meaning of the inward mind, But noysome breath, and poysnous spirit sent From inward parts, with cancred malice lind, And breathed forth with blast of bitter wind; Which passing through the eares would pierce the hart, And wound the soule it selfe with griefe unkind; For, like the stings of aspes that kill with smart, Her spightfull words did pricke and wound the inner part.

Such was that Hag, unmeet to host such guests, Whom greatest Princes court would welcome fayne; But neede, that answers not to all requests, Bad them not looke for better entertayne; And eke that age despysed nicenesse vaine, Enur'd to hardnesse and to homely fare, Which them to warlike discipline did trayne, And manly limbs endur'd with litle care Against all hard mishaps and fortunelesse misfare.

Then all that evening (welcommed with cold And chearelesse hunger) they together spent; Yet found no fault, but that the Hag did scold And rayle at them with grudgefull discontent, For lodging there without her owne consent: Yet they endured all with patience milde, And unto rest themselves all onely lent, Regardlesse of that queane so base and vilde To be unjustly blamd, and bitterly revilde.

Here, well I weene, when as these rimes be red With misregard, that some rash-witted wight, Whose looser thought will lightly be misled, These gentle Ladies will misdeeme too light For thus conversing with this noble Knight; Sith now of dayes such temperance is rare And hard to finde, that heat of youthfull spright For

ought will from his greedie pleasure spare: More hard for hungry steed t'abstaine from pleasant lare.

But antique age, yet in the infancie Of time, did live then like an innocent, In simple truth and blamelesse chastitie, Ne then of guile had made experiment; But, void of vile and treacherous intent, Held vertue for it selfe in soveraine awe: Then loyall love had royall regiment, And each unto his lust did make a lawe, From all forbidden things his liking to withdraw.

The Lyon there did with the Lambe consort, And eke the Dove sate by the Faulcons side; Ne each of other feared fraud or tort, But did in safe securitie abide, Withouten perill of the stronger pride: But when the world woxe old, it woxe warre old, (Whereof it hight) and, having shortly tride The traines of wit, in wickednesse woxe bold, And dared of all sinnes the secrets to unfold.

Then beautie, which was made to represent The great Creatours owne resemblance bright, Unto abuse of lawlesse lust was lent, And made the baite of bestiall delight: Then faire grew foule, and foule grew faire in sight; And that, which wont to vanquish God and man, Was made the vassall of the victors might; Then did her glorious flowre wax dead and wan, Despisd and troden downe of all that overran.

And now it is so utterly decayd, That any bud thereof doth scarse remaine, But-if few plants, preserv'd through heavenly ayd, In Princes Court doe hap to sprout againe, Dew'd with her drops of bountie Soveraine, Which from that goodly glorious flowre proceed, Sprung of the auncient stocke of Princes straine, Now th'onely remnant of that royall breed, Whose noble kind at first was sure of heavenly seed.

Tho, soone as day discovered heavens face To sinfull men with darknes overdight, This gentle crew gan from their eyelids chace The drowzie humour of the dampish night, And did themselves unto their journey dight. So forth they yode, and forward softly paced, That them to view had bene an uncouth sight, How all the way the

Prince on footpace traced, The Ladies both on horse, together fast embraced.

Soone as they thence departed were afore, That shamefull Hag, the slaunder of her sexe, Them follow'd fast, and them reviled sore, Him calling theefe, them whores; that much did vexe His noble hart: thereto she did annex False crimes and facts, such as they never ment, That those two Ladies much asham'd did wexe: The more did she pursue her lewd intent, And rayl'd and rag'd, till she had all her poyson spent.

At last, when they were passed out of sight, Yet she did not her spightfull speach forbeare, But after them did barke, and still backbite, Though there were none her hatefull words to heare. Like as a curre doth felly bite and teare The stone which passed straunger at him threw: So she, them seeing past the reach of eare, Against the stones and trees did rayle anew, Till she had duld the sting which in her tongs end grew.

They passing forth kept on their readie way, With easie steps so soft as foot could stryde, Both for great feeblesse, which did oft assay Faire Amoret that scarcely she could ryde, And eke through heavie armes which sore annoyd The Prince on foot, not wonted so to fare; Whose steadie hand was faine his steede to guyde, And all the way from trotting hard to spare; So was his toyle the more, the more that was his care.

At length they spide where towards them with speed A Squire came gallopping, as he would flie, Bearing a litle Dwarfe before his steed, That all the way full loud for aide did crie, That seem'd his shrikes would rend the brasen skie: Whom after did a mightie man pursew, Ryding upon a Dromedare on hie, Of stature huge, and horrible of hew, That would have maz'd a man his dreadfull face to vew:

For from his fearefull eyes two fierie beames, More sharpe then points of needles, did proceede, Shooting forth farre away two flaming streames, Full of sad powre, that poysnous bale did breede To all that on him lookt without good heed, And

secretly his enemies did slay: Like as the Basiliske, of serpents seede, From powrefull eyes close venim doth convay Into the lookers hart, and killeth farre away.

He all the way did rage at that same Squire, And after him full many threatnings threw, With curses vaine in his avengefull ire; But none of them (so fast away he flew) Him overtooke before he came in vew: Where when he saw the Prince in armour bright, He cald to him aloud his case to rew, And rescue him, through succour of his might, From that his cruell foe that him pursewd in sight.

Eftsoones the Prince tooke downe those Ladies twaine From loftie steede, and mounting in their stead Came to that Squire, yet trembling every vaine; Of whom he gan enquire his cause of dread: Who as he gan the same to him aread, Loe! hard behind his backe his foe was prest, With dreadfull weapon aymed at his head, That unto death had doen him unredrest, Had not the noble Prince his readie stroke represt:

Who, thrusting boldly twixt him and the blow, The burden of the deadly brunt did beare Upon his shield, which lightly he did throw Over his head before the harme came neare: Nathlesse it fell with so despiteous dreare And heavie sway, that hard unto his crowne The shield it drove, and did the covering reare: Therewith both Squire and dwarfe did tomble downe Unto the earth, and lay long while in senselesse swowne.

Whereat the Prince full wrath his strong right hand In full avengement heaved up on hie, And stroke the Pagan with his steely brand So sore, that to his saddle-bow thereby He bowed low, and so a while did lie: And, sure, had not his massie yron mace Betwixt him and his hurt bene happily, It would have cleft him to the girding place; Yet, as it was, it did astonish him long space.

But, when he to himselfe returnd againe, All full of rage he gan to curse and sweare, And vow by Mahoune that he should be slaine. With that his murdrous mace he up did reare, That seemed nought the souse thereof could beare, And therewith smote at

him with all his might; But, ere that it to him approched neare, The royall child with readie quicke foresight Did shun the proofe thereof, and it avoyded light.

But, ere his hand he could recure againe To ward his bodie from the balefull stound, He smote at him with all his might and maine, So furiously that, ere he wist, he found His head before him tombling on the ground; The whiles his babling tongue did yet blaspheme And curse his God that did him so confound: The whiles his life ran foorth in bloudie streame, His soule descended downe into the Stygian reame.

Which when that Squire beheld, he woxe full glad To see his foe breath out his spright in vaine: But that same dwarfe right sorie seem'd and sad, And howld aloud to see his Lord there slaine, And rent his haire and scratcht his face for paine. Then gan the Prince at leasure to inquire Of all the accident there hapned plaine, And what he was whose eyes did flame with fire; All which was thus to him declared by that Squire.

"This mightie man," (quoth he) "whom you have slaine, Of an huge Geauntesse whylome was bred, And by his strength rule to himselfe did gaine Of many Nations into thraldome led, And mightie kingdomes of his force adred; Whom yet he conquer'd not by bloudie fight, Ne hostes of men with banners brode dispred, But by the powre of his infectious sight, With which he killed all that came within his might.

"Ne was he ever vanquished afore, But ever vanquisht all with whom he fought; Ne was there man so strong, but he downe bore; Ne woman yet so faire, but he her brought Unto his bay, and captived her thought: For most of strength and beautie his desire Was spoyle to make, and wast them unto nought, By casting secret flakes of lustfull fire From his false eyes into their harts and parts entire.

"Therefore Corflambo was he cald aright, Though namelesse there his bodie now doth lie; Yet hath he left one daughter that is hight The faire Pœana, who seemes outwardly So faire as ever yet saw living eie; And were her vertue like her beautie

bright, She were as faire as any under skie: But ah! she given is to vaine delight, And eke too loose of life, and eke of love too light.

“So, as it fell, there was a gentle Squire That lov’d a Ladie of high parentage; But, for his meane degree might not aspire To match so high, her friends with counsell sage Dissuaded her from such a disparage: But she, whose hart to love was wholly lent, Out of his hands could not redeeme her gage, But, firmely following her first intent, Resolv’d with him to wend, gainst all her friends consent.

“So twixt themselves they pointed time and place To which when he according did repaire, An hard mishap and disaventrous case Him chaunst: instead of his Æmylia faire, This Gyants sonne, that lies there on the laire An headlesse heape, him unawares there caught; And all dismayd through mercilesse despaire Him wretched thrall unto his dongeon brought, Where he remaines, of all unsuccour’d and unsought.

“This Gyants daughter came upon a day Unto the prison, in her joyous glee, To view the thrals which there in bondage lay: Amongst the rest she chaunced there to see This lovely swaine, the Squire of low degree; To whom she did her liking lightly cast, And wooed him her paramour to bee: From day to day she woo’d and prayd him fast, And for his love him promist libertie at last.

“He, though affide unto a former love, To whom his faith he firmely ment to hold, Yet seeing not how thence he mote remove, But by that meanes which fortune did unfold, Her graunted love, but with affection cold, To win her grace his libertie to get: Yet she him still detaines in captive hold, Fearing, least if she should him freely set, He would her shortly leave, and former love forget.

“Yet so much favour she to him hath hight Above the rest, that he sometimes may space And walke about her gardens of delight, Having a keeper still with him in place; Which keeper is this Dwarfe, her dearling base, To whom the keyes of every prison dore By her committed be, of speciall grace, And at his will may whom he

list restore, And whom he list reserve to be afflicted more.

“Whereof when tydings came unto mine eare, Full inly sorie, for the fervent zeale Which I to him as to my soule did beare, I thether went; where I did long conceale My selfe, till that the Dwarfe did me reveale, And told his Dame her Squire of low degree Did secretly out of her prison steale; For me he did mistake that Squire to bee, For never two so like did living creature see.

“Then was I taken and before her brought, Who, through the likenesse of my outward hew, Being likewise beguiled in her thought, Gan blame me much for being so untrew To seeke by flight her fellowship t’eschew, That lov’d me deare, as dearest thing alive. Thence she commaunded me to prison new. Whereof I glad did not gaine say nor strive, But suffred that same Dwarfe me to her dongeon drive.

“There did I finde mine onely faithfull frend In heavy plight and sad perplexitie; Whereof I sorie, yet myselfe did bend Him to recomfort with my companie, But him the more agreev’d I found thereby: For all his joy, he said, in that distresse Was mine and his Æmylias libertie. Æmylia well he lov’d, as I mote ghesse, Yet greater love to me then her he did professe.

“But I with better reason him aviz’d, And shew’d him how, through error and misthought Of our like persons, eath to be disguiz’d, Or his exchange or freedom might be wrought. Whereto full loth was he, ne would for ought Consent that I, who stood all fearelesse free, Should wilfully be into thraldome brought, Till fortune did perforce it so decree: Yet, over-ruld at last, he did to me agree.

“The morrow next, about the wonted howre, The Dwarfe cald at the doore of Amyas To come forthwith unto his Ladies bowre: Insteed of whom forth came I, Placidas, And undiscerned forth with him did pas. There with great joyance and with gladsome glee Of faire Pœana I received was, And oft imbrast, as if that I were hee, And with kind words accoyd, vowing great love to mee.

“Which I, that was not bent to former love As was my friend that had her long

refus’d, Did well accept, as well it did behove, And to the present neede it wisely usd. My former hardnesse first I faire excusd; And after promist large amends to make. With such smooth termes her error I abusd To my friends good more then for mine owne sake, For whose sole libertie I love and life did stake.

“Thenceforth I found more favour at her hand, That to her Dwarfe, which had me in his charge, She bad to lighten my too heavie band, And graunt more scope to me to walke at large. So on a day, as by the flowrie marge Of a fresh streame I with that Elfe did play, Finding no meanes how I might us enlarge, But if that Dwarfe I could with me convay, I lightly snatcht him up and with me bore away.

“Thereat he shriekt aloud, that with his cry The Tyrant selfe came forth with yelling bray, And me pursew’d; but nathemore would I Forgoe the purchase of my gotten pray, But have perforce him hether brought away.” Thus as they talked, loe! where nigh at hand Those Ladies two, yet doubtfull through dismay, In presence came, desirous t’understand Tydings of all which there had hapned on the land.

Where soone as sad Æmylia did espie Her captive lovers friend, young Placidas, All mindlesse of her wonted modestie She to him ran, and him with streight embras Enfolding, said; “And lives yet Amyas?” “He lives,” (quoth he) “and his Æmylia loves.” “Then lesse,” (said she) “by all the woe I pas, With which my weaker patience fortune proves: But what mishap thus long him fro my selfe removes?”

Then gan he all this storie to renew, And tell the course of his captivitie, That her deare hart full deepely made to rew, And sigh full sore to heare the miserie In which so long he mercilesse did lie. Then, after many teares and sorrowes spent, She deare besought the Prince of remedie; Who thereto did with readie will consent, And well perform’d; as shall appeare by his event.

Canto IX

The Squire of low degree, releast, Pæana takes to wife: Britomart fightes with many

Knights; Prince Arthur stints their strife.

Hard is the doubt, and difficult to deeme, When all three kinds of love together meet And doe dispart the hart with powre extreme, Whether shall weigh the balance downe; to weet, The deare affection unto kindred sweet, Or raging fire of love to womankind, Or zeale of friends combynd with vertues meet: But of them all the band of vertuous mind, Me seemes, the gentle hart should most assured bind.

For naturall affection soone doth cesse, And quenched is with Cupids greater flame: But faithfull friendship doth them both suppresse, And them with maystring discipline doth tame, Through thoughts aspyring to eternall fame: For as the soule doth rule the earthly masse, And all the service of the bodie frame, So love of soule doth love of bodie passe, No lesse then perfect gold surmounts the meanest brasse.

All which who list by tryall to assay Shall in this storie find approved plaine; In which these Squires true friendship more did sway Then either care of parents could refraine, Or love of fairest Ladie could constraine; For though Pœana were as faire as morne, Yet did this trustie squire with proud disdaine For his friends sake her offred favours scorne, And she her selfe her syre of whom she was yborne.

Now, after that Prince Arthur graunted had To yeeld strong succour to that gentle swayne, Who now long time had lyen in prison sad; He gan advise how best he mote darrayne That enterprize for greatest glories gayne. That headlesse tyrants tronke he reard from ground, And, having ympt the head to it agayne, Upon his usuall beast it firmely bound, And made it so to ride as it alive was found.

Then did he take that chaced Squire, and layd Before the ryder, as he captive were, And made his Dwarfe, though with unwilling ayd, To guide the beast that did his maister beare, Till to his castle they approched neare; Whom when the watch, that kept continuall ward, Saw comming home, all voide of doubtfull feare, He, running downe, the gate to him unbard; Whom straight the Prince ensuing in together far'd.

There did he find in her delitious boure The faire Pœana playing on a Rote

Complayning of her cruell Paramoure, And singing all her sorrow to the note, As she had learned readily by rote; That with the sweetnesse of her rare delight The Prince halfe rapt began on her to dote; Till better him bethinking of the right, He her unwares attacht, and captive held by might.

Whence being forth produc'd, when she perceived Her owne deare sire, she cald to him for aide; But when of him no aunswere she received, But saw him sencelesse by the Squire upstaide, She weened well that then she was betraide: Then gan she loudly cry, and weepe, and waile, And that same Squire of treason to upbraide; But all in vaine: her plaints might not prevaile, Ne none there was to reskue her, ne none to baile.

Then tooke he that same Dwarfe, and him compeld To open unto him the prison dore, And forth to bring those thrals which there he held. Thence forth were brought to him above a score Of Knights and Squires to him unknowne afore: All which he did from bitter bondage free, And unto former liberty restore. Amongst the rest that Squire of low degree Came forth full weake and wan, not like him selfe to bee.

Whom soone as faire Æmylia beheld And Placidas, they both unto him ran, And him embracing fast betwixt them held, Striving to comfort him all that they can, And kissing oft his visage pale and wan: That faire Pœana, them beholding both, Gan both envy, and bitterly to ban; Through jealous passion weeping inly wroth, To see the sight perforce that both her eyes were loth.

But when awhile they had together beene, And diversly conferred of their case, She, though full oft she both of them had seene Asunder, yet not ever in one place, Began to doubt, when she them saw embrace, Which was the captive Squire she lov'd so deare, Deceived through great likenesse of their face: For they so like in person did appeare, That she uneath discerned whether whether weare.

And eke the Prince, when as he them avized, Their like resemblaunce much admired there, And mazd how nature had so well disguized Her worke, and counterfet her

selfe so nere, As if that by one patterne, seene somewhere, She had them made a paragone to be, Or whether it through skill or errour were. Thus gazing long at them much wondred he; So did the other Knights and Squires which them did see.

Then gan they ransacke that same Castle strong, In which he found great store of hoorded threasure, The which that tyrant gathered had by wrong And tortious powre, without respect or measure: Upon all which the Briton Prince made seasure, And afterwards continu'd there a while To rest him selfe, and solace in soft pleasure Those weaker Ladies after weary toile; To whom he did divide part of his purchast spoile.

And, for more joy, that captive Lady faire, The faire Pœana, he enlarged free, And by the rest did set in sumptuous chaire To feast and frollicke; nathemore would she Shew gladsome countenaunce nor pleasaunt glee; But grieved was for losse both of her sire, And eke of Lordship with both land and fee: But most she touched was with griefe entire For losse of her new love, the hope of her desire.

But her the Prince, through his well wonted grace, To better termes of myldnesse did entreat From that fowle rudenesse which did her deface; And that same bitter corsive, which did eat Her tender heart and made refraine from meat, He with good thewes and speaches well applyde Did mollifie, and calme her raging heat: For though she were most faire, and goodly dyde, Yet she it all did mar with cruelty and pride.

And, for to shut up all in friendly love, Sith love was first the ground of all her griefe, That trusty Squire he wisely well did move Not to despise that dame which lov'd him liefe, Till he had made of her some better priefe; But to accept her to his wedded wife: Thereto he offred for to make him chiefe Of all her land and lordship during life. He yeelded, and her tooke; so stinted all their strife.

From that day forth in peace and joyous blis They liv'd together long without debate; Ne private jarre, ne spite of enemis, Could shake the safe assuraunce of their

state: And she, whom Nature did so faire create That she mote match the fairest of her daies, Yet with lewd loves and lust intemperate Had it defaste, thenceforth reformd her waies, That all men much admyrde her change, and spake her praise.

Thus when the Prince had perfectly compylde, These paires of friends in peace and setled rest, Him selfe, whose minde did travell as with chylde Of his old love conceav'd in secret brest, Resolved to pursue his former quest; And, taking leave of all, with him did beare Faire Amoret, whom Fortune by bequest Had left in his protection whileare, Exchanged out of one into another feare.

Feare of her safety did her not constraine; For well she wist now in a mighty hond Her person, late in perill, did remaine, Who able was all daungers to withstond: But now in feare of shame she more did stond, Seeing her selfe all soly succourlesse, Left in the victors powre, like vassall bond, Whose will her weakenesse could no way represse, In case his burning lust should breake into excesse.

But cause of feare, sure, had she none at all Of him, who goodly learned had of yore The course of loose affection to forstall, And lawlesse lust to rule with reasons lore; That all the while he by his side her bore, She was as safe as in a Sanctuary. Thus many miles they two together wore, To seeke their loves dispersed diversly, Yet neither showed to other their hearts privity.

At length they came whereas a troupe of Knights They saw together skirmishing, as seemed: Sixe they were all, all full of fell despight, But foure of them the battell best beseemed, That which of them was best mote not be deemed. These foure were they from whom false Florimel By Braggadochio lately was redeemed; To weet, sterne Druon, and lewd Claribell, Love-lavish Blandamour, and lustfull Paridell.

Druons delight was all in single life, And unto Ladies love would lend no leasure: The more was Claribell enraged rife With fervent flames, and loved out of measure: So eke lov'd Blandamour, but yet at pleasure Would change his liking, and new Lemans prove; But Paridell of love did make no threasure, But lusted after all that

him did move: So diversly these foure disposed were to love.

But those two other, which beside them stoode, Were Britomart and gentle Scudamour; Who all the while beheld their wrathfull moode, And wondred at their impacable stoure, Whose like they never saw till that same houre: So dreadfull strokes each did at other drive, And laid on load with all their might and powre, As if that every dint the ghost would rive Out of their wretched corses, and their lives deprive.

As when Dan Æolus, in great displeasure For losse of his deare love by Neptune hent, Sends forth the winds out of his hidden threasure Upon the sea to wreake his fell intent; They breaking forth with rude unruliment From all foure parts of heaven doe rage full sore, And tosse the deepes, and teare the firmament, And all the world confound with wide uprore, As if instead thereof they Chaos would restore.

Cause of their discord and so fell debate Was for the love of that same snowy maid, Whome they had lost in Turneyment of late; And, seeking long to weet which way she straid, Met here together, where, through lewd upbraide Of Atè and Duessa, they fell out; And each one taking part in others aide This cruell conflict raised thereabout, Whose dangerous successe depended yet in doubt:

For sometimes Paridell and Blandamour The better had, and bet the others backe; Eftsoones the others did the field recoure, And on his foes did worke full cruell wracke: Yet neither would their fiendlike fury slacke, But evermore their malice did augment; Till that uneath they forced were, for lacke Of breath, their raging rigour to relent, And rest themselves for to recover spirits spent.

Then gan they change their sides, and new parts take; For Paridell did take to Druons side, For old despight which now forth newly brake Gainst Blandamour, whom alwaies he envide; And Blandamour to Claribell relide: So all afresh gan former fight renew. As when two Barkes, this caried with the tide, That with the wind, contrary courses sew, If wind and tide doe change, their courses change anew

Thenceforth they much more furiously gan fare, As if but then the battell had begonne; Ne helmets bright ne hawberks strong did spare, That through the clifts the vermeil bloud out sponne, And all adowne their riven sides did ronne. Such mortall malice wonder was to see In friends profest, and so great outrage donne: But sooth is said, and tride in each degree, Faint friends when they fall out most cruell fomen bee.

Thus they long while continued in fight; Till Scudamour and that same Briton maide By fortune in that place did chance to light: Whom soone as they with wrathfull eie bewraide, They gan remember of the fowle upbraide, The which that Britonesse had to them donne In that late Turney for the snowy maide; Where she had them both shamefully fordonne, And eke the famous prize of beauty from them wonne.

Eftsoones all burning with a fresh desire Of fell revenge, in their malicious mood They from them selves gan turne their furious ire, And cruell blades, yet steeming with whot bloud, Against those two let drive, as they were wood: Who wondring much at that so sodaine fit, Yet nought dismayd, them stoutly well withstood; Ne yeelded foote, ne once abacke did flit, But being doubly smitten likewise doubly smit.

The warlike Dame was on her part assaid Of Claribell and Blandamour attone; And Paridell and Druon fiercely laid At Scudamour, both his professed fone: Foure charged two, and two surcharged one; Yet did those two them selves so bravely beare, That th'other litle gained by the lone, But with their owne repayed duely weare, And usury withall: such gaine was gotten deare.

Full oftentimes did Britomart assay To speake to them, and some emparlance move; But they for nought their cruell hands would stay, Ne lend an eare to ought that might behove. As when an eager mastiffe once doth prove The tast of bloud of some engored beast, No words may rate, nor rigour him remove From greedy hold of that his blouddy feast: So litle did they hearken to her sweet beheast.

Whom when the Briton Prince afarre beheld With ods of so unequall match opprest, His mighty heart with indignation sweld, And inward grudge fild his heroicke brest: Eftsoones him selfe he to their aide addrest, And thrusting fierce into the thickest preace Divided them, how ever loth to rest; And would them faine from battell to surceasse, With gentle words perswading them to friendly peace.

But they so farre from peace or patience were, That all at once at him gan fiercely flie, And lay on load, as they him downe would beare; Like to a storme which hovers under skie, Long here and there and round about doth stie, At length breakes downe in raine, and haile, and sleet, First from one coast, till nought thereof be drie, And then another, till that likewise fleet; And so from side to side till all the world it weet.

But now their forces greatly were decayd, The Prince yet being fresh untoucht afore; Who them with speaches milde gan first disswade From such foule outrage, and them long forbore: Till seeing them through suffrance hartned more, Him selfe he bent their furies to abate, And layd at them so sharpely and so sore, That shortly them compelled to retrate, And being brought in daunger to relent too late.

But now his courage being throughly fired, He ment to make them know their follies prise, Had not those two him instantly desired T'asswage his wrath, and pardon their mesprise: At whose request he gan him selfe advise To stay his hand, and of a truce to treat In milder tearmes, as list them to devise; Mongst which the cause of their so cruell heat He did them aske, who all that passed gan repeat:

And told at large how that same errant Knight, To weet faire Britomart, them late had foyled In open turney, and by wrongfull fight Both of their publicke praise had them despoyled, And also of their private loves beguyled, Of two full hard to read the harder theft: But she that wrongfull challenge soone assoyled, And shew'd that she had not that Lady reft, (As they suppos'd) but her had to her liking left.

To whom the Prince thus goodly well replied: "Certes, sir Knight, ye seemen much

to blame To rip up wrong that battell once hath tried; Wherein the honor both of Armes ye shame, And eke the love of Ladies foule defame; To whom the world this franchise ever yeelded, That of their loves choise they might freedom clame, And in that right should by all knights be shielded: Gainst which, me seemes, this war ye wrongfully have wielded."

"And yet" (quoth she) "a greater wrong remaines: For I thereby my former love have lost; Whom seeking ever since with endlesse paines Hath me much sorrow and much travell cost: Aye me, to see that gentle maide so tost!" But Scudamour, then sighing deepe, thus saide: "Certes, her losse ought me to sorrow most, Whose right she is, where ever she be straide, Through many perils wonne, and many fortunes waide.

"For from the first that her I love profest, Unto this houre, this present lucklesse howre, I never joyed happinesse nor rest; But thus turmoild from one to other stowre I wast my life, and doe my daies devowre In wretched anguishe and incessant woe, Passing the measure of my feeble powre; That living thus a wretch, and loving so, I neither can my love ne yet my life forgo."

Then good Sir Claribell him thus bespake: "Now were it not, sir Scudamour, to you Dislikefull paine so sad a taske to take, Mote we entreat you, sith this gentle crew Is now so well accorded all anew, That as we ride together on our way, Ye will recount to us in order dew All that adventure which ye did assay For that faire Ladies love: past perils well apay."

So gan the rest him likewise to require, But Britomart did him importune hard To take on him that paine: whose great desire He glad to satisfie, him selfe prepar'd To tell through what misfortune he had far'd In that atchievement, as to him befell, And all those daungers unto them declar'd; Which sith they cannot in this Canto well Comprised be, I will them in another tell.

Canto X

Scudamore doth his request tell Of vertuous Amoret: Great Venus Temple is describ'd; And Lovers life forth set.

True he it said, what ever man it sayd, That love with gall and hony doth abound; But if the one be with the other wayd, For every dram of hony therein found A pound of gall doth over it redound: That I too true by triall have approved; For since the day that first with deadly wound My heart was launcht, and learned to have loved, I never joyed howre, but still with care was moved.

"And yet such grace is given them from above, That all the cares and evill which they meet May nought at all their setled mindes remove, But seeme, gainst common sence, to them most sweet; As hosting in their martyrdome unmeet. So all that ever yet I have endured I count as naught, and tread downe under feet, Since of my love at length I rest assured, That to disloyalty she will not be allured.

"Long were to tell the travell and long toile Through which this shield of love I late have wonne, And purchased this peerelesse beauties spoile, That harder may be ended, then begonne: But since ye so desire, your will be donne. Then hearke, ye gentle knights and Ladies free, My hard mishaps that ye may learne to shonne; For though sweet love to conquer glorious bee, Yet is the paine thereof much greater then the fee.

"What time the fame of this renowmed prise Flew first abroad, and all mens eares possest, I, having armes then taken, gan avise To winne me honour by some noble gest, And purchase me some place amongst the best. I boldly thought, (so young mens thoughts are bold) That this same brave emprize for me did rest, And that both shield and she whom I behold Might be my lucky lot; sith all by lot we hold.

"So on that hard adventure forth I went, And to the place of perill shortly came: That was a temple faire and auncient, Which of great mother Venus bare the name, And farre renowmed through exceeding fame, Much more then that which was in Paphos

built, Or that in Cyprus, both long since this same, Though all the pillours of the one were guilt, And all the others pavement were with yvory spilt.

“And it was seated in an Island strong, Abounding all with delices most rare, And wall’d by nature gainst invaders wrong, That none mote have accesse, nor inward fare, But by one way that passage did prepare. It was a bridge ybuilt in goodly wize With curious Corbes and pendants graven faire, And, arched all with porches, did arize On stately pillours fram’d after the Doricke guize.

“And for defence thereof on th’other end There reared was a castle faire and strong That warded all which in or out did wend, And flancked both the bridges sides along, Gainst all that would it faine to force or wrong: And therein wonned twenty valiant Knights, All twenty tride in warres experience long; Whose office was against all manner wights By all meanes to maintaine that castels ancient rights.

“Before that Castle was an open plaine, And in the midst thereof a piller placed; On which this shield, of many sought in vaine, The shield of Love, whose guerdon me hath graced, Was hangd on high with golden ribbands laced; And in the marble stone was written this, With golden letters goodly well enchaced; Blessed the man that well can use his blis: Whose ever be the shield, faire Amoret be his.

“Which when I red, my heart did inly earne, And pant with hope of that adventures hap: Ne stayed further newes thereof to learne, But with my speare upon the shield did rap, That all the castle ringed with the clap. Streight forth issewd a Knight all arm’d to proofe, And bravely mounted to his most mishap: Who, staying nought to question from aloofe, Ran fierce at me that fire glaunst from his horses hoofe.

“Whom boldly I encountred (as I could) And by good fortune shortly him unseated. Eftsoones outsprung two more of equall mould; But I them both with equall hap defeated. So all the twenty I likewise entreated, And left them groning there upon the plaine: Then, preacing to the pillour, I repeated The read thereof for guerdon of my paine, And taking downe the shield with me did it retaine.

“So forth without impediment I past, Till to the Bridges utter gate I came; The which I found sure lockt and chained fast. I knockt, but no man aunswred me by name; I cald, but no man answred to my clame: Yet I persever’d still to knocke and call, Till at the last I spide within the same Where one stood peeping through a crevis small, To whom I cald aloud, halfe angry therewithall.

“That was to weet the Porter of the place, Unto whose trust the charge thereof was lent: His name was Doubt, that had a double face, Th’one forward looking, th’other backeward bent, Therein resembling Janus auncient Which hath in charge the ingate of the yeare: And evermore his eyes about him went, And if some proved perill he did feare, Or did misdoubt some ill whose cause did not appeare.

“On th’one side he, on th’other sate Delay, Behinde the gate that none her might espy; Whose manner was all passengers to stay And entertaine with her occasions sly: Through which some lost great hope unheedily, Which never they recover might againe; And others, quite excluded forth, did ly Long languishing there in unpittied paine, And seeking often entraunce afterwards in vaine.

“Me when as he had privily espide Bearing the shield which I had conquerd late, He kend it streight, and to me opened wide. So in I past, and streight he closd the gate: But being in, Delay in close awaite Caught hold on me, and thought my steps to stay, Feigning full many a fond excuse to prate, And time to steale, the threasure of mans day, Whose smallest minute lost no riches render may.

“But by no meanes my way I would forslow For ought that ever she could doe or say; But from my lofty steede dismounting low Past forth on foote, beholding all the way The goodly workes, and stones of rich assay, Cast into sundry shapes by wondrous skill, That like on earth no where I recken may: And underneath, the river rolling still With murmure soft, that seem’d to serve the workmans will.

“Thence forth I passed to the second gate, The Gate of Good Desert, whose goodly pride And costly frame were long here to relate. The same to all stoode alwaies open

wide; But in the Porch did evermore abide An hideous Giant, dreadfull to behold, That stopt the entraunce with his spacious stride, And with the terrour of his countenance bold Full many did affray, that else faine enter would.

“His name was Daunger, dreaded over-all, Who day and night did watch and duely ward From fearefull cowards entrance to forstall And faint-heart-fooles, whom shew of perill hard Could terrific from Fortunes faire adward: For oftentimes faint hearts, at first espiall Of his grim face, were from approaching scard; Unworthy they of grace, whom one deniall Excludes from fairest hope withouten further triall.

“Yet many doughty warriours, often tride In greater perils to be stout and bold, Durst not the sternnesse of his looke abide; But, soone as they his countenance did behold, Began to faint, and feele their corage cold. Againe, some other, that in hard assaies Were cowards knowne, and litle count did hold, Either through gifts, or guile, or such like waies, Crept in by stouping low, or stealing of the kaies.

“But I, though meanest man of many moe, Yet much disdaining unto him to lout, Or creepe betweene his legs, so in to goe, Resolv’d him to assault with manhood stout, And either beat him in, or drive him out. Eftsoones, advauncing that enchaunted shield, With all my might I gan to lay about: Which when he saw, the glaive which he did wield He gan forthwith t’avale, and way unto me yield.

“So, as I entred, I did backeward looke, For feare of harme that might lie hidden there; And loe! his hindparts, whereof heed I tooke, Much more deformed fearefull, ugly were, Then all his former parts did earst appere: For hatred, murther, treason, and despight, With many moe lay in ambushment there, Awayting to entrap the warelesse wight Which did not them prevent with vigilant foresight.

“Thus having past all perill, I was come Within the compasse of that Islands space; The which did seeme, unto my simple doome, The onely pleasant and delightfull place That ever troden was of footings trace: For all that nature by her mother-wit Could frame in earth, and forme of substance base, Was there; and all that nature did

omit, Art, playing second natures part, supplyed it.

“No tree, that is of count, in greenewood growes, From lowest Juniper to Ceder tall, No flowre in field, that daintie odour throwes, And deckes his branch with blossomes over all, But there was planted, or grew naturall: Nor sense of man so coy and curious nice, But there mote find to please it selfe withall; Nor hart could wish for any queint device, But there it present was, and did fraile sense entice.

“In such luxurious plentie of all pleasure, It seem’d a second paradise to gheese, So lavishly enricht with Natures threasure, That if the happie soules, which doe possesse Th’Elysian fields and live in lasting blesse, Should happen this with living eye to see, They soone would loath their lesser happinesse, And wish to life return’d againe to bee, That in this joyous place they mote have joyance free.

“Fresh shadowes, fit to shroud from sunny ray; Faire lawnds, to take the sunne in season dew; Sweet springs, in which a thousand Nymphs did play; Soft rombling brookes, that gentle slomber drew; High reared mounts, the lands about to vew; Low looking dales, disloignd from common gaze; Delightfull bowres, to solace lovers trew; False Labyrinthes, fond runners eyes to daze; All which by nature made did nature selfe amaze.

“And all without were walkes and alleyes dight With divers trees enrang’d in even rankes; And here and there were pleasant arbors pight, And shadie seates, and sundry flowring bankes, To sit and rest the walkers wearie shankes: And therein thousand payres of lovers walkt, Praysing their god, and yeelding him great thankes, Ne ever ought but of their true loves talkt, Ne ever for rebuke or blame of any balkt.

“All these together by themselves did sport Their spotlesse pleasures and sweet loves content. But, farre away from these, another sort Of lovers lincked in true harts consent, Which loved not as these for like intent, But on chast vertue grounded their desire, Farre from all fraud or fayned blandishment; Which, in their spirits kindling zealous fire, Brave thoughts and noble deedes did evermore aspire.

“Such were great Hercules and Hyllus deare; Trew Jonathan and David trustie tryde; Stout Theseus and Pirithous his feare; Pylades and Orestes by his syde; Myld Titus and Gesippus without pryde; Damon and Pythias, whom death could not sever: All these, and all that ever had bene tyde In bands of friendship, there did live for ever; Whose lives although decay’d, yet loves decayed never.

“Which when as I, that never tasted blis Nor happie howre, beheld with gazefull eye, I thought there was none other heaven then this; And gan their endlesse happinesse envye, That being free from feare and gealosye Might frankely there their loves desire possesse; Whilest I, through paines and perlous jeopardie, Was forst to seeke my lifes deare patronnesse: Much dearer be the things which come through hard distresse.

“Yet all those sights, and all that else I saw, Might not my steps withhold, but that forthright Unto that purposd place I did me draw, Where as my love was lodged day and night, The temple of great Venus, that is hight The Queene of beautie, and of love the mother, There worshipped of every living wight; Whose goodly workmanship farre past all other That ever were on earth, all were they set together.

“Not that same famous Temple of Diane, Whose hight all Ephesus did oversee, And which all Asia sought with vowes prophane, One of the worlds seven wonders sayd to bee, Might match with this by many a degree: Nor that which that wise King of Jurie framed With endlesse cost to be th’Almighties see; Nor all, that else through all the world is named To all the heathen Gods, might like to this be clamed.

“I, much admyring that so goodly frame, Unto the porch approcht which open stood; But therein sate an amiable Dame, That seem’d to be of very sober mood, And in her semblant shew’d great womanhood: Strange was her tyre; for on her head a crowne She wore, much like unto a Danisk hood, Poudred with pearle and stone; and all her gowne Enwoven was with gold, that raught full low adowne.

“On either side of her two young men stood, Both strongly arm’d, as fearing one

another; Yet were they brethren both of halfe the blood, Begotten by two fathers of one mother, Though of contrarie natures each to other: The one of them hight Love, the other Hate. Hate was the elder, Love the younger brother; Yet was the younger stronger in his state Then th'elder, and him maystred still in all debate.

"Nathlesse that Dame so well them tempred both, That she them forced hand to joyne in hand, Albe that Hatred was thereto full loth, And turn'd his face away, as he did stand, Unwilling to behold that lovely band. Yet she was of such grace and vertuous might, That her commaundment he could not withstand, But bit his lip for felonous despight, And gnasht his yron tuskes at that displeasing sight.

"Concord she cleeped was in common reed, Mother of blessed Peace and Friendship trew; They both her twins, both borne of heavenly seed, And she her selfe likewise divinely grew; The which right well her workes divine did shew: For strength and wealth and happinesse she lends, And strife and warre and anger does subdew: Of litle much, of foes she maketh friends, And to afflicted minds sweet rest and quiet sends.

"By her the heaven is in his course contained, And all the world in state unmoved stands, As their Almightie maker first ordained, And bound them with inviolable bands; Else would the waters overflow the lands, And fire devoure the ayre, and hell them quight, But that she holds them with her blessed hands. She is the nourse of pleasure and delight, And unto Venus grace the gate doth open right.

"By her I entring half dismayed was; But she in gentle wise me entertayned, And twixt her selfe and Love did let me pas; But Hatred would my entrance have restrayned, And with his club me threatned to have brayned, Had not the Ladie with her powrefull speach Him from his wicked will uneath refrayned; And th'other eke his malice did empeach, Till I was throughly past the perill of his reach.

"Into the inmost Temple thus I came, Which fuming all with frankensence I found And odours rising from the altars flame. Upon an hundred marble pillors round The

roofe up high was reared from the ground, All deckt with crownes, and chaynes, and girlands gay, And thousand pretious gifts worth many a pound, The which sad lovers for their vowes did pay; And all the ground was strow'd with flowres as fresh as May.

"An hundred Altars round about were set, All flaming with their sacrifices fire, That with the steme thereof the Temple swet, Which rould in clouds to heaven did aspire, And in them bore true lovers vowes entire: And eke an hundred brasen caudrons bright, To bath in joy and amorous desire, Every of which was to a damzell hight; For all the Priests were damzels in soft linnen dight.

"Right in the midst the Goddesse selfe did stand Upon an altar of some costly masse, Whose substance was uneath to understand: For neither pretious stone, nor durefull brasse, Nor shining gold, nor mouldring clay it was; But much more rare and pretious to esteeme, Pure in aspect, and like to christall glasse, Yet glasse was not, if one did rightly deeme; But, being faire and brickle, likest glasse did seeme.

"But it in shape and beautie did excell All other Idoles which the heathen adore, Farre passing that, which by surpassing skill Phidias did make in Paphos Isle of yore, With which that wretched Greeke, that life forlore, Did fall in love: yet this much fairer shined, But covered with the slender veile afore; And both her feete and legs together twyned Were with a snake, whose head and tail were fast combyned.

"The cause why she was covered with a vele Was hard to know, for that her Priests the same From peoples knowledge labour'd to concele: But sooth it was not sure for womanish shame, Nor any blemish which the worke mote blame; But for, they say, she hath both kinds in one, Both male and female, both under one name: She syre and mother is her selfe alone, Begets and eke conceives, ne needeth other none.

"And all about her necke and shoulders flew A flocke of litle loves, and sports, and joyes, With nimble wings of gold and purple hew; Whose shapes seem'd not like to terrestriall boyes, But like to Angels playing heavenly toyes, The whilest their eldest

brother was away, Cupid their eldest brother; he enjoyes The wide kingdome of love with lordly sway, And to his law compels all creatures to obay.

“And all about her altar scattered lay Great sorts of lovers piteously complayning, Some of their losse, some of their loves delay, Some of their pride, some paragons disdayning, Some fearing fraud, some fraudulently fayning, As every one had cause of good or ill. Amongst the rest some one, through Loves constrayning Tormented sore, could not containe it still, But thus brake forth, that all the temple it did fill.

“ ‘Great Venus! Queene of beautie and of grace, The joy of Gods and men, that under skie Doest fayrest shine, and most adorne thy place; That with thy smyling looke doest pacifie The raging seas, and makst the stormes to flie; Thee, goddesse, thee the winds, the clouds doe feare, And, when thou spredst thy mantle forth on hie, The waters play, and pleasant lands appeare, And heavens laugh, and al the world shews joyous cheare.

“ ‘Then doth the dædale earth throw forth to thee Out of her fruitfull lap aboundant flowres; And then all living wights, soone as they see The spring breake forth out of his lusty bowres, They all doe learne to play the Paramours; First doe the merry birds, thy prety pages, Privily pricked with thy lustfull powres, Chirpe loud to thee out of their leavy cages, And thee their mother call to coole their kindly rages.

“ ‘Then doe the salvage beasts begin to play Their pleasant friskes, and loath their wonted food: The Lyons rore; the Tygres loudly bray; The raging Buls rebellow through the wood, And breaking forth dare tempt the deepest flood To come where thou doest draw them with desire. So all things else, that nourish vitall blood, Soone as with fury thou doest them inspire, In generation seeke to quench their inward fire.

“ ‘So all the world by thee at first was made, And dayly yet thou doest the same repayre; Ne ought on earth that merry is and glade, Ne ought on earth that lovely is and fayre, But thou the same for pleasure didst prepayre: Thou art the root of all that joyous is: Great God of men and women, queene of th’ayre, Mother of laughter, and

welspring of blisse, O graunt that of my love at last I may not misse!’

“So did he say: but I with murmure soft, That none might heare the sorrow of my hart, Yet inly gronmg deepe and sighing oft, Besought her to graunt ease unto my smart, And to my wound her gratious help impart. Whilest thus I spake, behold! with happy eye I spyde where at the Idoles feet apart A bevie of fayre damzels close did lye, Wayting when as the Antheme should be sung on hye.

“The first of them did seeme of ryper yeares And graver countenance then all the rest; Yet all the rest were eke her equall peares, Yet unto her obayed all the best. Her name was Womanhood; that she exprest By her sad semblant and demeanure wyse: For stedfast still her eyes did fixed rest, Ne rov’d at randon, after gazers guyse, Whose luring baytes oftimes doe heedlesse harts entyse.

“And next to her sate goodly Shamefastnesse, Ne ever durst her eyes from ground upreare, Ne ever once did looke up from her desse, As if some blame of evill she did feare, That in her cheekes made roses oft appeare: And her against sweet Cherefulnesse was placed, Whose eyes, like twinkling stars in evening cleare, Were deckt with smyles that all sad humors chaced, And darted forth delights the which her goodly graced.

“And next to her sate sober Modestie, Holding her hand upon her gentle hart; And her against sate comely Curtesie, That unto every person knew her part; And her before was seated overthwart Soft Silence, and submisse Obedience, Both linckt together never to dispart; Both gifts of God, not gotten but from thence, Both girlonds of his Saints against their foes offence.

“Thus sate they all around in seemely rate: And in the midst of them a goodly mayd Even in the lap of Womanhood there sate, The which was all in lilly white aray’d, With silver streames amongst the linnen stray’d; Like to the Morne, when first her shyning face Hath to the gloomy world itselfe bewray’d: That same was fayrest Amoret in place, Shyning with beauties light and heavenly vertues grace.

“Whom soone as I beheld, my hart gan throb Andvwade in doubt what best were to be donne; For sacrilege me seem’d the Church to rob, And folly seem’d to leave the thing undonne Which with so strong attempt I had begonne. Tho, shaking off all doubt and shamefast feare Which Ladies love, I heard, had never wonne Mongst men of worth, I to her stepped neare, And by the lilly hand her labour’d up to reare.

“Thereat that formost matrone me did blame, And sharpe rebuke for being over bold; Saying, it was to Knight unseemely shame Upon a recluse Virgin to lay hold, That unto Venus services was sold. To whom I thus: ‘Nay, but it fitteth best For Cupids man with Venus mayd to hold, For ill your goddesse services are drest By virgins, and her sacrifices let to rest.’

“With that my shield I forth to her did show, Which all that while I closely had conceld; On which when Cupid, with his killing bow And cruell shafts, emblazond she beheld, At sight thereof she was with terror queld, And said no more: but I, which all that while The pledge of faith, her hand, engaged held, Like warie Hynd within the weedie soyle, For no intreatie would forgoe so glorious spoyle.

“And evermore upon the Goddesse face Mine eye was fixt, for feare of her offence; Whom when I saw with amiable grace To laugh at me, and favour my pretence, I was emboldned with more confidence; And nought for nicenesse nor for envy sparing, In presence of them all forth led her thence, All looking on, and like astonisht staring, Yet to lay hand on her not one of all them daring.

“She often prayd, and often me besought, Sometime with tender teares to let her goe, Sometime with witching smyles; but yet, for nought That ever she to me could say or doe, Could she her wished freedome fro me wooe: But forth I led her through the Temple gate, By which I hardly past with much adoe: But that same Ladie, which me friended late In entrance, did me also friend in my retrate.

“No lesse did Daunger threaten me with dread, Whenas he saw me, maugre all his powre, That glorious spoyle of beautie with me lead, Then Cerberus, when Orpheus

did recoure His Leman from the Stygian Princes boure: But evermore my shield did me defend Against the storme of every dreadfull stoure: Thus safely with my love I thence did wend.” So ended he his tale, where I this Canto end.

Canto XI

Marinells former wound is heald; He comes to Proteus hall, Where Thamës doth the Medway wed And feasts the sea-gods all.

But ah for pittie! that I have thus long Left a fayre Ladie languishing in payne: Now wellaway! that I have doen such wrong, To let faire Florimell in bands remayne, In bands of love, and in sad thraldomes chayne; From which, unlessesome heavenly powre her free By miracle, not yet appearing playne, She lenger yet is like captiv’d to bee; That even to thinke thereof it inly pitties mee.

Here neede you to remember, how erewhile Unlovely Proteus, missing to his mind That Virgins love to win by wit or wile, Her threw into a dongeon deepe and blind, And there in chaynes her cruelly did bind, In hope thereby her to his bent to draw: For, when as neither gifts nor graces kind Her constant mind could move at all he saw, He thought her to compell by crueltie and awe.

Deepe in the bottome of an huge great rocke The dongeon was, in which her bound he left, That neither yron barres, nor brasen locke, Did neede to gard from force, or secret theft Of all her lovers which would her have reft: For wall’d it was with waves, which rag’d and ror’d As they the cliffe in peeces would have cleft; Besides ten thousand monsters foule abhor’d Did waite about it, gaping griesly, all begor’d.

And in the midst thereof did horror dwell, And darkenesse dredd that never viewed day, Like to the balefull house of lowest hell, In which old Styx her aged bones alway, Old Styx the Grandame of the Gods, doth lay. There did this lucklesse mayd seven months abide, Ne ever evening saw, ne mornings ray, Ne ever from the day the night descride, But thought it all one night that did no houres divide.

And all this was for love of Marinell, Who her despysd (ah! who would her despyse?) And wemens love did from his hart expell, And all those joyes that weake mankind entyse. Nathlesse his pride full dearely he did pryse; For of a womans hand it was ywroke, That of the wound he yet in languor lyes, Ne can be cured of that cruell stroke Which Britomart him gave, when he did her provoke.

Yet farre and neare the Nymph his mother sought, And many salves did to his sore applie, And many herbes did use. But when as nought, She saw, could ease his rankling maladie, At last to Tryphon she for helpe did hie, (This Tryphon is the sea-gods surgeon hight,) Whom she besought to find some remedie, And for his paines a whistle him behight, That of a fishes shell was wrought with rare delight.

So well that Leach did hearke to her request, And did so well employ his carefull paine, That in short space his hurts he had redrest, And him restor'd to healthfull state againe: In which he long time after did remaine There with the Nymph his mother, like her thrall: Who sore against his will did him retaine, For feare of perill which to him mote fall Through his too ventrous prowesse proved over all.

It fortun'd then, a solemne feast was there To all the Sea-gods and their fruitfull seede, In honour of the spousalls which then were Betwixt the Medway and the Thames agreed. Long had the Thames (as we in records reed) Before that day her wooed to his bed, But the proud Nymph would for no worldly meed, Nor no entreatie, to his love be led; Till now, at last relenting, she to him was wed.

So both agreed that this their bridale feast Should for the Gods in Proteus house be made; To which they all repayr'd, both most and least, As well which in the mightie Ocean trade, As that in rivers swim, or brookes doe wade; All which, not if an hundred tongues to tell, And hundred mouthes, and voice of brasse I had, And endlesse memorie that mote excell, In order as they came could I recount them well.

Helpe, therefore, O! thou sacred imp of Jove, The noursling of Dame Memorie his deare, To whom those rolles, layd up in heaven above, And records of antiquitie

appeare, To which no wit of man may comen neare; Helpe me to tell the names of all those floods And all those Nymphes, which then assembled were To that great banquet of the watry Gods, And all their sundry kinds, and all their hid abodes.

First came great Neptune, with his threeforkt mace, That rules the Seas and makes them rise or fall; His dewy lockes did drop with brine apace Under his Diademe imperiall: And by his side his Queene with coronall, Faire Amphitrite, most divinely faire, Whose yvorie shoulders weren covered all, As with a robe, with her owne silver haire, And deckt with pearles which th'Indian seas for her prepaire.

These marched farre afore the other crew: And all the way before them, as they went, Triton his trompet shrill before them blew, For goodly triumph and great jollyment, That made the rockes to roare as they were rent. And after them the royall issue came, Which of them sprung by lineall descent: First the Sea-gods, which to themselves doe clame The powre to rule the billowes, and the waves to tame.

Phorcys, the father of that fatall brood, By whom those old Heroës wonne such fame; And Glaucus, that wise southsayes understood; And tragicke Inoes sonne, the which became A God of seas through his mad mothers blame, Now hight Palemon, and is saylers frend; Great Brontes; and Astræus, that did shame Himselfe with incest of his kin unkend; And huge Orion, that doth tempests still portend;

The rich Cteatus; and Eurytus long; Neleus and Pelias, lovely brethren both; Mightie Chrysaor; and Caïcus strong; Eurypulus, that calmes the waters wroth; And faire Euphœmus, that upon them goth As on the ground, without dismay or dread; Fierce Eryx; and Alebius, that know'th The waters depth, and doth their bottome tread; And sad Asopus, comely with his hoarie head.

There also some most famous founders were Of puissant Nations which the world possest, Yet sonnes of Neptune, now assembled here: Ancient Ogyges, even th'auncientest; And Inachus renowmd above the rest; Phœnix, and Aon, and Pelasgus old; Great Belus, Phœax, and Agenor best; And mightie Albion, father of

the bold And warlike people which the Britaine Islands hold:

For Albion the sonne of Neptune was, Who, for the proofe of his great puissance, Out of his Albion did on dry-foot pas Into old Gall, that now is cleeped France, To fight with Hercules, that did advance To vanquish all the world with matchlesse might; And there his mortall part by great mischance Was slaine; but that which is th'immortall spright Lives still, and to this feast with Neptunes seed was dight.

But what doe I their names seeke to reherse, Which all the world have with their issue fild? How can they all in this so narrow verse Contayned be, and in small compasse hild? Let them record them that are better skild, And know the moniments of passed age: Onely what needeth shall be here fulfild, T'expresse some part of that great equipage Which from great Neptune do derive their parentage.

Next came the aged Ocean and his Dame Old Tethys, th'oldest two of all the rest; For all the rest of those two parents came, Which afterward both sea and land possest; Of all which Nereus, th'eldest and the best, Did first proceed, then which none more upright, Ne more sincere in word and deed profest; Most voide of guile, most free from fowle despight, Doing him selfe, and teaching others to doe right.

Thereto he was expert in prophecies, And could the ledden of the gods unfold; Through which, when Paris brought his famous prise, The faire Tindarid lasse, he him fortold That her all Greece with many a champion bold Should fetch againe, and finally destroy Proud Priams towne. So wise is Nereus old, And so well skild; nathlesse he takes great joy Ofttimes amongst the wanton Nymphs to sport and toy.

And after him the famous rivers came, Which doe the earth enrich and beautifie: The fertile Nile, which creatures new doth frame; Long Rhodanus, whose sourse springs from the skie; Faire Ister, flowing from the mountaines hie; Divine Scamander, purpled yet with blood Of Greeks and Trojans which therein did die; Pactolus glistring with his golden flood; And Tygris fierce, whose streames of none may be withstood;

Great Ganges, and immortall Euphrates, Deepe Indus, and Mæander intricate, Slow Peneus, and tempestuous Phasides, Swift Rhene, and Alpheus still immaculate; Ooraxes, feared for great Cyrus fate, Tybris, renowmed for the Romaines fame, Rich Oranochy, though but knowen late; And that huge River, which doth beare his name Of warlike Amazons, who doe possesse the same.

Joy on those warlike women, which so long Can from all men so rich a kingdome hold! And shame on you, O men! which boast your strong And valiant hearts, in thoughts lesse hard and bold, Yet quaile in conquest of that land of gold. But this to you, O Britons! most pertaines, To whom the right hereof it selfe hath sold, The which, for sparing litle cost or paines, Loose so immortall glory, and so endlesse gaines.

Then was there heard a most celestiall sound Of dainty musicke, which did next ensew Before the spouse: that was Arion crownd; Who, playing on his harpe, unto him drew The eares and hearts of all that goodly crew, That even yet the Dolphin, which him bore Through the Agæan seas from Pirates vew, Stood still by him astonisht at his lore, And all the raging seas for joy forgot to rore.

So went he playing on the watery plaine: Soone after whom the lovely Bridegroome came, The noble Thamis, with all his goodly traine; But him before there went, as best became, His auncient parents, namely th'auncient Thame: But much more aged was his wife then he, The Ouze, whom men doe Isis rightly name; Full weake and crooked creature seemed shee, And almost blind through eld, that scarce her way could see.

Therefore on either side she was sustained Of two smal grooms, which by their names were hight The Churne and Charwell, two small streames, which pained Them selves her footing to direct aright, Which fayled oft through faint and feeble plight: But Thame was stronger, and of better stay; Yet seem'd full aged by his outward sight, With head all hoary, and his beard all gray, Deawed with silver drops

that trickled downe alway.

And eke he somewhat seem’d to stoupe afore With bowed backe, by reason of the lode And auncient heavy burden which he bore Of that faire City, wherein make abode So many learned impes, that shoote abrode, And with their braunches spred all Britany, No lesse then do her elder sisters broode. Joy to you both, ye double noursery Of Arts! but, Oxford, thine doth Thame most glorify.

But he their sonne full fresh and jolly was, All decked in a robe of watchet hew, On which the waves, glittering like Christall glas, So cunningly enwoven were, that few Could weenen whether they were false or trew: And on his head like to a Coronet He wore, that seemed strange to common vew, In which were many towres and castels set, That it encompast round as with a golden fret.

Like as the mother of the Gods, they say, In her great iron charet wonts to ride, When to Joves pallace she doth take her way, Old Cybele, arayd with pompous pride, Wearing a Diademe embattild wide With hundred turrets, like a Turribant; With such an one was Thamis beautifide; That was to weet the famous Troynovant, In which her kingdomes throne is chiefly resiant.

And round about him many a pretty Page Attended duely, ready to obay; All little Rivers which owe vassallage To him, as to their Lord, and tribute pay: The chaulky Kenet, and the Thetis gray, The morish Cole, and the soft sliding Breane, The wanton Lee, that oft doth loose his way; And the still Darent, in whose waters cleane Ten thousand fishes play and decke his pleasant streame.

Then came his neighbour flouds which nigh him dwell, And water all the English soile throughout: They all on him this day attended well, And with meet service waited him about, Ne none disdained low to him to lout: No, not the stately Severne grudg’d at all, Ne storming Humber, though he looked stout; But both him honor’d as their principall, And let their swelling waters low before him fall.

There was the speedy Tamar, which devides The Cornish and the Devonish

confines; Through both whose borders swiftly downe it glides, And, meeting Plim, to Plimmouth thence declines: And Dart, nigh chockt with sands of tinny mines. But Avon marched in more stately path, Proud of his Adamants with which he shines And glisters wide, as als' of wondrous Bath, And Bristow faire, which on his waves he builded hath.

And there came Stoure with terrible aspect, Bearing his sixe deformed heads on hye, That doth his course through Blandford plains direct, And washeth Winborne meades in season drye. Next him went Wylibourne with passage slye, That of his wylinesse his name doth take, And of him selfe doth name the shire thereby: And Mole, that like a nousling Mole doth make His way still under ground, till Thamis he overtake.

Then came the Rother, decked all with woods Like a wood God, and flowing fast to Rhy; And Sture, that parteth with his pleasant floods The Easterne Saxons from the Southerne ny, And Clare and Harwitch both doth beautify: Him follow'd Yar, soft washing Norwitch wall, And with him brought a present joyfully Of his owne fish unto their festivall, Whose like none else could shew, the which they Ruffins call.

Next these the plenteous Ouse came far from land, By many a city and by many a towne, And many rivers taking under-hand Into his waters as he passeth downe, The Cle, the Were, the Grant, the Sture, the Rowne. Thence doth by Huntingdon and Cambridge flit, My mother Cambridge, whom as with a Crowne He doth adorne, and is adorn'd of it With many a gentle Muse and many a learned wit.

And after him the fatall Welland went, That, if old sawes prove true (which God forbid!) Shall drowne all Holland with his excrement, And shall see Stamford, though now homely hid, Then shine in learning, more than ever did Cambridge or Oxford, Englands goodly beames. And next to him the Nene downe softly slid; And bounteous Trent, that in him selfe enseames Both thirty sorts of fish, and thirty sundry streames.

Next these came Tyne, along whose stony bancke That Romaine Monarch built a brasen wall, Which mote the feebled Britons strongly flancke Against the Picts that swarmed over-all, Which yet thereof Gualsever they doe call: And Twede, the limit betwixt Logris land And Albany: And Eden, though but small, Yet often stainde with bloud of many a band Of Scots and English both, that tyned on his strand.

Then came those sixe sad brethren, like forlorne, That whilome were (as antique fathers tell) Sixe valiant Knights of one faire Nymphe yborne, Which did in noble deedes of armes excell, And wonned there where now Yorke people dwell; Still Ure, swift Werfe, and Oze the most of might, High Swale, unquiet Nide, and troublous Skell; All whom a Scythian king, that Humber hight, Slew cruelly, and in the river drowned quight.

But past not long ere Brutus warlicke sonne, Locrinus, them aveng'd, and the same date, Which the proud Humber unto them had donne, By equall dome repayd on his owne pate: For in the selfe same river, where he late Had drenched them, he drowned him againe, And nam'd the river of his wretched fate; Whose bad condition yet it doth retaine, Oft tossed with his stormes which therein still remaine.

These after came the stony shallow Lone, That to old Loncaster his name doth lend; And following Dee, which Britons long ygone Did call divine, that doth by Chester tend; And Conway, which out of his streame doth send Plenty of pearles to decke his dames withall; And Lindus that his pikes doth most commend, Of which the auncient Lincolne men doe call: All these together marched toward Proteus hall.

Ne thence the Irishe Rivers absent were, Sith no lesse famous then the rest they bee, And joyne in neighbourhood of kingdome nere, Why should they not likewise in love agree, And joy likewise this solemne day to see? They saw it all, and present were in place; Though I them all according their degree Cannot recount, nor tell their hidden race, Nor read the salvage cuntreis thorough which they pace.

There was the Liffy rolling downe the lea, The sandy Slane, the stony Aubrian, The

spacious Shenan spreading like a sea, The pleasant Boyne, the fishy fruitfull Ban, Swift Awniduff, which of the English man Is cal'de Blacke-water, and the Liffar deep, Sad Trowis, that once his people overran, Strong Allo tombling from Slewlogher steep, And Mulla mine, whose waves I whilom taught to weep.

And there the three renowmed brethren were, Which that great Gyant Blomius begot Of the faire Nimph Rheusa wandring there. One day, as she to shunne the season whot Under Slewboome in shady grove was got, This Gyant found her and by force deflowr'd; Whereof conceiving, she in time forth brought These three faire sons, which being thenceforth powrd In three great rivers ran, and many countreis scowrd.

The first the gentle Shure that, making way By sweet Clonmell, adornes rich Waterford; The next, the stubborne Newre whose waters gray By faire Kilkenny and Rossepontè boord; The third, the goodly Barow which doth hoord Great heapes of salmons in his deepe bosome: All which, long sundred, doe at last accord To joyne in one, ere to the sea they come; So, flowing all from one, all one at last become.

There also was the wide embayed Mayre; The pleasaunt Bandon crownd with many a wood; The spreading Lee that, like an Island fayre, Encloseth Corke with his devided flood; And balefull Oure, late staind with English blood, With many more whose names no tongue can tell: All which that day in order seemly good Did on the Thamis attend, and waited well To doe their dueful service, as to them befell.

Then came the Bride, the lovely Medua came, Clad in a vesture of unknowen geare And uncouth fashion, yet her well became, That seem'd like silver, sprinckled here and theare With glittering spangs that did like starres appeare, And wav'd upon, like water Chamelot, To hide the metall, which yet every where Bewrayd it selfe, to let men plainely wot It was no mortall worke, that seem'd and yet was not.

Her goodly lockes adowne her backe did flow Unto her waste, with flowres bescattered, The which ambrosiall odours forth did throw To all about, and all her shoulders spred As a new spring; and likewise on her hed A Chapelet of sundry

flowers she wore, From under which the deawy humour shed Did tricle downe her haire, like to the hore Congealed litle drops which doe the morne adore.

On her two pretty handmaides did attend, One cald the Theise, the other cald the Crane, Which on her waited things amisse to mend, And both behind upheld her spredding traine; Under the which her feet appeared plaine, Her silver feet, faire washt against this day: And her before there paced Pages twaine, Both clad in colours like, and like array, The Doune and eke the Frith, both which prepard her way.

And after these the Sea Nymphs marched all, All goodly damzels, deckt with long greene haire, Whom of their sire Nereïdes men call, All which the Oceans daughter to him bare, The gray-eyde Doris; all which fifty are, All which she there on her attending had: Swift Proto, milde Eucratè, Thetis faire, Soft Spio, sweete Endorè, Sao sad, Light Doto, wanton Glaucè, and Galenè glad;

White hand Eunica, proud Dynamenè, Joyous Thalia, goodly Amphitrite, Lovely Pasithee, kinde Eulimenè, Light-foote Cymothoë, and sweete Melite, Fairest Pherusa, Phao lilly white, Wondred Agavè, Poris, and Nesæa, With Erato that doth in love delite, And Panopæ, and wise Protomedæa, And snowy neckd Doris, and milkewhite Galathæa;

Speedy Hippothoë, and chaste Actea, Large Lisianassa, and Pronæa sage, Euagorè, and light Pontoporea, And she that with her least word can asswage The surging seas, when they do sorest rage, Cymodocè, and stout Autonoë, And Neso, and Eionè well in age, And, seeming still to smile, Glauconomè, And she that hight of many heastes Polynomè;

Fresh Alimeda deckt with girlond greene; Hyponeo with salt-bedewed wrests; Laomedia like the christall sheene; Liagorè much praisd for wise behests; And Psamathè for her brode snowy brests; Cymo, Eupompè, and Themistè just; And, she that vertue loves and vice detests, Euarna, and Menippè true in trust, And Nemertea

learned well to rule her lust.

All these the daughters of old Nereus were, Which have the sea in charge to them assinde, To rule his tides, and surges to uprere, To bring forth stormes, or fast them to upbinde, And sailers save from wreckes of wrathfull winde. And yet, besides, three thousand more there were Of th'Oceans seede, but Joves and Phœbus kinde; The which in floods and fountaines doe appere, And all mankinde do nourish with their waters clere.

The which, more eath it were for mortall wight To tell the sands, or count the starres on hye, Or ought more hard, then thinke to reckon right. But well I wote that these, which I descry, Were present at this great solemnity: And there, amongst the rest, the mother was Of luckelesse Marinell, Cymodocè; Which, for my Muse her selfe now tyred has, Unto an other Canto I will overpas.

Canto XII

Marin, for love of Florimell, In langour wastes his life; The Nymph, his mother getteth her And gives to him for wife.

O! what an endlesse worke have I in hand, To count the seas abundant progeny, Whose fruitfull seede farre passeth those in land, And also those which wonne in th'azure sky: For much more eath to tell the starres on hy, Albe they endlesse seeme in estimation, Then to recount the Seas posterity: So fertile be the flouds in generation, So huge their numbers, and so numberlesse their nation.

Therefore the antique wisards well invented That Venus of the fomy sea was bred, For that the seas by her are most augmented: Witnesse th'exceeding fry which there are fed, And wondrous sholes which may of none be red. Then, blame me not if I have err'd in count Of Gods, of Nymphs, of rivers, yet unred; For though their numbers do much more surmount, Yet all those same were there which erst I did recount.

All those were there, and many other more, Whose names and nations were too long to tell, That Proteus house they fild even to the dore; Yet were they all in order, as befell, According their degrees disposed well. Amongst the rest was faire Cymodocè, The mother of unlucky Marinell, Who thither with her came, to learne and see The manner of the Gods when they at banquet be.

But for he was halfe mortall, being bred Of mortall sire, though of immortall wombe, He might not with immortall food be fed, Ne with th'eternall Gods to bancket come; But walkt abrode, and round about did rome To view the building of that uncouth place, That seem'd unlike unto his earthly home: Where, as he to and fro by chaunce did trace, There unto him betid a disaventrous case.

Under the hanging of an hideous clieffe He heard the lamentable voice of one, That piteously complaind her carefull grieffe, Which never she before disclosd to none, But to her selfe her sorrow did bemone: So feelingly her case she did complaine, That ruth it moved in the rocky stone, And made it seeme to feele her grievous paine, And oft to grone with billowes beating from the maine:

"Though vaine, I see, my sorrowes to unfold, And count my cares when none is nigh to heare, Yet, hoping griefe may lessen being told, I will them tell though unto no man neare: For heaven, that unto all lends equall eare, Is farre from hearing of my heavy plight; And lowest hell, to which I lie most neare, Cares not what evils hap to wretched wight; And greedy seas doe in the spoile of life delight.

"Yet loe! the seas, I see, by often beating Doe pearce the rockes, and hardest marble weares; But his hard rocky hart for no entreating Will yeeld, but when my piteous plaints he heares, Is hardned more with my aboundant teares: Yet though he never list to me relent, But let me waste in woe my wretched yeares, Yet will I never of my love repent, But joy that for his sake I suffer prisonment.

"And when my weary ghost, with griefe outworne, By timely death shall winne her wished rest, Let then this plaint unto his eares be borne, That blame it is to him, that

armes profest, To let her die whom he might have redrest.” There did she pause, inforced to give place Unto the passion that her heart opprest; And, after she had wept and wail’d a space, She gan afresh thus to renew her wretched case.

“Ye Gods of seas, if any Gods at all Have care of right, or ruth of wretches wrong, By one or other way me, woefull thrall, Deliver hence out of this dungeon strong, In which I daily dying am too long: And if ye deeme me death for loving one That loves not me, then doe it not prolong, But let me die and end my dales attone, And let him live unlov’d, or love him selfe alone.

“But if that life ye unto me decree, Then let mee live as lovers ought to do, And of my lifes deare love beloved be: And if he should through pride your doome undo, Do you by duresse him compell thereto, And in this prison put him here with me; One prison fittest is to hold us two. So had I rather to be thrall then free; Such thraldome or such freedome let it surely be.

“But O vaine judgement, and conditions vaine, The which the prisoner points unto the free! The whiles I him condemne, and deeme his paine, He where he list goes loose, and laughes at me. So ever loose, so ever happy be! But where so loose or happy that thou art, Know, Marinell, that all this is for thee.” With that she wept and wail’d, as if her hart Would quite have burst through great abundance of her smart.

All which complaint when Marinell had heard, And understood the cause of all her care To come of him for using her so hard, His stubborne heart, that never felt misfare, Was toucht with soft remorse and pitty rare; That even for griefe of minde he oft did grone, And inly wish that in his powre it weare Her to redresse: but since he meanes found none, He could no more but her great misery bemone.

Thus whilst his stony heart with tender ruth Was toucht, and mighty courage mollifide, Dame Venus sonne, that tameth stubborne youth With iron bit, and maketh him abide Till like a victor on his backe he ride, Into his mouth his maystring bridle threw, That made him stoupe, till he did him bestride: Then gan he

make him tread his steps anew, And learne to love by learning lovers paines to rew.

Now gan he in his grieved minde devise, How from that dungeon he might her enlarge. Some while he thought, by faire and humble wise To Proteus selfe to sue for her discharge: But then he fear'd his mothers former charge Gainst womens love, long given him in vaine: Then gan he thinke, perforce with sword and targe Her forth to fetch, and Proteus to constraine; But soone he gan such folly to forthinke againe.

Then did he cast to steale her thence away, And with him beare where none of her might know: But all in vaine, for-why he found no way To enter in, or issue forth below; For all about that rocke the sea did flow: And though unto his will she given were, Yet without ship or bote her thence to row, He wist not how her thence away to bere, And daunger well he wist long to continue there.

As last, when as no meanes he could invent, Backe to him selfe he gan returne the blame, That was the author of her punishment; And with vile curses and reprochfull shame To damne him selfe by every evil name, And deeme unworthy or of love or life, That had despisde so chast and faire a dame, Which him had sought through trouble and long strife, Yet had refusde a God that her had sought to wife.

In this sad plight he walked here and there, And romed round about the rocke in vaine, As he had lost him selfe he wist not where; Oft listening if he mote her heare againe, And still bemoning her unworthy paine. Like as an Hynde, whose calfe is falne unwares Into some pit, where she him heares complaine, An hundred times about the pit side fares Right sorrowfully mourning her bereaved cares.

And now by this the feast was throughly ended, And every one gan homeward to resort: Which seeing, Marinell was sore offended That his departure thence should be so short, And leave his love in that sea-walled fort. Yet durst he not his mother disobay, But her attending in full seemly sort, Did march amongst the many all the way, And all the way did inly mourne, like one astray.

Being returned to his mothers bowre, In solitary silence, far from wight, He gan record the lamentable stowre, In which his wretched love lay day and night For his deare sake, that ill deserv'd that plight: The thought whereof empierst his hart so deepe, That of no worldly thing he tooke delight; Ne dayly food did take, ne nightly sleepe, But pyn'd, and mourn'd, and languisht, and alone did weepe.

That in short space his wonted chearefull hew Gan fade, and lively spirits deaded quight: His cheeke-bones raw, and eie-pits hollow grew, And brawney armes had lost their knowen might, That nothing like himselfe he seem'd in sight. Ere long so weake of limbe, and sicke of love He woxe, that lenger he note stand upright, But to his bed was brought, and layd above, Like ruefull ghost, unable once to stirre or move.

Which when his mother saw, she in her mind Was troubled sore, ne wist well what to weene; Ne could by search nor any meanes out find The secret cause and nature of his teene, Whereby she might apply some medicine; But weeping day and night did him attend, And mourn'd to see her losse before her eyne, Which griev'd her more that she it could not mend: To see an helplesse evill double griefe doth lend.

Nought could she read the roote of his disease, Ne weene what mister maladie it is, Whereby to seeke some meanes it to appease. Most did she thinke, but most she thought amis, That that same former fatall wound of his Whyleare by Tryphon was not throughly healed, But closely rankled under th'orifis: Least did she thinke, that which he most concealed, That love it was, which in his hart lay unrevealed.

Therefore to Tryphon she againe doth hast, And him doth chyde as false and fraudulent, That fayld the trust which she in him had plast, To cure her sonne, as he his faith had lent, Who now was falne into new languishment Of his old hurt, which was not throughly cured. So backe he came unto her patient; Where searching every part, her well assured That it was no old sore which his new paine procured;

But that it was some other maladie, Or grief unknowne, which he could not discerne:

So left he her withouten remedie. Then gan her heart to faint, and quake, and earne, And inly troubled was the truth to learne. Unto himselfe she came, and him besought, Now with faire speches, now with threatnings sterne, If ought lay hidden in his grieved thought, It to reveale; who still her answered, there was nought.

Nathlesse she rested not so satisfide; But leaving watry gods, as booting nought, Unto the shinie heaven in haste she hide, And thence Apollo, King of Leaches, brought. Apollo came; who, soone as he had sought Through his disease, did by and by out find That he did languish of some inward thought, The which afflicted his engrieved mind; Which love he red to be, that leads each living kind.

Which when he had unto his mother told, She gan thereat to fret and greatly grieve; And, comming to her sonne, gan first to scold And chyde at him that made her misbelieve: But afterwards she gan him soft to shrieve, And wooe with fair intreatie, to disclose Which of the Nymphes his heart so sore did mieve; For sure she weend it was some one of those, Which he had lately seene, that for his love he chose.

Now lesse she feared that same fatall read, That warned him of womens love beware, Which being ment of mortall creatures sead, For love of Nymphes she thought she need not care, But promist him, what ever wight she weare, That she her love to him would shortly gaine. So he her told: but soone as she did heare That Florimell it was which wrought his paine, She gan afresh to chafe, and grieve in every vaine.

Yet since she saw the streight extremitie, In which his life unluckily was lay’d, It was no time to scan the prophecie, Whether old Proteus true or false had sayd, That his decay should happen by a mayd: It’s late in death of daunger to advize, Or love forbid him, that is life denayd; But rather gan in troubled mind devize How she that Ladies libertie might enterprize.

To Proteus selfe to sew she thought it vaine, Who was the root and worker of her woe, Nor unto any meaner to complaine; But unto great king Neptune selfe did goe,

And, on her knee before him falling lowe, Made humble suit unto his Majestie To graunt to her her sonnes life, which his foe, A cruell Tyrant, had presumpteouslie By wicked doome condemn'd a wretched death to die.

To whom God Neptune, softly smyling, thus: "Daughter, me seemes of double wrong ye plaine, Gainst one that hath both wronged you and us; For death t'adward I ween'd did appertaine To none but to the seas sole Soveraine. Read therefore who it is which this hath wrought, And for what cause; the truth discover plaine, For never wight so evill did or thought, But would some rightfull cause pretend, though rightly nought."

To whom she answer'd: "Then, it is by name Proteus, that hath ordayn'd my sonne to die; For that a waift, the which by fortune came Upon your seas, he claym'd as propertie: And yet nor his, nor his in equitie, But yours the waift by high prerogative. Therefore I humbly crave your Majestie It to replevie, and my sonne reprive. So shall you by one gift save all us three alive."

He graunted it: and streight his warrant made, Under the Sea-gods scale autenticall, Commaunding Proteus straight t'enlarge the mayd, Which wandring on his seas imperiall He lately tooke, and sithence kept as thrall. Which she receiving with meete thankefulnesse, Departed straight to Proteus therewithall; Who, reading it with inward loathfulnesse, Was grieved to restore the pledge he did possesse.

Yet durst he not the warrant to withstand, But unto her delivered Florimell: Whom she receiving by the lilly hand, Admyr'd her beautie much, as she mote well, For she all living creatures did excell; And was right joyous that she gotten had So faire a wife for her sonne Marinell. So home with her she streight the virgin lad, And shewed her to him, then being sore bestad.

Who soone as he beheld that angels face Adorn'd with all divine perfection, His cheared heart eftsoones away gan chace Sad death, revived with her sweet inspection, And feeble spirit inly felt refection: As withered weed through cruell

winters tine, That feeles the warmth of sunny beames reflection, Liftes up his head that did before decline, And gins to spread his leafe before the faire sunshine.

Right so himselfe did Marinell upreare, When he in place his dearest love did spy; And though his limbs could not his bodie beare, Ne former strength returne so suddenly, Yet chearefull signes he shewed outwardly. Ne lesse was she in secret hart affected, But that she masked it with modestie, For feare she should of lightnesse be detected: Which to another place I leave to be perfected.

Book V

The Legend of Artegall, or of Justice

So oft as I with state of present time The image of the antique world compare, When as mans age was in his freshest prime, And the first blossome of faire vertue bare; Such oddes I finde twixt those, and these which are, As that, through long continuance of his course, Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square From the first point of his appointed sourse; And being once amisse growes daily wourse and wourse:

For from the golden age, that first was named, It’s now at earst become a stonie one; And men themselves, the which at first were framed Of earthly mould, and form’d of flesh and bone, Are now transformed into hardest stone; Such as behind their backs (so backward bred) Were throwne by Pyrrha and Deucalione: And if then those may any worse be red, They into that ere long will be degendered.

Let none then blame me, if in discipline Of vertue and of civill uses lore, I doe not forme them to the common line Of present dayes, which are corrupted sore, But to the antique use which was of yore, When good was onely for it selfe desyred, And all men sought their owne, and none no more; When Justice was not for most meed out-hyred, But simple Truth did rayne, and was of all admyred.

For that which all men then did vertue call, Is now cald vice; and that which vice

was hight, Is now hight vertue, and so us'd of all: Right now is wrong, and wrong that was is right; As all things else in time are chaunged quight: Ne wonder; for the heavens revolution Is wandred farre from where it first was pight, And so doe make contrarie constitution Of all this lower world, toward his dissolution.

For who so list into the heavens looke, And search the courses of the rowling spheares, Shall find that from the point where they first tooke Their setting forth, in these few thousand yeares They all are wandred much; that plaine appeares: For that same golden fleecy Ram, which bore Phrixus and Helle from their stepdames feares, Hath now forgot where he was plast of yore, And shouldred hath the Bull which fayre Europa bore:

And eke the Bull hath with his bow-bent horne So hardly butted those two twins of Jove, That they have crusht the Crab, and quite him borne Into the great Nemæan lions grove. So now all range, and doe at randon rove Out of their proper places farre away, And all this world with them amisse doe move, And all his creatures from their course astray, Till they arrive at their last ruinous decay.

Ne is that same great glorious lampe of light, That doth enlumine all these lesser fyres, In better case, ne keepes his course more right, But is miscaried with the other Spheres: For since the terme of fourteene hundred yeres, That learned Ptolomæe his hight did take, He is declyned from that marke of theirs Nigh thirtie minutes to the Southerne lake; That makes me feare in time he will us quite forsake.

And if to those Ægyptian wisards old, Which in Star-read were wont have best insight, Faith may be given, it is by them told That since the time they first tooke the Sunnes hight, Foure times his place he shifted hath in sight, And twice hath risen where he now doth West, And wested twice where he ought rise aright: But most is Mars amisse of all the rest, And next to him old Saturne, that was wont be best.

For during Saturnes ancient raigne it's sayd That all the world with goodnesse did abound: All loved vertue, no man was affrayd Of force, ne fraud in wight was to be

found: No warre was knowne, no dreadfull trompets sound; Peace universall rayn'd mongst men and beasts, And all things freely grew out of the ground: Justice sate high ador'd with solemne feasts, And to all people did divide her dred beheasts:

Most sacred vertue she of all the rest, Resembling God in his imperiall might; Whose soveraine powre is herein most exprest, That both to good and bad he dealeth right, And all his workes with Justice hath bedight. That powre he also doth to Princes lend, And makes them like himselfe in glorious sight To sit in his own seate, his cause to end, And rule his people right, as he doth recommend.

Dread Soverayne Goddesse, that doest highest sit In seate of judgement in th'Almighties stead, And with magnificke might and wondrous wit Doest to thy people righteous doome aread, That furthest Nations filles with awful dread, Pardon the boldnesse of thy basest thrall, That dare discourse of so divine a read As thy great justice, praysed over-all; The instrument whereof loe! here thy Artegall.

Canto I

Artegall trayn'd in Justice lore Irenes quest pursewed: He doth avenge on Sanglier His Ladies bloud embrewed.

Though vertue then were held in highest price, In those old times of which I doe entreat, Yet then likewise the wicked seede of vice Began to spring; which shortly grew full great, And with their boughes the gentle plants did beat: But evermore some of the vertuous race Rose up, inspired with heroicke heat, That cropt the branches of the sient base, And with strong hand their fruitful rancknes did deface.

Such first was Bacchus, that with furious might All th'East, before untam'd, did overronne, And wrong repressed, and establisht right, Which lawlesse men had formerly fordonne: There Justice first her princely rule begonne. Next Hercules his like ensample shewed, Who all the West with equall conquest wonne, And monstrous tyrants with his club subdewed: The club of Justice dread with kingly

powre endewed.

And such was he of whom I have to tell, The Champion of true Justice, Artegall: Whom (as ye lately mote remember well) An hard adventure, which did then befall, Into redoubted perill forth did call; That was to succour a distressed Dame Whom a strong tyrant did unjustly thrall, And from the heritage, which she did clame, Did with strong hand withhold; Grantorto was his name.

Wherefore the Lady, which Irena hight, Did to the Faery Queene her way addresse, To whom complayning her afflicted plight, She her besought of gratious redresse. That soveraine Queene, that mightie Emperesse, Whose glorie is to aide all suppliants pore, And of weake Princes to be Patronesse, Chose Artegall to right her to restore; For that to her he seem'd best skild in righteous lore.

For Artegall injustice was upbrought Even from the cradle of his infancie, And all the depth of rightfull doome was taught By faire Astræa with great industrie, Whilest here on earth she lived mortallie: For till the world from his perfection fell Into all filth and foule iniquitie, Astræa here mongst earthly men did dwell, And in the rules of justice them instructed well.

Whiles through the world she walked in this sort, Upon a day she found this gentle childe Amongst his peres playing his childish sport; Whom seeing fit, and with no crime defilde, She did allure with gifts and speaches milde To wend with her. So thence him farre she brought Into a cave from companie exilde, In which she noursled him till yeares he raught, And all the discipline of justice there him taught.

There she him taught to weigh both right and wrong In equal ballance with due recompence, And equitie to measure out along According to the line of conscience, When so it needs with rigour to dispence: Of all the which, for want there of mankind, She caused him to make experience Upon wyld beasts, which she in woods did find With wrongfull powre oppressing others of their kind.

Thus she him trayned, and thus she him taught In all the skill of deeming wrong and

right, Untill the ripenesse of mans yeares he raught; That even wilde beasts did feare his awfull sight, And men admyr'd his over-ruling might; Ne any liv'd on ground that durst withstand His dreadfull heast, much lesse him match in fight, Or bide the horror of his wreakfull hand, When so he list in wrath lift up his steely brand.

Which steely brand, to make him dreaded more, She gave unto him, gotten by her slight And earnest search, where it was kept in store In Joves eternall house, unwist of wight, Since he himselfe it us'd in that great fight Against the Titans, that whylome rebelled Gainst highest heaven: Chrysaor it was hight; Chrysaor, that all other swords excelled, Well prov'd in that same day when Jove those Gyants quelled:

For of most perfect metall it was made, Tempred with Adamant amongst the same, And garnisht all with gold upon the blade In goodly wise, whereof it tooke his name, And was of no lesse vertue then of fame; For there no substance was so firme and hard, But it would pierce or cleave, where so it came, Ne any armour could his dint outward; But wheresoever it did light, it throughly shard.

Now, when the world with sinne gan to abound, Astræa loathing lenger here to space Mongst wicked men, in whom no truth she found, Return'd to heaven, whence she deriv'd her race; Where she hath now an everlasting place Mongst those twelve signes, which nightly we doe see The heavens bright-shining baudricke to enchace; And is the Virgin, sixt in her degree, And next her selfe her righteous ballance hanging bee.

But when she parted hence she left her groome, An yron man, which did on her attend Alwayes to execute her stedfast doome, And willed him with Artegall to wend, And doe what ever thing he did intend: His name was Talus, made of yron mould, Immoveable, resistlesse, without end; Who in his hand a yron flale did hould, With which he thresht out falshood, and did truth unfould.

He now went with him in this new inquest, Him for to aide, if aide he chaunst to

neede, Against that cruell Tyrant, which opprest The faire Irena with his foule misdeede, And kept the crowne in which she should succeed: And now together on their way they bin, When as they saw a Squire in squallid weed Lamenting sore his sorrowfull sad tyne, With many bitter teares shed from his blubbred eyne.

To whom as they approched, they espide A sorie sight as ever seene with eye, An headlesse Ladie lying him beside In her owne blood all wallow'd wofully, That her gay clothes did in discolour die. Much was he moved at that ruefull sight; And flam'd with zeale of vengeance inwardly, He askt who had that Dame so fouly dight, Or whether his owne hand, or whether other wight?

"Ah! woe is me, and wellaway!" (quoth hee, Bursting forth teares like springs out of a banke), "That ever I this dismall day did see! Full farre was I from thinking such a pranke; Yet litle losse it were, and mickle thanke, If I should graunt that I have doen the same, That I mote drinke the cup whereof she dranke, But that I should die guiltie of the blame The which another did, who now is fled with shame."

"Who was it then," (sayd Artegall) "that wrought? And why? doe it declare unto me trew." "A knight," (said he) "if knight he may be thought That did his hand in Ladies bloud embrew, And for no cause, but as I shall you shew. This day as I in solace sate hereby With a fayre love, whose losse I now do rew, There came this knight, having in companie This lucklesse Ladie which now here doth headlesse lie.

"He, whether mine seem'd fayrer in his eye, Or that he wexed weary of his owne, Would change with me, but I did it denye; So did the Ladies both, as may be knowne: But he, whose spirit was with pride upblowne, Would not so rest contented with his right; But, having from his courser her downe throwne, Fro me reft mine away by lawlesse might, And on his steed her set to beare her out of sight.

"Which when his Ladie saw, she follow'd fast, And on him catching hold gan loud to crie Not so to leave her, nor away to cast, But rather of his hand besought to die. With that his sword he drew all wrathfully, And at one stroke cropt off her head with

scorne, In that same place whereas it now doth lie. So he my love away with him hath borne, And left me here both his and mine owne love to morne."

"Aread" (sayd he) "which way then did he make? And by what markes may he be knowne againe?" "To hope" (quoth he) "him soone to overtake That hence so long departed, is but vaine; But yet he pricked over yonder plaine, And, as I marked, bore upon his shield, By which it's easie him to know againe, A broken sword within a bloodie field; Expressing well his nature which the same did wield."

No sooner sayd, but streight he after sent His yron page, who him pursew'd so light, As that it seem'd above the ground he went; For he was swift as swallow in her flight, And strong as Lyon in his lordly might. It was not long before he overtooke Sir Sanglier, (so cleeped was that Knight) Whom at the first he ghessed by his looke, And by the other markes which of his shield he tooke.

He bad him stay, and backe with him retire; Who, full of scorne to be commaunded so, The Lady to alight did eft require, Whilest he reformed that uncivill fo, And streight at him with all his force did go; Who mov'd no more therewith, then when a rocke Is lightly stricken with some stones throw; But to him leaping lent him such a knocke, That on the ground he layd him like a sencelesse blocke.

But, ere he could him selfe recure againe, Him in his iron paw he seized had; That when he wak't out of his warelesse paine, He found him selfe unwist so ill bestad, That lim he could not wag: Thence he him lad, Bound like a beast appointed to the stall: The sight whereof the Lady sore adrad, And fain'd to fly for feare of being thrall; But he her quickly stayd, and forst to wend withall.

When to the place they came, where Artegall By that same carefull Squire did then abide, He gently gan him to demaund of all That did betwixt him and that Squire betide: Who with sterne countenance and indignant pride Did aunswere, that of all he guiltlesse stood, And his accuser thereuppon deride; For neither he did shed that Ladies bloud, Nor tooke away his love, but his owne proper good.

Well did the Squire perceive him selfe too weake To aunswere his defiaunce in the field, And rather chose his challenge off to breake, Then to approve his right with speare and shield, And rather guilty chose himselfe to yield: But Artegall by signes perceiving plaine That he it was not which that Lady kild, But that strange Knight, the fairer love to gaine, Did cast about by sleight the truth thereout to straine;

And sayd; “Now sure this doubtfull causes right Can hardly but by Sacrament be tride, Or else by ordele, or by blooddy fight, That ill perhaps mote fall to either side; But if ye please that I your cause decide, Perhaps I may all further quarrell end, So ye will sweare my judgement to abide.” Thereto they both did franckly condiscend, And to his doome with listfull eares did both attend.

“Sith then,” (sayd he) “ye both the dead deny, And both the living Lady claime your right, Let both the dead and living equally Devided be betwixt you here in sight, And each of either take his share aright: But looke, who does dissent from this my read, He for a twelve moneths day shall in despight Beare for his penaunce that same Ladies head, To witnesse to the world that she by him is dead.”

Well pleased with that doome was Sangliere, And offred streight the Lady to be slaine; But that same Squire, to whom she was more dere, When as he saw she should be cut in twaine, Did yield she rather should with him remaine Alive, then to him selfe be shared dead; And rather then his love should suffer paine, He chose with shame to beare that Ladies head: True love despiseth shame, when life is cald in dread.

Whom when so willing Artegall perceaved; “Not so, thou Squire,” (he sayd) “but thine I deeme The living Lady, which from thee he reaved, For worthy thou of her doest rightly seeme. And you, Sir Knight, that love so light esteeme, As that ye would for little leave the same, Take here your owne, that doth you best beseeme, And with it beare the burden of defame, Your owne dead Ladies head, to tell abrode your shame.”

But Sangliere disdained much his doome, And sternly gan repine at his beheast; Ne would for ought obay, as did become, To beare that Ladies head before his breast, Until that Talus had his pride represt, And forced him, maulgre, it up to reare. Who when he saw it bootelesse to resist, He tooke it up, and thence with him did beare, As rated Spaniell takes his burden up for feare.

Much did that Squire Sir Artegall adore For his great justice, held in high regard, And as his Squire him offred evermore To serve, for want of other meete reward, And wend with him on his adventure hard; But he thereto would by no meanes consent, But leaving him forth on his journey far'd: Ne wight with him but onely Talus went; They two enough t'encounter an whole Regiment.

Canto II

Artegall heares of Florimell; Does with the Pagan fight: Him slaies; drownes Lady Munera Does race her castle quight.

Nought is more honorable to a knight, Ne better doth beseeme brave chevalry, Then to defend the feeble in their right, And wrong redresse in such as wend awry: Whilome those great Heroes got thereby Their greatest glory for their rightfull deedes, And place deserved with the Gods on hy. Herein the noblesse of this knight exceedes, Who now to perils great for justice sake proceedes.

To which as he now was uppon the way, He chaunst to meet a Dwarfe in hasty course, Whom he requir'd his forward hast to stay, Till he of tidings mote with him discourse. Loth was the Dwarfe, yet did he stay perforse, And gan of sundry newes his store to tell, As to his memory they had recourse; But chiefly of the fairest Florimell, How she was found againe, and spousde to Marinell.

For this was Dony, Florimels owne Dwarfe, Whom having lost, (as ye have heard whyleare) And finding in the way the scattred scarfe, The fortune of her life long time did feare: But of her health when Artegall did heare, And safe returne, he was

full inly glad, And askt him where and when her bridale cheare Should be solemniz'd; for, if time he had, He would be there, and honor to her spousall ad.

"Within three daies," (quoth he) "as I do here, It will be at the Castle of the Strond; What time, if naught me let, I will be there To doe her service so as I am bond: But in my way, a little here beyond, A cursed cruell Sarazin doth wonne, That keepes a Bridges passage by strong hond, And many errant Knights hath there fordonne; That makes all men for feare that passage for to shonne."

"What mister wight," (quoth he) "and how far hence Is he, that doth to travellers such harmes?" "He is" (said he) "a man of great defence, Expert in battell and in deedes of armes; And more emboldned by the wicked charmes, With which his daughter doth him still support; Having great Lordships got and goodly farmes, Through strong oppression of his powre extort, By which he stil them holds, and keepes with strong effort.

"And dayly he his wrongs encreaseth more; For never wight he lets to passe that way Over his Bridge, albee he rich or poore, But he him makes his passage-penny pay: Else he doth hold him backe or beat away. Thereto he hath a groome of evill guize, Whose scalp is bare, that bondage doth bewray, Which pols and pils the poore in piteous wize; But he him selfe uppon the rich doth tyrannize.

"His name is hight Pollentè, rightly so, For that he is so puissant and strong, That with his powre he all doth overgo, And makes them subject to his mighty wrong; And some by sleight he eke doth underfong. For on a Bridge he custometh to fight, Which is but narrow, but exceeding long; And in the same are many trap-fals pight, Through which the rider downe doth fall through oversight.

"And underneath the same a river flowes That is both swift and dangerous deepe withall; Into the which whom so he overthrowes, All destitute of helpe doth headlong fall; But he him selfe through practise usuall, Leapes forth into the floud, and there assaies His foe confused through his sodaine fall, That horse and man he

equally dismaies, And either both them drownes, or trayterously slaies.

“Then doth he take the spoile of them at will, And to his daughter brings, that dwels thereby; Who all that comes doth take, and therewith fill The coffers of her wicked threasury, Which she with wrongs hath heaped up so hy That many Princes she in wealth exceedes, And purchast all the countrey lying ny With the revenue of her plenteous meedes: Her name is Munera, agreeing with her deedes.

“Thereto she is full faire, and rich attired, With golden hands and silver feete beside, That manv Lords have her to wife desired, But she them all despiseth for great pride.” “Now by my life,” (sayd he) “and God to guide, None other way will I this day betake, But by that Bridge whereas he doth abide: Therefore me thither lead.” No more he spake, But thitherward forthright his ready way did make.

Unto the place he came within a while, Where on the Bridge he ready armed saw The Sarazin, awayting for some spoile: When as they to the passage gan to draw, A villaine to them came with scull all raw, That passage money did of them require, According to the custome of their law: To whom he aunswerd wroth, “Loe! there thy hire;” And with that word him strooke, that streight he did expire.

Which when the Pagan saw he wexed wroth, And streight him selfe unto the fight addrest, Ne was Sir Artegall behinde: so both Together ran with ready speares in rest. Right in the midst, whereas they brest to brest Should meete, a trap was letten downe to fall Into the floud: streight leapt the Carle unblest, Well weening that his foe was falne withall; But he was well aware, and leapt before his fall.

There being both together in the floud, They each at other tyrannously flew; Ne ought the water cooled their whot bloud, But rather in them kindled choler new: But there the Paynim, who that use well knew To fight in water, great advantage had, That oftentimes him nigh he overthrew: And eke the courser whereuppon he rad Could swim like to a fish, whiles he his backe bestrad.

Which oddes when as Sir Artegall espide, He saw no way but close with him in hast;

And to him driving strongly downe the tide Uppon his iron coller griped fast, That with the straint his wesand nigh he brast. There they together strove and struggled long Either the other from his steede to cast; Ne ever Artegall his griple strong For any thing wold slacke, but still upon him hong.

As when a Dolphin and a Sele are met In the wide champian of the Ocean plaine, With cruell chaufe their courages they whet, The maysterdome of each by force to gaine, And dreadfull battaile twixt them do darraine: They snuf, they snort, they bounce, they rage, they rore, That all the sea, disturbed with their traine, Doth frie with fome above the surges hore. Such was betwixt these two the troublesome uprore.

So Artegall at length him forst forsake His horses backe for dread of being drownd, And to his handy swimming him betake. Eftsoones him selfe he from his hold unbownd, And then no ods at all in him he fownd; For Artegall in swimming skilfull was, And durst the depth of any water sownd. So ought each Knight, that use of perill has, In swimming be expert, through waters force to pas.

Then very doubtfull was the warres event, Uncertaine whether had the better side; For both were skild in that experiment, And both in armes well traind, and throughly tride: But Artegall was better breath'd beside, And towards th'end grew greater in his might, That his faint foe no longer could abide His puissance, ne beare him selfe upright; But from the water to the land betooke his flight.

But Artegall pursewd him still so neare With bright Chrysaor in his cruell hand, That as his head he gan a litle reare Above the brincke to tread upon the land, He smote it off, that tumbling on the strand It bit the earth for very fell despight, And gnashed with his teeth, as if he band High God, whose goodnesse he despaired quight, Or curst the hand which did that vengeance on him dight.

His corps was carried downe along the Lee, Whose waters with his filthy bloud it stayned; But his blasphemous head, that all might see, He pitcht upon a pole on high

ordayned; Where many years it afterwards remayned, To be a mirrour to all mighty men, In whose right hands great power is contayned, That none of them the feeble over-ren, But alwaies doe their powre within just compasse pen.

That done, unto the Castle he did wend, In which the Paynims daughter did abide, Guarded of many which did her defend: Of whom he entrance sought, but was denide, And with reprochfull blasphemy defide, Beaten with stones downe from the battilment, That he was forced to withdraw aside, And bad his servant Talus to invent Which way he enter might without endangerment.

Eftsoones his Page drew to the Castle gate, And with his iron flale at it let flie, That all the warders it did sore amate, The which erewhile spake so reprochfully, And made them stoupe that looked earst so hie. Yet still he bet and bounst uppon the dore, And thundred strokes thereon so hideouslie, That all the peece he shaked from the flore, And filled all the house with feare and great uprore.

With noise whereof the Lady forth appeared Uppon the Castle wall; and, when she saw The daungerous state in which she stood, she feared The sad effect of her neare overthrow; And gan entreat that iron man below To cease his outrage, and him faire besought; Sith neither force of stones which they did throw, Nor powr of charms, which she against him wrought, Might otherwise prevaile, or make him cease for ought.

But, when as yet she saw him to proceede Unmov'd with praiers or with piteous thought, She ment him to corrupt with goodly meede; And causde great sackes with endlesse riches fraught Unto the battilment to be upbrought, And powred forth over the Castle wall, That she might win some time, though dearly bought, Whilest he to gathering of the gold did fall: But he was nothing mov'd nor tempted therewithall:

But still continu'd his assault the more, And layd on load with his huge yron flaile, That at the length he has yrent the dore, And made way for his maister to assaile; Who being entred, nought did then availe For wight against his powre them selves to

reare. Each one did flie; their hearts began to faile, And hid them selves in corners here and there; And eke their dame halfe dead did hide her self for feare.

Long they her sought, yet no where could they finde her, That sure they ween'd she was escapt away; But Talus, that could like a lime-hound winde her, And all things secrete wisely could bewray, At length found out whereas she hidden lay Under an heape of gold. Thence he her drew By the faire lockes, and fowly did array Withouten pitty of her goodly hew, That Artegall him selfe her seemelesse plight did rew.

Yet for no pitty would he change the course Of Justice, which in Talus hand did lye; Who rudely hayld her forth without remorse, Still holding up her suppliant hands on hye, And kneeling at his feete submissively: But he her suppliant hands, those hands of gold, And eke her feete, those feete of silver trye, Which sought unrighteousnesse, and justice sold, Chopt off, and nayld on high that all might them behold.

Her selfe then tooke he by the sclender wast, In vaine loud crying, and into the flood Over the Castle wall adowne her cast, And there her drowned in the durty mud; But the streame washt away her guilty blood. Thereafter all that mucky pelfe he tooke, The spoile of peoples evil gotten good, The which her sire had scrap't by hooke and crooke, And burning all to ashes powr'd it downe the brooke.

And lastly all that Castle quite he raced, Even from the sole of his foundation, And all the hewen stones thereof defaced, That there mote be no hope of reparation, Nor memory thereof to any nation. All which when Talus throughly had perfourmed, Sir Artegall undid the evill fashion, And wicked customes of that Bridge refourmed; Which done, unto his former journey he retourned:

In which they measur'd mickle weary way, Till that at length nigh to the sea they drew; By which as they did travell on a day, They saw before them, far as they could vew, Full many people gathered in a crew; Whose great assembly they did much

admire, For never there the like resort they knew. So towardes them they coasted, to enquire What thing so many nations met did there desire.

There they beheld a mighty Gyant stand Upon a rocke, and holding forth on hie An huge great paire of ballance in his hand, With which he boasted, in his surquedrie, That all the world he would weigh equallie, If ought he had the same to counterpoys; For want whereof he weighed vanity, And fild his ballaunce full of idle toys: Yet was admired much of fooles, women, and boys.

He sayd that he would all the earth uptake And all the sea, divided each from either: So would he of the fire one ballaunce make, And one of th'ayre, without or wind or wether: Then would he ballaunce heaven and hell together, And all that did within them all containe, Of all whose weight he would not misse a fether: And looke what surplus did of each remaine, He would to his owne part restore the same againe:

For-why, he sayd, they all unequall were, And had encroched upon others share; Like as the sea (which plaine he shewed there) Had worne the earth; so did the fire the aire; So all the rest did others parts empaire, And so were realmes and nations run awry. All which he undertooke for to repaire, In sort as they were formed aunciently, And all things would reduce unto equality.

Therefore the vulgar did about him flocke, And cluster thicke unto his leasings vaine, Like foolish flies about an hony-crocke; In hope by him great benefite to gaine, And uncontrolled freedome to obtaine. All which when Artegall did see and heare, How he misled the simple peoples traine, In sdeignfull wize he drew unto him neare, And thus unto him spake, without regard or feare.

"Thou that presum'st to weigh the world anew, And all things to an equall to restore, Instead of right me seemes great wrong dost shew, And far above thy forces pitch to sore; For ere thou limit what is lesse or more In every thing, thou oughtest first to know What was the poyse of every part of yore: And looke then how much it doth overflow Or faile thereof, so much is more then just to trow.

“For at the first they all created were In goodly measure by their Makers might; And weighed out in ballaunces so nere, That not a dram was missing of their right: The earth was in the middle centre pight, In which it doth immoveable abide, Hemd in with waters like a wall in sight, And they with aire, that not a drop can slide: Al which the heavens containe, and in their courses guide.

“Such heavenly justice doth among them raine, That every one doe know their certaine bound, In which they doe these many yeares remaine, And mongst them al no change hath yet beene found; But if thou now shouldst weigh them new in pound, We are not sure they would so long remaine: All change is perillous, and all chaunce unsound. Therefore leave off to weigh them all againe, Till we may be assur’d they shall their course retaine.”

“Thou foolishe Elfe,” (said then the Gyant wroth) “Seest not how badly all things present bee, And each estate quite out of order goth? The sea it selfe doest thou not plainely see Encroch uppon the land there under thee? And th’earth it selfe how daily its encreast By all that dying to it turned be: Were it not good that wrong were then surceast, And from the most that some were given to the least?

“Therefore I will throw downe these mountaines hie, And make them levell with the lowly plaine; These towring rocks, which reach unto the skie, I will thrust downe into the deepest maine, And, as they were, them equalize againe. Tyrants, that make men subject to their law, I will suppresse, that they no more may raine; And Lordings curbe that commons over-aw, And all the wealth of rich men to the poore will draw.”

“Of things unseene how canst thou deeme aright,” Then answered the righteous Artegall, “Sith thou misdeem’st so much of things in sight? What though the sea with waves continuall Doe eate the earth, it is no more at all; Ne is the earth the lesse, or loseth ought, For whatsoever from one place doth fall Is with the tide unto another brought: For there is nothing lost, that may be found if sought.

“Likewise the earth is not augmented more By all that dying into it doe fade; For of the earth they formed were of yore: How ever gay their blossome or their blade Doe flourish now, they into dust shall vade. What wrong then is it, if that when they die They turne to that whereof they first were made? All in the powre of their great Maker lie: All creatures must obey the voice of the Most Hie.

“They live, they die, like as he doth ordaine, Ne ever any asketh reason why. The hils doe not the lowly dales disdaine, The dales doe not the lofty hils envy. He maketh Kings to sit in soverainty; He maketh subjects to their powre obay; He pulleth downe, he setteth up on hy; He gives to this, from that he takes away, For all we have is his: what he list doe, he may.

“What ever thing is done by him is donne, Ne any may his mighty will withstand; Ne any may his soveraine power shonne, Ne loose that he hath bound with stedfast band. In vaine therefore doest thou now take in hand To call to count, or weigh his workes anew, Whose counsels depth thou canst not understand; Sith of things subject to thy daily vew Thou doest not know the causes, nor their courses dew.

“For take thy ballaunce, if thou be so wise, And weigh the winde that under heaven doth blow; Or weigh the light that in the East doth rise; Or weigh the thought that from mans mind doth flow But if the weight of these thou canst not show, Weigh but one word which from thy lips doth fall: For how canst thou those greater secrets know, That doest not know the least thing of them all? Ill can he rule the great that cannot reach the small.”

Therewith the Gyant much abashed sayd, That he of little things made reckoning light; Yet the least word that ever could be layd Within his ballaunce he could way aright. “Which is” (sayd he) “more heavy then in weight, The right or wrong, the false or else the trew?” He answered that he would try it streight; So he the words into his ballaunce threw, But streight the winged words out of his ballaunce flew.

Wroth wcxt he then, and sayd that words were light, Ne would within his ballaunce

well abide: But he could justly weigh the wrong or right. “Well then,” sayd Artegall, “let it be tride: First in one ballance set the true aside.” He did so first, and then the false he layd In th’other scale; but still it downe did slide, And by no meane could in the weight be stayd; For by no meanes the false will with the truth be wayd.

“Now take the right likewise,” sayd Artegale, “And counterpeise the same with so much wrong.” So first the right he put into one scale, And then the Gyant strove with puissance strong To fill the other scale with so much wrong; But all the wrongs that he therein could lay Might not it peise; yet did he labour long, And swat, and chauf d, and proved every way: Yet all the wrongs could not a litle right downe way.

Which when he saw he greatly grew in rage, And almost would his balances have broken; But Artegall him fairely gan asswage, And said, “Be not upon thy balance wroken, For they doe nought but right or wrong betoken; But in the mind the doome of right must bee: And so likewise of words, the which be spoken, The eare must be the ballance, to decree And judge, whether with truth or falshood they agree.

“But set the truth and set the right aside, For they with wrong or falshood will not fare, And put two wrongs together to be tnde, Or else two falses, of each equall share, And then together doe them both compare; For truth is one, and right is ever one.” So did he; and then plaine it did appeare, Whether of them the greater were attone; But right sate in the middest of the beame alone.

But he the fight from thence did thrust away, For it was not the right which he did seeke, But rather strove extremities to way, Th’one to diminish, th’other for to eeke; For of the meane he greatly did misleeke. Whom when so lewdly minded Talus found, Approching nigh unto him, cheeke by cheeke, He shouldered him from off the higher ground, And, down the rock him throwing, in the sea him dround.

Like as a ship, whom cruell tempest drives Upon a rocke with horrible dismay, Her shattered ribs in thousand peeces rives, And spoyling all her geares and goodly ray Does make her selfe misfortunes piteous pray. So downe the cliffe the wretched

Gyant tumbled; His battred ballances in peeces lay, His timbered bones all broken rudely rumbled: So was the high-aspyring with huge ruine humbled.

That when the people, which had there about Long wayted, saw his sudden desolation, They gan to gather in tumultuous rout, And mutining to stirre up civill faction For certaine losse of so great expectation: For well they hoped to have got great good, And wondrous riches by his innovation. Therefore resolving to revenge his blood They rose in armes, and all in battell order stood.

Which lawlesse multitude him comming too In warlike wise when Artegall did vew, He much was troubled, ne wist what to doo: For loth he was his noble hands t'embrew In the base blood of such a rascall crew; And otherwise, if that he should retire, He fear'd least they with shame would him pursew; Therefore he Talus to them sent t'inquire The cause of their array, and truce for to desire.

But soone as they him nigh approching spide, They gan with all their weapons him assay, And rudely stroke at him on every side; Yet nought they could him hurt, ne ought dismay: But when at them he with his flaile gan lay, He like a swarme of flyes them overthrew; Ne any of them durst come in his way, But here and there before his presence flew, And hid themselves in holes and bushes from his vew.

As when a Faulcon hath with nimble flight Flowne at a flush of Ducks foreby the brooke, The trembling foule dismayd with dreadfull sight Of death, the which them almost overtooke, Doe hide themselves from her astonying looke Amongst the flags and covert round about. When Talus saw they all the field forsooke, And none appeared of all that raskall rout, To Artegall he turn'd and went with him throughout.

Canto III

The Spousals of faire Florimell, Where turney many Knights; There Braggadochio is uncas'd In all the Ladies sights.

After long stormes and tempests overblowne The sunne at length his joyous face doth cleare: So when as fortune all her spight hath showne, Some blisfull houres at last must needes appeare; Else should afflicted wights oftimes despeire: So comes it now to Florimell by tourne, After long sorrowes suffered whyleare, In which captiv'd she many moneths did mourne, To tast of joy, and to wont pleasures to retourne.

Who being freed from Proteus cruell band By Marinell was unto him affide, And by him brought againe to Faerie land, Where he her spous'd, and made his joyous bride. The time and place was blazed farre and wide, And solemne feasts and giusts ordain'd therefore: To which there did resort from every side Of Lords and Ladies infinite great store; Ne any Knight was absent that brave courage bore.

To tell the glorie of the feast that day, The goodly service, the devicefull sights, The bridegromes state, the brides most rich aray, The pride of Ladies, and the worth of knights, The royall banquets, and the rare delights, Were worke fit for an Herauld, not for me: But for so much as to my lot here lights, That with this present treatise doth agree, True vertue to advance, shall here recounted bee.

When all men had with full satietie Of meates and drinkes their appetites suffiz'd, To deedes of armes and proofe of chevalrie They gan themselves addresse, full rich aguiz'd As each one had his furnitures deviz'd. And first of all issu'd Sir Marinell, And with him sixe knights more, which enterpriz'd To chalenge all in right of Florimell, And to maintaine that she all others did excell.

The first of them was hight Sir Orimont, A noble Knight, and tride in hard assayes; The second had to name Sir Bellisont, But second unto none in prowesse prayse; The third was Brunell, famous in his dayes; The fourth Ecastor, of exceeding might; The fift Armeddan, skild in lovely layes; The sixt was Lansack, a redoubted Knight; All sixe well-seene in armes, and prov'd in many a fight.

And them against came all that list to giust, From every coast and countrie under

sunne: None was debard, but all had leave that lust. The trompets sound, then all together ronne. Full many deeds of armes that day were donne, And many knights unhorst, and many wounded, As fortune fell; yet little lost or wonne: But all that day the greatest prayse redounded To Marinell, whose name the Heralds loud resounded.

The second day, so soone as morrow light Appear'd in heaven, into the field they came, And there all day continew'd cruell fight, With divers fortune fit for such a game, In which all strove with perill to winne fame; Yet whether side was viclor note be ghest: But at the last the trompets did proclame That Marinell that day deserved best. So they disparted were, and all men went to rest.

The third day came, that should due tryall lend Of all the rest; and then this warlike crew Together met of all to make an end. There Marinell great deeds of armes did shew, And through the thickest like a Lyon flew, Rashing off helmes, and ry ving plates asonder, That every one his daunger did eschew: So terribly his dreadfull strokes did thonder, That all men stood amaz'd, and at his might did wonder.

But what on earth can alwayes happie stand? The greater prowesse greater perils find. So farre he past amongst his enemies band, That they have him enclosed so behind, As by no meanes he can himselfe outwind: And now perforce they have him prisoner taken; And now they doe with captive bands him bind; And now they lead him thence, of all forsaken, Unlesse some succour had in time him overtaken.

It fortun'd, whylest they were thus ill beset, Sir Artegall into the Tilt-yard came, With Braggadochio, whom he lately met Upon the way with that his snowy Dame: Where when he understood by common fame What evil hap to Marinell betid, He much was mov'd at so unworthie shame, And streight that boaster prayd, with whom he rid, To change his shield with him, to be the better hid.

So forth he went, and soone them overhent, Where they were leading Marinell away; Whom he assayld with dreadlesse hardiment, And forst the burden of their prize to stay. They were an hundred knights of that array, Of which th'one halfe

upon himselfe did set, The other stayd behind to gard the pray: But he ere long the former fiftie bet, And from the other fiftie soone the prisoner fet.

So backe he brought Sir Marinell againe; Whom having quickly arm'd againe anew, They both together joyned might and maine, To set afresh on all the other crew: Whom with sore havocke soone they overthrew, And chaced quite out of the field, that none Against them durst his head to perill shew. So were they left Lords of the field alone: So Marinell by him was rescu'd from his fone.

Which when he had perform'd, then backe againe To Braggadochio did his shield restore; Who all this while behind him did remaine, Keeping there close with him in pretious store That his false Ladie, as ye heard afore. Then did the trompets sound, and Judges rose, And all these knights, which that day armour bore, Came to the open hall to listen whose The honour of the prize should be adjudg'd by those.

And thether also came in open sight Fayre Florimell, into the common hall, To greet his guerdon unto every knight, And best to him to whom the best should fall. Then for that stranger knight they loud did call, To whom that day they should the girlond yield, Who came not forth; but for Sir Artegall Came Braggadochio, and did shew his shield, Which bore the Sunne brode blazed in a golden field.

The sight whereof did all with gladnesse fill: So unto him they did addeeme the prise Of all that Tryumph. Then the trompets shrill Don Braggadochios name resounded thrise: So courage lent a cloke to cowardise. And then to him came fayrest Florimell, And goodly gan to greet his brave emprise, And thousand thankes him yeeld, that had so well Approv'd that day that she all others did excell.

To whom the boaster, that all knights did blot, With proud disdaine did scornefull answere make, That what he did that day, he did it not For her, but for his owne deare Ladies sake, Whom on his perill he did undertake Both her and eke all others to excell: And further did uncomely speaches crake. Much did his words the gentle Ladie quell, And turn'd aside for shame to heare what he did tell.

Then forth he brought his snowy Florimele, Whom Trompart had in keeping there beside, Covered from peoples gazement with a vele: Whom when discovered they had throughly eide, With great amazement they were stupefide; And said, that surely Florimell it was, Or if it were not Florimell so tride, That Florimell her selfe she then did pas. So feeble skill of perfect things the vulgar has.

Which when as Marinell beheld likewise, He was therewith exceedingly dismayd, Ne wist he what to thinke, or to devise; But, like as one whom feends had made affrayd, He long astonisht stood, ne ought he sayd, Ne ought he did, but with fast fixed eies He gazed still upon that snowy mayd; Whom ever as he did the more avize, The more to be true Florimell he did surmize.

As when two sunnes appeare in the asure skye, Mounted in Phœbus charet fierie bright, Both darting forth faire beames to each mans eye, And both adorn'd with lampes of flaming light; All that behold so strange prodigious sight, Not knowing natures worke, nor what to weene, Are rapt with wonder and with rare affright. So stood Sir Marinell, when he had seene The semblant of this false by his faire beauties Queene.

All which when Artegall, who all this while Stood in the preasse close covered, well advewed, And saw that boasters pride and gracelesse guile, He could no longer beare, but forth issewed, And unto all himselfe there open shewed, And to the boaster said; "Thou losell base, That hast with borrowed plumes thy selfe endewed, And others worth with leasings doest deface, When they are all restor'd thou shalt rest in disgrace.

"That shield, which thou doest beare, was it indeed Which this dayes honour sav'd to Marinell: But not that arme, nor thou the man, I reed, Which didst that service unto Florimell. For proofe shew forth thy sword, and let it tell What strokes, what dreadfull stoure, it stird this day; Or shew the wounds which unto thee befell; Or shew the sweat with which thou diddest sway So sharpe a battell, that so many did

dismay.

“But this the sword which wrought those cruell stounds, And this the arme the which that shield did beare, And these the signs” (so shewed forth his wounds) “By which that glorie gotten doth appeare. As for this Ladie, which he sheweth here, Is not (I wager) Florimell at all; But some fayre Franion, fit for such a fere, That by misfortune in his hand did fall.” For proofe whereof he bad them Florimell forth call.

So forth the noble Ladie was ybrought, Adorn’d with honor and all comely grace: Whereto her bashful shamefastnesse ywrought A great increase in her faire blushing face, As roses did with lilies interlace; For of those words, the which that boaster threw, She inly yet conceived great disgrace: Whom when as all the people such did vew, They shouted loud, and signes of gladnesse all did shew.

Then did he set her by that snowy one, Like the true saint beside the image set, Of both their beauties to make paragone And triall, whether should the honor get. Streightway, so soone as both together met, Th’enchaunted Damzell vanisht into nought: Her snowy substance melted as with heat, Ne of that goodly hew remayned ought, But th’emptie girdle which about her wast was wrought.

As when the daughter of Thaumantes faire Hath in a watry cloud displayed wide Her goodly bow, which paints the liquid ayre, That all men wonder at her colours pride; All suddenly, ere one can looke aside, The glorious picture vanisheth away, Ne any token doth thereof abide: So did this Ladies goodly form decay, And into nothing goe, ere one could it bewray.

Which when as all that present were beheld, They stricken were with great astonishment, And their faint harts with senselesse horrour queld, To see the thing, that seem’d so excellent, So stolen from their fancies wonderment That what of it became none understood: And Braggadochio selfe with dreriment So daunted was in his despeyring mood, That like a lifelesse corse immoveable he stood.

But Artegall that golden belt uptooke, The which of all her spoyle was onely left; Which was not hers, as many it mistooke, But Florimells owne girdle, from her reft While she was flying, like a weary weft, From that foule monster which did her compell To perils great; which he unbuckling eft Presented to the fayrest Florimell, Who round about her tender wast it fitted well.

Full many Ladies often had assayd About their middles that faire belt to knit; And many a one suppos'd to be a mayd: Yet it to none of all their loynes would fit, Till Florimell about her fastned it. Such power it had, that to no womans wast By any skill or labour it would sit, Unlesse that she were continent and chast, But it would lose or breake, that many had disgrast.

Whilest thus they busied were bout Florimell, And boastfull Braggadochio, to defame, Sir Guyon, as by fortune then befell, Forth from the thickest preasse of people came, His owne good steed, which he had stolne, to clame; And th'one hand seizing on his golden bit, With th'other drew his sword; for with the same He ment the thiefe there deadly to have smit: And, had he not bene held, he nought had fayld of it.

Thereof great hurly-burly moved was Throughout the hall for that same warlike horse; For Braggadochio would not let him pas, And Guyon would him algates have perforse, Or it approve upon his carrion corse. Which troublous stirre when Artegall perceived, He nigh them drew to stay th'avengers forse, And gan inquire how was that steed bereaved, Whether by might extort, or else by slight deceaved?

Who all that piteous storie, which befell About that wofull couple which were slaine, And their young bloodie babe to him gan tell; With whom whiles he did in the wood remaine, His horse purloyned was by subtill traine, For which he chalenged the thiefe to fight: But he for nought could him thereto constraine; For as the death he hated such despight, And rather had to lose then trie in armes his right.

Which Artegall well hearing, (though no more By law of armes there neede ones

right to trie, As was the wont of warlike knights of yore, Then that his foe should him the field denie,) Yet, further right by tokens to descrie, He askt what privie tokens he did beare? “If that” (said Guyon) “may you satisfie, Within his mouth a blacke spot doth appeare, Shapt like a horses shoe, who list to seeke it there.”

Whereof to make due tryall, one did take The horse in hand within his mouth to looke: But with his heeles so sorely he him strake, That all his ribs he quite in peeces broke, That never word from that day forth he spoke. Another, that would seeme to have more wit, Him by the bright embrodered hed-stall tooke; But by the shoulder him so sore he bit, That he him maymed quite, and all his shoulder split.

Ne he his mouth would open unto wight, Untill that Guyon selfe unto him spake, And called Brigadore, (so was he hight,) Whose voice so soone as he did undertake, Eftsoones he stood as still as any stake, And suffred all his secret marke to see: And, when as he him nam’d, for joy he brake His bands, and follow’d him with gladfull glee, And friskt, and flong aloft, and louted low on knee.

Thereby Sir Artegall did plaine areed That unto him the horse belong’d, and sayd; “Lo there! Sir Guyon, take to you the steed, As he with golden saddle is arayd, And let that losell, plainely now displayd, Hence fare on foot, till he an horse have gayned.” But the proud boaster gan his doome upbrayd, And him revil’d, and rated, and disdayned, That judgement so unjust against him had ordayned.

Much was the knight incenst with his lewd word To have revenged that his villeny; And thrise did lay his hand upon his sword, To have him slaine, or dearely doen aby: But Guyon did his choler pacify, Saying, “Sir knight, it would dishonour bee To you that are our judge of equity, To wreake your wrath on such a carle as hee: It’s punishment enough that all his shame doe see.”

So did he mitigate Sir Artegall; But Talus by the backe the boaster hent, And drawing him out of the open hall Upon him did inflict this punishment: First he his beard did shave, and fowly shent, Then from him reft his shield, and it renverst, And

blotted out his armes with falshood blent, And himselfe baffuld, and his armes unherst, And broke his sword in twaine, and all his armour sperst.

The whiles his guilefull groome was fled away, But vaine it was to thinke from him to flie; Who overtaking him did disaray, And all his face deform'd with infamie, And out of court him scourged openly. So ought all faytours that true knighthood shame, And armes dishonour with base villanie, From all brave knights be banisht with defame; For oft their lewdnes blotteth good deserts with blame.

Now when these counterfeits were thus uncased Out of the fore-side of their forgerie, And in the sight of all men cleane disgraced, All gan to jest and gibe full merilie At the remembrance of their knaverie: Ladies can laugh at Ladies, Knights at Knights, To thinke with how great vaunt of braverie He them abused through his subtill slights, And what a glorious shew he made in all their sights.

There leave we them in pleasure and repast, Spending their joyous dayes and gladfull nights, And taking usurie of time forepast, With all deare delices and rare delights, Fit for such Ladies and such lovely knights; And turne we here to this faire furrowes end Our wearie yokes, to gather fresher sprights, That, when as time to Artegall shall tend, We on his first adventure may him forward send.

Canto IV

Artegall dealeth right betwixt Two brethren that doe strive: Saves Terpine from the gallow tree, And doth from death reprive.

Whoso upon him selfe will take the skill True Justice unto people to divide, Had neede have mightie hands for to fulfill That which he doth with righteous doome decide, And for to maister wrong and puissant pride: For vaine it is to deeme of things aright, And makes wrong doers justice to deride, Unlesse it be perform'd with dreadlesse might; For powre is the right hand of Justice truely hight.

Therefore whylome to knights of great emprise The charge of Justice given was in

trust, That they might execute her judgements wise, And with their might beat downe licentious lust, Which proudly did impugne her sentence just: Whereof no braver president this day Remaines on earth, preserv'd from yron rust Of rude oblivion and long times decay, Then this of Artegall, which here we have to say.

Who having lately left that lovely payre, Enlincked fast in wedlockes loyall bond, Bold Marinell with Florimell the fayre, With whom great feast and goodly glee he fond, Departed from the Castle of the Strond To follow his adventures first intent, Which long agoe he taken had in hond: Ne wight with him for his assistance went, But that great yron groome, his gard and government.

With whom, as he did passe by the sea shore, He chaunst to come whereas two comely Squires, Both brethren, whom one wombe together bore, But stirred up with different desires, Together strove, and kindled wrathfull fires: And them beside two seemely damzells stood, By all meanes seeking to asswage their ires; Now with faire words, but words did little good, Now with sharpe threats, but threats the more increast their mood.

And there before them stood a Coffer strong Fast bound on every side with iron bands, But seeming to have suffred mickle wrong, Either by being wreckt uppon the sands, Or being carried farre from forraine lands. Seem'd that for it these Squires at ods did fall, And bent against them selves their cruell hands; But evermore those Damzells did forestall Their furious encounter, and their fiercenesse pall.

But firmely fixt they were with dint of sword And battailes doubtfull proofe their rights to try, Ne other end their fury would afford, But what to them Fortune would justify: So stood they both in readinesse thereby To joyne the combate with cruell intent, When Artegall, arriving happily, Did stay a while their greedy bickerment, Till he had questioned the cause of their dissent.

To whom the elder did this aunswere frame: "Then weete ye, Sir, that we two brethren be, To whom our sire, Milesio by name, Did equally bequeath his lands in

fee, Two Hands, which ye there before you see Not farre in sea; of which the one appeares But like a little Mount of small degree, Yet was as great and wide, ere many yeares, As that same other Isle, that greater bredth now beares.

“But tract of time, that all things doth decay, And this devouring Sea, that naught doth spare, The most part of my land hath washt away, And throwne it up unto my brothers share: So his encreased, but mine did empaire. Before which time I lov’d, as was my lot, That further mayd, hight Philtera the faire, With whom a goodly doure I should have got, And should have joyned bene to her in wedlocks knot.

“Then did my younger brother, Amidas, Love that same other Damzell, Lucy bright, To whom but little dowre allotted was: Her vertue was the dowre that did delight. What better dowre can to a dame be hight? But now, when Philtra saw my lands decay And former livelod fayle, she left me quight, And to my brother did ellope streight way, Who, taking her from me, his owne love left astray.

“She, seeing then her selfe forsaken so, Through dolorous despaire which she conceyved, Into the Sea her selfe did headlong throw, Thinking to have her griefe by death bereaved: But see how much her purpose was deceaved! Whilest thus, amidst the billowes beating of her, Twixt life and death long to and fro she weaved, She chaunst unwares to light uppon this coffer, Which to her in that daunger hope of life did offer.

“The wretched mayd, that earst desir’d to die, When as the paine of death she tasted had, And but halfe seene his ugly visnomie, Gan to repent that she had beene so mad For any death to chaunge life, though most bad: And catching hold of this Sea-beaten chest, (The lucky Pylot of her passage sad,) After long tossing in the seas distrest, Her weary barke at last uppon mine Isle did rest.

“Where I by chaunce then wandring on the shore Did her espy, and through my good endevour From dreadfull mouth of death, which threatned sore Her to have swallow’d up, did helpe to save her. She then, in recompence of that great favour

Which I on her bestowed, bestowed on me The portion of that good which Fortune gave her, Together with her selfe in dowry free; Both goodly portions, but of both the better she.

“Yet in this coffer which she with her brought Great threasure sithence we did finde contained, Which as our owne we tooke, and so it thought; But this same other Damzell since hath fained That to her selfe that threasure appertained; And that she did transport the same by sea, To bring it to her husband new ordained, But suffred cruell shipwracke by the way: But whether it be so or no, I can not say.

“But, whether it indeede be so or no, This doe I say, that what so good or ill Or God or Fortune unto me did throw, Not wronging any other by my will, I hold mine owne, and so will hold it still. And though my land he first did winne away, And then my love, (though now it little skill) Yet my good lucke he shall not likewise pray, But I will it defend whilst ever that I may.”

So having sayd, the younger did ensew: “Full true it is what so about our land My brother here declared hath to you: But not for it this ods twixt us doth stand. But for this threasure throwne uppon his strand; Which well I prove, as shall appeare by triall, To be this maides with whom I fastned hand, Known by good markes and perfect good espiall: Therefore it ought be rendred her without deniall.”

When they thus ended had, the Knight began: “Certes, your strife were easie to accord, Would ye remit it to some righteous man.” “Unto yourselfe,” said they, “we give our word, To bide that judgement ye shall us afford.” “Then for assurance to my doome to stand, Under my foote let each lay downe his sword; And then you shall my sentence understand.” So each of them layd downe his sword out of his hand.

Then Artegall thus to the younger sayd: “Now tell me, Amidas, if that ye may, Your brothers land the which the sea hath layd Unto your part, and pluckt from his away, By what good right doe you withhold this day?” “What other right,” (quoth he)

“should you esteeme, But that the sea it to my share did lay?” “Your right is good,” (sayd he) “and so I deeme, That what the sea unto you sent your own should seeme.”

Then turning to the elder thus he sayd: “Now, Bracidas, let this likewise be showne; Your brothers threasure, which from him is strayd, Being the dowry of his wife well knowne, By what right doe you claime to be your owne?” “What other right,” (quoth he) “should you esteeme, But that the sea hath it unto me throwne?” “Your right is good,” (sayd he) “and so I deeme, That what the sea unto you sent your own should seeme.

“For equall right in equall things doth stand; For what the mighty Sea hath once possest, And plucked quite from all possessors hand, Whether by rage of waves that never rest, Or else by wracke that wretches hath distrest, He may dispose by his imperiall might, As thing at randon left, to whom he list. So, Amidas, the land was yours first hight; And so the threasure yours is, Bracidas, by right.”

When he his sentence thus pronounced had, Both Amidas and Philtra were displeased; But Bracidas and Lucy were right glad, And on the threasure by that judgement seased. So was their discord by this doome appeased, And each one had his right. Then Artegall, When as their sharpe contention he had ceased, Departed on his way, as did befall, To follow his old quest, the which him forth did call.

So as he travelled uppon the way, He chaunst to come, where happily he spide A rout of many people farre away; To whom his course he hastily applide, To weete the cause of their assemblaunce wide: To whom when he approched neare in sight, (An uncouth sight) he plainely then descride To be a troupe of women, warlike dight, With weapons in their hands as ready for to fight.

And in the midst of them he saw a Knight, With both his hands behinde him pinnoed hard, And round about his necke an halter tight, And ready for the gallow-tree prepard: His face was covered, and his head was bar’d, That who he was uneath was to descry; And with full heavy heart with them he far’d, Griev’d to the soule, and

groning inwardly, That he of womens hands so base a death should dy.

But they, like tyrants mercilesse, the more Rejoyced at his miserable case, And him reviled, and reproched sore With bitter taunts and termes of vile disgrace. Now when as Artegall, arriv'd in place, Did aske what cause brought that man to decay, They round about him gan to swarme apace, Meaning on him their cruell hands to lay, And to have wrought unwares some villanous assay.

But he was soone aware of their ill minde, And drawing backe deceived their intent: Yet, though him selfe did shame on womankinde His mighty hand to shend, he Talus sent To wrecke on them their follies hardyment: Who with few sowces of his yron flale Dispersed all their troupe incontinent, And sent them home to tell a piteous tale Of their vaine prowesse turned to their proper bale.

But that same wretched man, ordayned to die, They left behind them, glad to be so quit: Him Talus tooke out of perplexitie, And horrour of fowle death for Knight unfit, Who more then losse of life ydreaded it; And, him restoring unto living light, So brought unto his Lord, where he did sit Beholding all that womanish weake fight; Whom soone as he beheld he knew, and thus behight:

"Sir Turpine! haplesse man, what make you here? Or have you lost your selfe and your discretion, That ever in this wretched case ye were? Or have ye yeelded you to proude oppression Of womens powre, that boast of mens subjection? Or else what other deadly dismall day Is falne on you by heavens hard direction That ye were runne so fondly far astray As for to lead your selfe unto your owne decay?"

Much was the man confounded in his mind, Partly with shame, and partly with dismay, That all astonisht he him selfe did find, And little had for his excuse to say, But onely thus: "Most haplesse well ye may Me justly terme, that to this shame am brought, And made the scorne of Knighthod this same day: But who can scape what his owne fate hath wrought? The worke of heavens will surpasseth humaine thought."

“Right true: but faulty men use oftentimes To attribute their folly unto fate, And lay on heaven the guilt of their owne crimes. But tell, Sir Terpin, ne let you amate Your misery, how fell ye in this state?” “Then sith ye needs” (quoth he) “will know my shame, And all the ill which chaunst to me of late, I shortly will to you rehearse the same, In hope ye will not turne misfortune to my blame.

“Being desirous (as all Knights are woont) Through hard adventures deedes of armes to try, And after fame and honour for to hunt, I heard report that farre abrode did fly, That a proud Amazon did late defy All the brave Knights that hold of Maidenhead, And unto them wrought all the villany That she could forge in her malicious head, Which some hath put to shame, and many done be dead.

“The cause, they say, of this her cruell hate Is for the sake of Bellodant the bold, To whom she bore most fervent love of late, And wooed him by all the waies she could: But when she saw at last that he ne would For ought or nought be wonne unto her will, She turn’d her love to hatred manifold, And for his sake vow’d to doe all the ill Which she could doe to Knights; which now she doth fulfill.

“For all those Knights, the which by force or guile She doth subdue, she fowly doth entreate. First, she doth them of warlike armes despoile, And cloth in womens weedes: And then with threat Doth them compell to worke, to earne their meat, To spin, to card, to sew, to wash, to wring; Ne doth she give them other thing to eat But bread and water or like feeble thing, Them to disable from revenge adventuring.

“But if through stout disdaine of manly mind Any her proud observaunce will withstand, Uppon that gibbet, which is there behind, She causeth them be hang’d up out of hand; In which condition I right now did stand: For, being overcome by her in fight, And put to that base service of her band, I rather chose to die in lives despight, Then lead that shamefull life, unworthy of a Knight.”

“How hight that Amazon?” (said Artegall) “And where and how far hence does she abide?” “Her name” (quoth he) “they Radigund doe call, A Princesse of great powre

and greater pride, And Queene of Amazons, in armes well tride And sundry battels, which she hath atchieved With great successe, that her hath glorifide, And made her famous, more then is believed; Ne would I it have ween'd, had I not late it prieved."

"Now sure," (said he) "and by the faith that I To Maydenhead and noble knighthood owe, I will not rest till I her might doe trie, And venge the shame that she to Knights doth show. Therefore, Sir Terpin, from you lightly throw This squalid weede, the patterne of dispaire, And wend with me, that ye may see and know How Fortune will your ruin'd name repaire And knights of Maidenhead, whose praise she would empaire."

With that, like one that hopelesse was depryv'd From deathes dore at which he lately lay, Those yron fetters wherewith he was gyv'd, The badges of reproch, he threw away, And nimbly did him dight to guide the way Unto the dwelling of that Amazone: Which was from thence not past a mile or tway, A goodly citty and a mighty one, The which, of her owne name, she called Radegone.

Where they arriving by the watchman were Descried streight; who all the city warned How that three warlike persons did appeare, Of which the one him seem'd a Knight all armed, And th'other two well likely to have harmed. Eftsoones the people all to harnesse ran, And like a sort of Bees in clusters swarmed: Ere long their Queene her selfe, halfe like a man, Came forth into the rout, and them t'array began.

And now the Knights, being arrived neare, Did beat uppon the gates to enter in; And at the Porter, skorning them so few, Threw many threats, if they the towne did win, To teare his flesh in peeces for his sin: Which when as Radigund there comming heard, Her heart for rage did grate, and teeth did grin. She bad that streight the gates should be unbard, And to them way to make with weapons well prepard.

Soone as the gates were open to them set, They pressed forward, entraunce to have made; But in the middle way they were ymet With a sharpe showre of arrowes, which them staid, And better bad advise, ere they assaid Unknowen perill of bold

womens pride. Then all that rout uppon them rudely laid, And heaped strokes so fast on every side, And arrowes haild so thicke, that they could not abide.

But Radigund her selfe, when she espide Sir Terpin, from her direfull doome acquit, So cruell doale amongst her maides divide T'avenge that shame they did on him commit, All sodainely enflam'd with furious fit Like a fell Lionesse at him she flew, And on his headpeece him so fiercely smit, That to the ground him quite she overthrew, Dismayd so with the stroke that he no colours knew.

Soone as she saw him on the ground to grovell, She lightly to him leapt; and in his necke Her proud foote setting, at his head did levell, Weening at once her wrath on him to wreake And his contempt, that did her judg'ment breake. As when a Beare hath seiz'd her cruell clawes Uppon the carkasse of some beast too weake, Proudly stands over, and a while doth pause To heare the piteous beast pleading her plaintiffe cause.

Whom when as Artegall in that distresse By chaunce beheld, he left the bloudy slaughter In which he swam, and ranne to his redresse: There her assayling fiercely fresh, he raught her Such an huge stroke, that it of sence distraught her; And had she not it warded warily, It had depriv'd her mother of a daughter: Nathlesse for all the powre she did apply It made her stagger oft, and stare with ghastly eye.

Like to an Eagle, in his kingly pride Soring through his wide Empire of the aire To weather his brode sailes, by chaunce hath spide A Goshauke, which hath seized for her share Uppon some fowle that should her feast prepare; With dreadfull force he flies at her bylive, That with his souce, which none enduren dare, Her from the quarrey he away doth drive, And from her griping pounce the greedy prey doth rive.

But, soone as she her sence recover'd had, She fiercely towards him her selfe gan dight, Through vengeful wrath and sdeignfull pride half mad; For never had she suffred such despight: But ere she could joyne hand with him to fight, Her warlike maides about her flockt so fast, That they disparted them, maugre their might, And

with their troupes did far asunder cast; But mongst the rest the fight did untill evening last.

And every while that mighty yron man With his strange weapon, never wont in warre, Them sorely vext, and courst, and overran, And broke their bowes, and did their shooting marre, That none of all the many once did darre Him to assault, nor once approach him nie; But like a sort of sheepe dispersed farre For dread of their devouring enemie, Through all the fields and vallies did before him flie.

But when as dales faire shinie-beame, yclowded With fearefull shadowes of deformed night, Warn'd man and beast in quiet rest be shrowded, Bold Radigund with sound of trumpe on hight, Causd all her people to surcease from fight; And gathering them unto her citties gate, Made them all enter in before her sight; And all the wounded, and the weake in state, To be convayed in, ere she would once retrate.

When thus the field was voided all away, And all things quieted, the Elfin Knight, Weary of toile and travell of that day, Causd his pavilion to be richly pight Before the city gate, in open sight; Where he him selfe did rest in safëty Together with Sir Terpin all that night: But Talus usde, in times of jeopardy, To keepe a nightly watch for dread of treachery.

But Radigund, full of heart-gnawing griefe For the rebuke which she sustain'd that day, Could take no rest, ne would receive reliefe; But tossed in her troublous minde what way She mote revenge that blot which on her lay. There she resolv'd her selfe in single fight To try her Fortune, and his force assay, Rather then see her people spoiled quight, As she had seene that day, a disaventerous sight.

She called forth to her a trusty mayd, Whom she thought fittest for that businesse; Her name was Clarin, and thus to her sayd: "Goe, damzell, quickly, doe thy selfe addresse To doe the message which I shall expresse. Goe thou unto that stranger Faery Knight, Who yeester day drove us to such distresse: Tell, that to morrow I with him wil fight, And try in equall field whether hath greater might.

“But these conditions doe to him propound: That if I vanquishe him, he shall obay My law, and ever to my lore be bound; And so will I, if me he vanquish may, What ever he shall like to doe or say. Goe streight, and take with thee to witnesse it Sixe of thy fellowes of the best array, And beare with you both wine and juncates fit, And bid him eate: henceforth he oft shall hungry sit.”

The Damzell streight obayd, and putting all In readinesse, forth to the Towne-gate went; Where, sounding loud a Trumpet from the wall, Unto those warlike Knights she warning sent. Then Talus forth issuing from the tent Unto the wall his way did fearelesse take, To weeten what that trumpets sounding ment: Where that same Damzell lowdly him bespake, And shew’d that with his Lord she would emparlaunce make.

So he them streight conducted to his Lord; Who, as he could, them goodly well did greete, Till they had told their message word by word: Which he accepting well, as he could weete, Them fairely entertaynd with curt’sies meete, And gave them gifts and things of deare delight. So backe againe they homeward turnd their feete; But Artegall him selfe to rest did dight, That he mote fresher be against the next daies fight.

Canto V

Artegall fights with Radigund, And is subdewed by guile: He is by her emprisoned, But wrought by Clarins wile.

So soone as day forth dawning from the East Nights humid curtaine from the heavens withdrew, And earely calling forth both man and beast Comaunded them their daily workes renew, These noble warriors, mindefull to pursew The last daies purpose of their vowed fight, Them selves thereto preparde in order dew; The Knight, as best was seeming for a Knight, And th’Amazon, as best it likt her selfe to dight.

All in a Camis light of purple silke Woven uppon with silver, subtly wrought, And quilted uppon sattin white as milke; Trayled with ribbands diversly distraught, Like as the workeman had their courses taught; Which was short tucked for light motion Up to her ham; but, when she list, it raught Downe to her lowest heele; and thereuppon She wore for her defence a mayled habergeon.

And on her legs she painted buskins wore, Basted with bends of gold on every side, And mailes betweene, and laced close afore; Uppon her thigh her Cemitare was tide With an embrodered belt of mickell pride; And on her shoulder hung her shield, bedeckt Uppon the bosse with stones that shined wide, As the faire Moone in her most full aspect, That to the Moone it mote be like in each respect.

So forth she came out of the citty gate With stately port and proud magnificence, Guarded with many Damzels that did waite Uppon her person for her sure defence, Playing on shaumes and trumpets, that from hence Their sound did reach unto the heavens hight: So forth into the field she marched thence, Where was a rich Pavilion ready pight Her to receive, till time they should begin the fight.

Then forth came Artegall out of his tent, All arm’d to point, and first the Lists did enter: Soone after eke came she, with fell intent And countenaunce fierce, as having fully bent her That battells utmost triall to adventer. The Lists were closed fast, to barrc the rout From rudely pressing to the middle center; Which in great heapes them circled all about, Wayting how Fortune would resolve that daungerous dout.

The Trumpets sounded, and the field began; With bitter strokes it both began and ended. She at the first encounter on him ran With furious rage, as if she had intended Out of his breast the very heart have rended: But he, that had like tempests often tride, From that first flaw him selfe right well defended. The more she rag’d, the more he did abide; She hewd, she foynd, she lasht, she laid on every side.

Yet still her blowes he bore, and her forbore, Weening at last to win advantage new; Yet still her crueltie increased more, And, though powre faild, her courage did

accrew; Which fayling, he gan fiercely her pursew. Like as a Smith that to his cunning feat The stubborne mettall seeketh to subdew, Soone as he feeles it mollifide with heat, With his great yron sledge doth strongly on it beat.

So did Sir Artegall upon her lay, As if she had an yron andvile beene, That flakes of fire, bright as the sunny ray, Out of her steely armes were flashing seene, That all on fire ye would her surely weene; But with her shield so well her selfe she warded From the dread daunger of his weapon keene, That all that while her life she safely garded; But he that helpe from her against her will discarded.

For with his trenchant blade at the next blow Halfe of her shield he shared quite away, That halfe her side it selfe did naked show, And thenceforth unto daunger opened way. Much was she moved with the mightie sway Of that sad stroke, that halfe enrag'd she grew, And, like a greedie Beare unto her pray, With her sharpe Cemitare at him she flew, That glauncing downe his thigh the purple bloud forth drew.

Thereat she gan to triumph with great boast, And to upbrayd that chaunce which him misfell, As if the prize she gotten had almost, With spightfull speaches, fitting with her well; That his great hart gan inwardly to swell With indignation at her vaunting vaine, And at her strooke with puissaunce fearefull fell: Yet with her shield she warded it againe, That shattered all to peeces round about the plaine.

Having her thus disarmed of her shield, Upon her helmet he againe her strooke, That downe she fell upon the grassie field In sencelesse swoune, as if her life forsooke, And pangs of death her spirit overtooke. Whom when he saw before his foote prostrated, He to her lept with deadly dreadfull looke, And her sunshynie helmet soone unlaced, Thinking at once both head and helmet to have raced.

But, when as he discovered had her face, He saw, his senses straunge astonishment, A miracle of natures goodly grace In her faire visage voide of ornament, But bath'd in bloud and sweat together ment; Which in the rudenesse of that evill plight

Bewrayd the signes of feature excellent: Like as the Moone in foggie winters night Doth seeme to be her selfe, though darkned be her light.

At sight thereof his cruell minded hart Empierced was with pittifull regard, That his sharpe sword he threw from him apart, Cursing his hand that had that visage mard: No hand so cruell, nor no hart so hard, But ruth of beautie will it mollifie. By this, upstarting from her swoune, she star'd A while about her with confused eye; Like one that from his dreame is waked suddenlye.

Soone as the knight she there by her did spy Standing with emptie hands all weaponlesse, With fresh assault upon him she did fly, And gan renew her former cruelnesse: And though he still retyr'd, yet nathelesse With huge redoubled strokes she on him layd; And more increast her outrage mercilesse, The more that he with meeke intreatie prayd Her wrathful hand from greedy vengeance to have stayd.

Like as a Puttocke having spyde in sight A gentle Faulcon sitting on an hill, Whose other wing, now made unmeete for flight, Was lately broken by some fortune ill; The foolish Kyte, led with licentious will, Doth beat upon the gentle bird in vaine, With many idle stoups her troubling still: Even so did Radigund with bootlesse paine Annoy this noble Knight, and sorely him constraine.

Nought could he do but shun the dred despight Of her fierce wrath, and backward still retyre; And with his single shield, well as he might, Beare off the burden of her raging yre: And evermore he gently did desyre To stay Her stroks, and he himselfe would yield; Yet nould she hearke, ne let him once respyre, Till he to her delivered had his shield, And to her mercie him submitted in plaine field.

So was he overcome; not overcome, But to her yeelded of his owne accord; Yet was he justly damned by the doome Of his owne mouth, that spake so warelesse word, To be her thrall and service her afford: For though that he first victorie obtayned, Yet after, by abandoning his sword, He wilfull lost that he before attayned: No fayrer conquest then that with goodwill is gayned.

Tho with her sword on him she flatling strooke, In signe of true subjection to her powre, And as her vassall him to thraldome tooke: But Terpine, borne to' a more unhappy howre, As he on whom the lucklesse stars did lowre, She caused to be attacht, and forthwith led Unto the crooke, t'abide the balefull stowre From which he lately had through reskew fled: Where he full shamefully was hanged by the hed.

But when they thought on Talus hands to lay, He with his yron flaile amongst them thondred, That they were fayne to let him scape away, Glad from his companie to be so sondred; Whose presence all their troups so much encombred, That th' heapes of those which he did wound and slay, Besides the rest dismayd, might not be nombred: Yet all that while he would not once assay To reskew his owne Lord, but thought it just t'obay.

Then tooke the Amazon this noble knight, Left to her will by his owne wilfull blame, And caused him to be disarmed quight Of all the ornaments of knightly name, With which whylome he gotten had great fame: Instead whereof she made him to be dight In womans weedes, that is to manhood shame, And put before his lap a napron white, Instead of Curiets and bases fit for fight.

So being clad she brought him from the field, In which he had bene trayned many a day, Into a long large chamber, which was sield With moniments of many Knights decay, By her subdewed in victorious fray: Amongst the which she causd his warlike armes Be hang'd on high, that mote his shame bewray; And broke his sword, for feare of further harmes, With which he wont to stirre up battailous alarmes.

There entred in he round about him saw Many brave knights, whose names right well he knew, There bound t'obay that Amazons proud law, Spinning and carding all in comely rew, That his bigge hart loth'd so uncomely vew: But they were forst, through penurie and pyne, To doe those workes to them appointed dew; For nought was given them to sup or dyne, But what their hands could earne by twisting linnen

twyne.

Amongst them all she placed him most low, And in his hand a distaffe to him gave, That he thereon should spin both flax and tow; A sordid office for a mind so brave: So hard it is to be a womans slave. Yet he it tooke in his owne selfes despight, And thereto did himselfe right well behave Her to obay, sith he his faith had plight Her vassall to become, if she him wonne in fight.

Who had him seene imagine mote thereby That whylome hath of Hercules bene told, How for lolas sake he did apply His mightie hands the distaffe vile to hold For his huge club, which had subdew'd of old So many monsters which the world annoyed, His Lyons skin chaungd to a pall of gold, In which, forgetting warres, he onely joyed In combats of sweet love, and with his mistresse toyed.

Such is the crueltie of womenkynd, When they have shaken off the shamefast band, With which wise Nature did them strongly bynd T'obay the heasts of mans well-ruling hand, That then all rule and reason they withstand To purchase a licentious libertie: But vertuous women wisely understand, That they were borne to base humilitie, Unlesse the heavens them lift to lawfull soveraintie.

Thus there long while continu'd Artegall, Serving proud Radigund with true subjection, How ever it his noble heart did gall T'obay a womans tyrannous direction, That might have had of life or death election: But, having chosen, now he might not chaunge. During which time the warlike Amazon, Whose wandring fancie after lust did raunge, Gan cast a secret liking to this captive straunge.

Which long concealing in her covert brest, She chaw'd the cud of lovers carefull plight; Yet could it not so thoroughly digest, Being fast fixed in her wounded spright, But it tormented her both day and night: Yet would she not thereto yeeld free accord To serve the lowly vassall of her might, And of her servant make her soverayne Lord: So great her pride that she such basenesse much abhord.

So much the greater still her anguish grew, Through stubborne handling of her

love-sicke hart; And still the more she strove it to subdew, The more she still augmented her owne smart, And wyder made the wound of th' hidden dart. At last, when long she struggled had in vaine, She gan to stoupe, and her proud mind convert To meeke obeysance of loves mightie raine, And him entreat for grace that had procur'd her paine.

Unto her selfe in secret she did call Her nearest handmayd, whom she most did trust, And to her said: "Clarinda, whom of all I trust alive, sith I thee fostred first, Now is the time that I untimely must Thereof make tryall in my greatest need. It is so hapned that the heavens unjust, Spighting my happie freedome, have agreed To thrall my looser life, or my last bale to breed."

With that she turn'd her head, as halfe abashed, To hide the blush which in her visage rose And through her eyes like sudden lightning flashed, Decking her cheeke with a vermilion rose; But soone she did her countenance compose, And to her turning thus began againe: "This griefes deepe wound I would to thee disclose, Thereto compelled through hart-murdring paine; But dread of shame my doubtfull lips doth still restraine."

"Ah! my deare dread," (said then the faithfull Mayd) "Can dread of ought your dreadlesse hart withhold, That many hath with dread of death dismayd, And dare even deathes most dreadfull face behold? Say on, my soverayne Ladie, and be bold: Doth not your handmayds life at your foot lie?" Therewith much comforted she gan unfold The cause of her conceived maladie, As one that would confesse, yet faine would it denie.

"Clarin," (said she) "thou seest yond Fayry Knight, Whom not my valour, but his owne brave mind Subjected hath to my unequall might. What right is it, that he should thraldome find For lending life to me, a wretch unkind, That for such good him recompence with ill? Therefore I cast how I may him unbind, And by his freedome get his free goodwill; Yet so, as bound to me he may continue still:

“Bound unto me but not with such hard bands Of strong compulsion and streight violence, As now in miserable state he stands; But with sweet love and sure benevolence, Voide of malitious mind or foule offence: To which if thou canst win him any way Without discoverie of my thoughts pretence, Both goodly meede of him it purchase may, And eke with gratefull service me right well apay.

“Which that thou mayst the better bring to pas, Loe! here this ring, which shall thy warrant bee, And token true to old Eumenias, From time to time, when thou it best shah see, That in and out thou mayst have passage free. Goe now, Clarinda; well thy wits advise, And all thy forces gather unto thee, Armies of lovely lookes, and speeches wise, With which thou canst even Jove himselfe to love entise.”

The trustie Mayd, conceiving her intent, Did with sure promise of her good endevour Give her great comfort and some harts content. So, from her parting, she thenceforth did labour By all the meanes she might to curry favour With th’Elfin Knight, her Ladies best beloved: With daily shew of courteous kind behaviour, Even at the marke-white of his hart she roved, And with wide-glauncing words one day she thus him proved.

“Unhappie Knight! upon whose hopelesse state Fortune, envying good, hath felly frowned, And cruell heavens have heapt an heavy fate; I rew that thus thy better dayes are drowned In sad despaire, and all thy senses swowned In stupid sorow, sith thy juster merit Might else have with felicitie bene crowned: Looke up at last, and wake thy dulled spirit To thinke how this long death thou mightest disinherit.”

Much did he marvell at her uncouth speach, Whose hidden drift he could not well perceive; And gan to doubt least she him sought t’appeach Of treason, or some guilefull traine did weave, Through which she might his wretched life bereave. Both which to barre he with this answere met her: “Faire Damzell, that with ruth (as I perceave) Of my mishaps art mov’d to wish me better, For such your kind regard I can but rest your detter.

“Yet, weet ye well, that to a courage great It is no lesse beseeming well to beare The storme of fortunes frowne or heavens threat, Then in the sunshine of her countenance cleare Timely to joy and carrie comely cheare: For though this cloud have now me overcast, Yet doe I not of better times despeyre; And though (unlike) they should for ever last, Yet in my truthes assurance I rest fixed fast.”

“But what so stonie minde,” (she then replyde) “But if in his owne powre occasion lay, Would to his hope a windowe open wyde, And to his fortunes helpe make readie way?” “Unworthy sure” (quoth he) “of better day, That will not take the offer of good hope, And eke pursew, if he attaine it may.” Which speaches she applying to the scope Of her intent, this further purpose to him shope.

“Then why doest not, thou ill advized man, Make meanes to win thy libertie forlorne, And try if thou by faire entreatie can Move Radigund? who, though she still have worne Her dayes in warre, yet (weet thou) was not borne Of Beares and Tygres, nor so salvage mynded As that, albe all love of men she scorne, She yet forgets that she of men was kynded: And sooth oft seene, that proudest harts base love hath blynded.”

“Certes, Clarinda, not of cancred will,” (Sayd he) “nor obstinate disdainefull mind, I have forbore this duetie to fulfill; For well I may this weene by that I fynd, That she a Queene, and come of Princely kynd, Both worthie is for to be sewd unto, Chiefely by him whose life her law doth bynd, And eke of powre her owne doome to undo, And als’ of princely grace to be inclyn’d thereto.

“But want of meanes hath bene mine onely let From seeking favour where it doth abound; Which if I might by your good office get, I to your selfe should rest for ever bound, And readie to deserve what grace I found.” She feeling him thus bite upon the bayt, Yet doubting least his hold was but unsound And not well fastened, would not strike him strayt, But drew him on with hope fit leasure to awayt.

But, foolish Mayd! whyles heedlesse of the hooke She thus oft times was beating off

and on, Through slipperie footing fell into the brooke, And there was caught to her confusion: For, seeking thus to salve the Amazon, She wounded was with her deceipts owne dart, And gan thenceforth to cast affection, Conceived close in her beguiled hart, To Artegall, through pittie of his causelesse smart.

Yet durst she not disclose her fancies wound, Ne to himselfe, for doubt of being sdayned, Ne yet to any other wight on ground, For feare her mistresse shold have knowledge gayned; But to her selfe it secretly retayned Within the closet of her covert brest, The more thereby her tender hart was payned; Yet to awayt fit time she weened best, And fairely did dissemble her sad thoughts unrest.

One day her Ladle, calling her apart, Gan to demaund of her some tydings good, Touching her loves successe, her lingring smart. Therewith she gan at first to change her mood, As one adaw'd, and halfe confused stood; But quickly she it overpast, so soone As she her face had wypt to fresh her blood: Tho gan she tell her all that she had donne, And all the wayes she sought his love for to have wonne:

But sayd that he was obstinate and sterne, Scorning her offers and conditions vaine; Ne would be taught with any termes to lerne So fond a lesson as to love againe: Die rather would he in penurious paine, And his abridged dayes in dolour wast, Then his foes love or liking entertaine. His resolution was, both first and last, His bodie was her thrall, his hart was freely plast.

Which when the cruell Amazon perceived, She gan to storme, and rage, and rend her gall, For very fell despight which she conceived, To be so scorned of a base-borne thrall, Whose life did lie in her least eyelids fall; Of which she vow'd, with many a cursed threat, That she therefore would him ere long forstall. Nathlesse, when calmed was her furious heat, She chang'd that threatfull mood, and mildly gan entreat:

"What now is left, Clarinda? what remaines, That we may compasse this our enterprize? Great shame to lose so long employed paines, And greater shame t'abide

so great misprize, With which he dares our offers thus despize: Yet that his guilt the greater may appeare, And more my gratious mercie by this wize, I will a while with his first folly beare, Till thou have tride againe, and tempted him more neare.

“Say and do all that may thereto prevaile; Leave nought unpromist that may him perswade, Life, freedome, grace, and gifts of great availe, With which the Gods themselves are mylder made: Thereto adde art, even womens witty trade, The art of mightie words that men can charme; With which in case thou canst him not invade, Let him feele hardnesse of thy heavie arme: Who will not stoupe with good shall be made stoupe with harme.

“Some of his diet doe from him withdraw, For I him find to be too proudly fed: Give him more labour, and with streighter law, That he with worke may be forwearied: Let him lodge hard, and lie in strawen bed, That may pull downe the courage of his pride; And lay upon him, for his greater dread, Cold yron chaines with which let him be tide; And let what ever he desires be him denide.

“When thou hast all this doen, then bring me newes Of his demeane: thenceforth not like a lover, But like a rebell stout, I will him use; For I resolve this siege not to give over, Till I the conquest of my will recover.” So she departed full of griefe and sdaine, Which inly did to great impatience move her: But the false mayden shortly turn’d againe Unto the prison, where her hart did thrall remaine.

There all her subtill nets she did unfold, And all the engins of her wit display; In which she meant him warelesse to enfold, And of his innocence to make her pray. So cunningly she wrought her crafts assay, That both her Ladie, and her selfe withall, And eke the knight attonce she did betray; But most the knight, whom she with guilefull call Did cast for to allure into her trap to fall.

As a bad Nurse, which, fayning to receive In her owne mouth the food ment for her chyld, Withholdes it to her selfe, and doeth deceive The infant, so for want of nourture spoyld; Even so Clarinda her owne Dame beguyld, And turn’d the trust

which was in her affyde, To feeding of her private fire, which boyld Her inward brest, and in her entrayles fryde, The more that she it sought to cover and to hyde.

For, comming to this knight, she purpose fayned, How earnest suit she earst for him had made Unto her Queene, his freedome to have gayned, But by no meanes could her thereto perswade; But that instead thereof she sternely bade His miserie to be augmented more, And many yron bands on him to lade: All which nathlesse she for his love forebore; So praying him t'accept her service evermore.

And, more then that, she promist that she would, In case she might finde favour in his eye, Devize how to enlarge him out of hould. The Fayrie, glad to gaine his libertie, Can yeeld great thankes for such her curtesie; And with faire words, fit for the time and place, To feede the humour of her maladie, Promist, if she would free him from that case, He wold, by all good means he might, deserve such grace.

So daily he faire semblant did her shew, Yet never meant he in his noble mind To his owne absent love to be untrew: Ne ever did deceiptfull Clarin find In her false hart his bondage to unbind, But rather how she mote him faster tye. Therefore unto her mistresse most unkind She daily told her love he did defye; And him she told her Dame his freedome did denye.

Yet thus much friendship she to him did show, That his scarse diet somewhat was amended, And his worke lessened, that his love mote grow: Yet to her Dame him still she discommended, That she with him mote be the more offended. Thus he long while in thraldome there remayned, Of both beloved well, but litle frended, Untill his owne true love his freedome gayned: Which in an other Canto will be best contayned.

Canto VI

Talus brings newes to Britomart Of Artegals mishap: She goes to seeke him; Dolon meets, Who seekes her to entrap.

Some men, I wote, will deeme in Artegall Great weaknesse, and report of him much ill, For yeelding so himselfe a wretched thrall To th'insolent commaund of womens will; That all his former praise doth fowly spill: But he the man, that say or doe so dare, Be well adviz'd that he stand stedfast still; For never yet was wight so well aware, But he, at first or last, was trapt in womens snare.

Yet in the streightnesse of that captive state This gentle knight himselfe so well behaved, That notwithstanding all the subtill bait With which those Amazons his love still craved, To his owne love his loialtie he saved: Whose character in th'Adamantine mould Of his true hart so firmely was engraved, That no new loves impression ever could Bereave it thence: such blot his honour blemish should.

Yet his owne love, the noble Britomart, Scarse so conceived in her jealous thought, What time sad tydings of his balefull smart In womans bondage Talus to her brought; Brought in untimely houre, ere it was sought: For, after that the utmost date assynde For his returne she waited had for nought, She gan to cast in her misdoubtfull mynde A thousand feares, that love-sicke fancies faine to fynde.

Sometime she feared least some hard mishap Had him misfalne in his adventurous quest; Sometime least his false foe did him entrap In traytrous traine, or had unwares opprest; But most she did her troubled mynd molest, And secretly afflict with jealous feare, Least some new love had him from her possest: Yet loth she was, since she no ill did heare, To thinke of him so ill; yet could she not forbeare.

One while she blam'd her selfe; another whyle She him condemn'd as trustlesse and untrew; And then, her griefe with errour to beguyle, She fayn'd to count the time againe anew, As if before she had not counted trew: For houres, but daycs; for weekes that passed were, She told but moneths, to make them seeme more few; Yet when she reckned them, still drawing neare, Each hour did seeme a moneth, and every moneth a yeare.

But when as yet she saw him not returne, She thought to send some one to seeke him

out; But none she found so fit to serve that turne, As her owne selfe, to ease her selfe of dout. Now she deviz'd, amongst the warlike rout Of errant Knights, to seeke her errant Knight; And then againe resolv'd to hunt him out Amongst loose Ladies lapped in delight: And then both Knights envide, and Ladies eke did spight.

One day when as she long had sought for ease In every place, and every place thought best, Yet found no place that could her liking please, She to a window came that opened West, Towards which coast her love his way addrest: There looking forth, shee in her heart did find Many vaine fancies working her unrest; And sent her winged thoughts, more swift then wind, To beare unto her love the message of her mind.

There as she looked long, at last she spide One comming towards her with hasty speede. Well weend she then, ere him she plaine descride, That it was one sent from her love indeede; Who when he nigh approcht, shee mote arede That it was Talus, Artegall his groome: Whereat her heart was fild with hope and drede; Ne would she stay till he in place could come, But ran to meete him forth to know his tidings somme.

Even in the done him meeting, she begun: "And where is he thy Lord, and how far hence? Declare at once: and hath he lost or wun?" The yron man, albe he wanted sence And sorrowes feeling, yet, with conscience Of his ill newes, did inly chill and quake, And stood still mute, as one in great suspence; As if that by his silence he would make Her rather reade his meaning then him selfe it spake.

Till she againe thus sayd: "Talus, be bold, And tell what ever it be, good or bad, That from thy tongue thy hearts intent doth hold." To whom he thus at length: "The tidings sad, That I would hide, will needs, I see, be rad. My Lord, your love, by hard mishap doth lie In wretched bondage, wofully bestad." "Ay me," (quoth she) "what wicked destinie! And is he vanquisht by his tyrant enemy?"

"Not by that Tyrant, his intended foe, But by a Tyrantesse," (he then replide) "That

him captived hath in haplesse woe." "Cease, thou bad newes-man! badly doest thou hide Thy maisters shame, in harlots bondage tide: The rest my selfe too readily can spell." With that in rage she turn'd from him aside, Forcing in vaine the rest to her to tell; And to her chamber went like solitary cell.

There she began to make her monefull plaint Against her Knight for being so untrew; And him to touch with falshoods fowle attaint, That all his other honour overthrew. Oft did she blame her selfe, and often rew, For yeelding to a straungers love so light, Whose life and manners straunge she never knew; And evermore she did him sharpely twight For breach of faith to her, which he had firmely plight.

And then she in her wrathfull will did cast How to revenge that blot of honour blent, To fight with him, and goodly die her last: And then againe she did her selfe torment, Inflicting on her selfe his punishment. A while she walkt, and chauft; a while she threw Her selfe uppon her bed, and did lament: Yet did she not lament with loude alew, As women wont, but with deepe sighes and singults few.

Like as a wayward childe, whose sounder sleepe Is broken with some fearefull dreames affright, With froward will doth set him selfe to weepe, Ne can be stild for all his nurses might, But kicks, and squals, and shriekes for fell despight: Now scratching her, and her loose locks misusing, Now seeking darkenesse, and now seeking light, Then craving sucke, and then the sucke refusing: Such was this Ladies fit in her loves fond accusing.

But when she had with such unquiet fits Her selfe there close afflicted long in vaine, Yet found no easement in her troubled wits, She unto Talus forth return'd againe, By change of place seeking to ease her paine; And gan enquire of him with mylder mood The certaine cause of Artegals detaine, And what he did, and in what state he stood, And whether he did woo, or whether he were woo'd?

"Ah wellaway!" (sayd then the yron man) "That he is not the while in state to woo; But lies in wretched thraldome, weake and wan, Not by strong hand compelled

thereunto, But his owne doome, that none can now undoo.” “Sayd I not then” (quoth shee), “erwhile aright, That this is things compacte betwixt you two, Me to deceive of faith unto me plight, Since that he was not forst, nor overcome in fight?”

With that he gan at large to her dilate The whole discourse of his captivance sad, In sort as ye have heard the same of late: All which when she with hard enduraunce had Heard to the end, she was right sore bestad, With sodaine stounds of wrath and griefe attone; Ne would abide, till she had aunswere made, But streight her selfe did dight, and armor don, And mounting to her steede bad Talus guide her on.

So forth she rode uppon her ready way, To seeke her Knight, as Talus her did guide. Sadly she rode, and never word did say Nor good nor bad, ne ever lookt aside, But still right downe; and in her thought did hide The felnesse of her heart, right fully bent To fierce avengement of that womans pride, Which had her Lord in her base prison pent, And so great honour with so fowle reproch had blent.

So as she thus melancholicke did ride, Chawing the cud of griefe and inward paine, She chaunst to meete, toward the eventide, A Knight that softly paced on the plaine, As if him selfe to solace he were faine: Well shot in yeares he seem’d, and rather bent To peace then needlesse trouble to constraine, As well by view of that his vestiment, As by his modest semblant that no evill ment.

He comming neare gan gently her salute With curteous words, in the most comely wize; Who though desirous rather to rest mute, Then termes to entertaine of common guize, Yet rather then she kindnesse would despize, She would her selfe displease; so him requite. Then gan the other further to devize Of things abrode, as next to hand did light, And many things demaund, to which she answer’d light.

For little lust had she to talke of ought, Or ought to heare that mote delightfull bee: Her minde was whole possessed of one thought, That gave none other place. Which when as hee By outward signes (as well he might) did see, He list no lenger to use lothfull speach, But her besought to take it well in gree, Sith shady dampe had dimd

the heavens reach, To lodge with him that night, unles good cause empeach.

The Championesse, now seeing night at dore, Was glad to yeeld unto his good request, And with him went without gaine-saying more. Not farre away, but little wide by West, His dwelling was, to which he him addrest: Where soone arriving they received were In seemely wise, as them beseemed best; For he, their host, them goodly well did cheare, And talk't of pleasant things the night away to weare.

Thus passing th'evening well, till time of rest, Then Britomart unto a bowre was brought, Where groomes awayted her to have undrest; But she ne would undressed be for ought, Ne doffe her armes, though he her much besought: For she had vow'd, she sayd, not to forgo Those warlike weedes, till she revenge had wrought Of a late wrong uppon a mortall foe; Which she would sure performe, betide her wele or wo.

Which when their Host perceiv'd, right discontent In minde he grew, for feare least by that art He should his purpose misse, which close he ment: Yet taking leave of her he did depart. There all that night remained Britomart, Restlesse, recomfortlesse, with heart deepe grieved, Nor suffering the least twinckling sleepe to start Into her eye, which th' heart mote have relieved; But if the least appear'd, her eyes she streight reprieved:

"Ye guilty eyes," (sayd she) "the which with guyle My heart at first betrayd, will ye betray My life now too, for which a little whyle Ye will not watch? false watches, wellaway! I wote when ye did watch both night and day Unto your losse; and now needes will ye sleepe? Now ye have made my heart to wake alway, Now will ye sleepe? ah! wake, and rather weepe To thinke of your night's want, that should yee waking keepe."

Thus did she watch, and weare the weary night In waylfull plaints that none was to appease; Now walking soft, now sitting still upright, As sundry chaunge her seemed best to ease. Ne lesse did Talus suffer sleepe to seaze His eyelids sad, but watcht continually, Lying without her dore in great disease: Like to a Spaniell wayting

carefully Least any should betray his Lady treacherously.

What time the native Belman of the night, The bird that warned Peter of his fall, First rings his silver Bell t'each sleepy wight, That should their mindes up to devotion call, She heard a wondrous noise below the hall: All sodainely the bed, where she should lie, By a false trap was let adowne to fall Into a lower roome, and by and by The loft was raysd againe, that no man could it spie.

With sight whereof she was dismayd right sore, Perceiving well the treason which was ment; Yet stirred not at all for doubt of more, But kept her place with courage confident, Wayting what would ensue of that event. It was not long before she heard the sound Of armed men comming with close intent Towards her chamber; at which dreadfull stound She quickly caught her sword, and shield about her bound.

With that there came unto her chamber dore Two Knights all armed ready for to fight; And after them full many other more, A raskall rout, with weapons rudely dight: Whom soone as Talus spide by glims of night, He started up, there where on ground he lay, And in his hand his thresher ready keight. They seeing that let drive at him streightway, And round about him preace in riotous aray.

But, soone as he began to lay about With his rude yron flaile, they gan to flie, Both armed Knights and eke unarmed rout; Yet Talus after them apace did plie, Where ever in the darke he could them spie, That here and there like scattred sheepe they lay: Then, backe returning where his Dame did lie, He to her told the story of that fray, And all that treason there intended did bewray.

Wherewith though wondrous wroth, and inly burning To be avenged for so fowle a deede, Yet being forst to abide the daies returning, She there remain'd; but with right wary heede, Least any more such practise should proceede. Now mote ye know (that which to Britomart Unknowen was) whence all this did proceede; And for what cause so great mischievous smart Was meant to her that never evill ment in hart.

The goodman of this house was Dolon hight; A man of subtill wit and wicked

minde, That whilome in his youth had bene a Knight, And armes had borne, but little good could finde, And much lesse honour by that warlike kinde Of life: for he was nothing valorous, But with slie shiftes and wiles did underminde All noble Knights, which were adventurous, And many brought to shame by treason treacherous.

He had three sonnes, all three like fathers sonnes, Like treacherous, like full of fraud and guile, Of all that on this earthly compasse wonnes; The eldest of the which was slaine erewhile By Artegall, through his owne guilty wile: His name was Guizor; whose untimely fate For to avenge, full many treasons vile His father Dolon had deviz'd of late With these his wicked sons, and shewd his cankred hate.

For sure he weend that this his present guest Was Artegall, by many tokens plaine; But chiefly by that yron page he ghest, Which still was wont with Artegall remaine; And therefore ment him surely to have slaine: But by Gods grace, and her good heedinesse, She was preserved from their traytrous traine. Thus she all night wore out in watchfulnesse, Ne suffred slothfull sleepe her eyelids to oppresse.

The morrow next, so soone as dawning houre Discovered had the light to living eye, She forth yssew'd out of her loathed bowre, With full intent t'avenge that villany On that vilde man and all his family; And, comming down to seeke them where they wond, Nor sire, nor sonnes, not any could she spie: Each rowme she sought, but them all empty fond. They all were fled for feare; but whether, nether kond.

She saw it vaine to make there lenger stay, But tooke her steede; and thereon mounting light Gan her addresse unto her former way. She had not rid the mountenance of a flight, But that she saw there present in her sight Those two false brethren on that perillous Bridge, On which Pollente with Artegall did fight. Streight was the passage, like a ploughed ridge, That, if two met, the one mote needes fall over the lidge.

There they did thinke them selves on her to wreake; Who as she nigh unto them

drew, the one These vile reproches gan unto her speake: “Thou recreant false traytor, that with lone Of armes hast knighthood stolne, yet Knight art none, No more shall now the darkenesse of the night Defend thee from the vengeance of thy fone; But with thy bloud thou shalt appease the spright Of Guizor by thee slaine, and murdred by thy slight.”

Strange were the words in Britomartis eare, Yet stayd she not for them, but forward fared, Till to the perillous Bridge she came; and there Talus desir’d that he might have prepared The way to her, and those two losels scared; But she thereat was wroth, that for despight The glauncing sparkles through her bever glared, And from her eies did flash out fiery light, Like coles that through a silver Censer sparkle bright.

She stayd not to advise which way to take, But putting spurres unto her fiery beast, Thorough the midst of them she way did make. The one of them, which most her wrath increast, Uppon her speare she bore before her breast, Till to the Bridges further end she past; Where falling downe his challenge he releast: The other over side the Bridge she cast Into the river, where he drunke his deadly last.

As when the flashing Levin haps to light Uppon two stubborne oakes, which stand so neare That way betwixt them none appeares in sight; The Engin, fiercely flying forth, doth teare Th’one from the earth, and through the aire doth beare; The other it with force doth overthrow Uppon one side, and from his rootes doth reare: So did the Championesse those two there strow, And to their sire their carcasses left to bestow.

Canto VII

Britomart comes to Isis Church, Where shee strange visions sees: She fights with Radigund, her slaies, And Artegall thence frees.

Nought is on earth more sacred or divine, That Gods and men doe equally adore,

Then this same vertue that doth right define: For th'hevens themselves, whence mortal men implore Right in their wrongs, are rul'd by righteous lore Of highest Jove, who doth true justice deale To his inferiour Gods, and evermore Therewith containes his heavenly Common-weale: The skill whereof to Princes hearts he doth reveale.

Well therefore did the antique world invent That Justice was a God of soveraine grace, And altars unto him and temples lent, And heavenly honours in the highest place; Calling him great Osyris, of the race Of th'old Ægyptian Kings that whylome were, With fayned colours shading a true case; For that Osyris, whilest he lived here, The justest man alive and truest did appeare.

His wife was Isis; whom they likewise made A Goddesse of great powre and soverainty, And in her person cunningly did shade That part of Justice which is Equity, Whereof I have to treat here presently: Unto whose temple when as Britomart Arrived, shee with great humility Did enter in, ne would that night depart; But Talus mote not be admitted to her part.

There she received was in goodly wize Of many Priests, which duely did attend Uppon the rites and daily sacrifize, All clad in linnen robes with silver hemd; And on their heads, with long locks comely kemd, They wore rich Mitres shaped like the Moone, To shew that Isis doth the Moone portend; Like as Osyris signifies the Sunne: For that they both like race in equall justice runne.

The Championesse them greeting, as she could, Was thence by them into the Temple led; Whose goodly building when she did behould, Borne uppon stately pillours, all dispred With shining gold, and arched over hed, She wondred at the workemans passing skill, Whose like before she never saw nor red; And thereuppon long while stood gazing still, But thought that she thereon could never gaze her fill.

Thence forth unto the Idoll they her brought; The which was framed all of silver fine, So well as could with cunning hand be wrought, And clothed all in garments

made of line, Hemd all about with fringe of silver twine: Uppon her head she wore a Crowne of gold; To shew that she had powre in things divine: And at her feete a Crocodile was rold, That with her wreathed taile her middle did enfold.

One foote was set uppon the Crocodile, And on the ground the other fast did stand; So meaning to suppresse both forged guile And open force: and in her other hand She stretched forth a long white sclender wand. Such was the Goddesse; whom when Britomart Had long beheld, her selfe uppon the land She did prostrate, and with right humble hart Unto her selfe her silent prayers did impart.

To which the Idoll, as it were inclining, Her wand did move with amiable looke, By outward shew her inward sence desining: Who well perceiving how her wand she shooke, It as a token of good fortune tooke. By this the day with dampe was overcast, And joyous light the house of Jove forsooke; Which when she saw her helmet she unlaste, And by the altars side her selfe to slumber plaste.

For other beds the Priests there used none, But on their mother Earths deare lap did lie, And bake their sides uppon the cold hard stone, T'enure them selves to sufferaunce thereby, And proud rebellious flesh to mortify: For by the vow of their religion, They tied were to stedfast chastity And continence of life, that, all forgon, They mote the better tend to their devotion.

Therefore they mote not taste of fleshly food, Ne feed on ought the which doth bloud containe, Ne drinke of wine; for wine, they say, is blood, Even the bloud of Gyants, which were slaine By thundring Jove in the Phlegrean plaine: For which the earth (as they the story tell) Wroth with the Gods, which to perpetuall paine Had damn'd her sonnes which gainst them did rebell, With inward griefe and malice did against them swell:

And of their vitall bloud, the which was shed Into her pregnant bosome, forth she brought The fruitfull vine; whose liquor blouddy red, Having the mindes of men with fury fraught, Mote in them stirre up old rebellious thought To make new warre

against the Gods againe. Such is the powre of that same fruit, that nought The fell contagion may thereof restraine, Ne within reasons rule her madding mood containe.

There did the warlike Maide her selfe repose, Under the wings of Isis all that night; And with sweete rest her heavy eyes did close, After that long daies toile and weary plight: Where whilest her earthly parts with soft delight Of sencelesse sleepe did deeply drowned lie, There did appeare unto her heavenly spright A wondrous vision, which did close implie The course of all her fortune and posteritie.

Her seem'd, as she was doing sacrifize To Isis, deckt with Mitre on her hed And linnen stole after those Priestes guize, All sodainely she saw transfigured Her linnen stole to robe of scarlet red, And Moone-like Mitre to a Crowne of gold; That even she her selfe much wondered At such a chaunge, and joyed to behold Her selfe adorn'd with gems and jewels manifold.

And, in the midst of her felicity, An hideous tempest seemed from below To rise through all the Temple sodainely, That from the Altar all about did blow The holy fire, and all the embers strow Uppon the ground; which, kindled privily, Into outragious flames unwares did grow, That all the Temple put in jeopardy Of flaming, and her selfe in great perplexity.

With that the Crocodile, which sleeping lay Under the Idols feete in fearelesse bowre, Seem'd to awake in horrible dismay, As being troubled with that stormy stowre; And gaping greedy wide did streight devoure Both flames and tempest: with which growen great, And swolne with pride of his owne peerelesse powre, He gan to threaten her likewise to eat, But that the Goddesse with her rod him backe did beat.

Tho turning all his pride to humblesse meeke, Him selfe before her feete he lowly threw, And gan for grace and love of her to seeke; Which she accepting, he so neare her drew That of his game she soone enwombed grew, And forth did bring a Lion of great might, That shortly did all other beasts subdew. With that she waked full of fearefull fright, And doubtfully dismayd through that so uncouth sight.

So thereuppon long while she musing lay, With thousand thoughts feeding her fantasie, Untill she spide the lampe of lightsome day Uplifted in the porch of heaven hie: Then up she rose fraught with melancholy, And forth into the lower parts did pas, Whereas the Priestes she found full busily About their holy things for morrow Mas; Whom she saluting faire, faire resaluted was:

But by the change of her unchearefull looke, They might perceive she was not well in plight, Or that some pensivenesse to heart she tooke: Therefore thus one of them, who seem'd in sight To be the greatest and the gravest wight, To her bespake: "Sir Knight, it seemes to me That, thorough evill rest of this last night, Or ill apayd or much dismayd ye be; That by your change of cheare is easie for to see."

"Certes," (sayd she) "sith ye so well have spide The troublous passion of my pensive mind, I will not seeke the same from you to hide; But will my cares unfolde, in hope to find Your aide to guide me out of errour blind." "Say on" (quoth he) "the secret of your hart; For, by the holy vow which me doth bind, I am adjur'd best counsell to impart To all that shall require my comfort in their smart."

Then gan she to declare the whole discourse Of all that vision which to her appeard, As well as to her minde it had recourse. All which when he unto the end had heard, Like to a weake faint-hearted man he fared Through great astonishment of that strange sight; And, with long locks upstanding, stifly stared Like one adawed with some dreadfull spright: So, fild with heavenly fury, thus he her benight.

"Magnificke Virgin, that in queint disguise British armes doest maske thy royall blood, S to pursue a perillous emprize, How couldst thou weene, through that disguized hood, To hide thy state from being understood? Can from th'immortall Gods ought hidden bee? They doe thy linage, and thy Lordly brood, They doe thy sire lamenting sore for thee, They doe thy love forlorne in womens thraldome see.

"The end whereof, and all the long event, They do to thee in this same dreame discover; For that same Crocodile doth represent The righteous Knight that is thy

faithfull lover, Like to Osyris in all just endever: For that same Crocodile Osyris is, That under Isis feete doth sleepe for ever; To shew that clemence oft, in things amis, Restraines those sterne behests and cruell doomes of his.

“That Knight shall all the troublous stormes asswage And raging flames, that many foes shall reare To hinder thee from the just heritage Of thy sires Crowne, and from thy countrey deare: Then shalt thou take him to thy loved fere, And joyne in equall portion of thy realme; And afterwards a sonne to him shalt beare, That Lion-like shall shew his powre extreame. So blesse thee God, and give thee joyance of thy dreame!”

All which when she unto the end had heard, She much was eased in her troublous thought, And on those Priests bestowed rich reward; And royall gifts of gold and silver wrought She for a present to their Goddesse brought. Then taking leave of them, she forward went To seeke her love, where he was to be sought; Ne rested till she came without relent Unto the land of Amazons, as she was bent.

Whereof when newes to Radigund was brought, Not with amaze, as women wonted bee, She was confused in her troublous thought; But fild with courage and with joyous glee, As glad to heare of armes, the which now she Had long surceast, she bad to open bold, That she the face of her new foe might see: But when they of that yron man had told, Which late her folke had slaine, she bad them forth to hold.

So there without the gate, (as seemed best) She caused her Pavilion be pight; In which stout Britomart her selfe did rest, Whiles Talus watched at the dore all night. All night likewise they of the towne in fright Uppon their wall good watch and ward did keepe. The morrow next, so soone as dawning light Bad doe away the dampe of drouzie sleepe, The warlike Amazon out of her bowre did peepe.

And caused streight a Trumpet loud to shrill To warne her foe to battell soone be prest: Who, long before awoke, (for she ful ill Could sleepe all night, that in unquiet brest Did closely harbour such a jealous guest) Was to the battell whilome ready

dight. Eftsoones that warriouresse with haughty crest Did forth issue all ready for the fight: On th'other side her foe appeared soone in sight.

But ere they reared hand the Amazone Began the streight conditions to propound, With which she used still to tye her fone, To serve her so as she the rest had bound: Which when the other heard, she sternly frownd For high disdaine of such indignity, And would no lenger treat, but bad them sound; For her no other termes should ever tie Then what prescribed were by lawes of chevalrie.

The Trumpets sound, and they together run With greedy rage, and with their faulchins smot; Ne either sought the others strokes to shun, But through great fury both their skill forgot, And practicke use in armes; ne spared not Their dainty parts, which nature had created So faire and tender without staine or spot For other uses then they them translated; Which they now hackt and hewd as if such use they hated.

As when a Tygre and a Lionesse Are met at spoyling of some hungry pray, Both challenge it with equall greedinesse: But first the Tygre clawes thereon did lay, And therefore, loth to loose her right away, Doth in defence thereof full stoutly stond: To which the Lion strongly doth gainesay, That she to hunt the beast first tooke in hond; And therefore ought it have where ever she it fond.

Full fiercely layde the Amazon about, And dealt her blowes unmercifully sore; Which Britomart withstood with courage stout, And them repaide againe with double more. So long they fought, that all the grassie flore Was fild with bloud which from their sides did flow, And gushed through their armes, that all in gore They trode, and on the ground their lives did strow, Like fruitles seede, of which untimely death should grow.

At last proud Radigund, with fell despight, Having by chaunce espide advantage neare, Let drive at her with all her dreadfull might, And thus upbrayding said: "This token beare Unto the man whom thou doest love so deare; And tell him for his sake thy life thou gavest." Which spitefull words she, sore engriev'd to heare, Thus

answer'd: "Lewdly thou my love depravest, Who shortly must repent that now so vainely bravest.

Nath'lesse that stroke so cruell passage found, That glauncing on her shoulder-plate it bit Unto the bone, and made a griesly wound, That she her shield, through raging smart of it, Could scarse uphold: yet soone she it requit; For, having force increast through furious paine, She her so rudely on the helmet smit That it empierced to the very braine, And her proud person low prostrated on the plaine.

Where being layd, the wrothfull Britonesse Stayd not till she came to her selfe againe, But in revenge both of her loves distresse And her late vile reproch though vaunted vaine, And also of her wound which sore did paine, She with one stroke both head and helmet cleft. Which dreadfull sight when all her warlike traine There present saw, each one of sence bereft Fled fast into the towne, and her sole victor left.

But yet so fast they could not home retrate, But that swift Talus did the formost win; And, pressing through the preace unto the gate, Pelmell with them attonce did enter in. There then a piteous slaughter did begin; For all that ever came within his reach He with his yron flale did thresh so thin, That he no worke at all left for the leach: Like to an hideous storme, which nothing may empeach.

And now by this the noble Conqueresse Her selfe came in, her glory to partake; Where, though revengefull vow she did professe, Yet when she saw the heapes which he did make Of slaughtred carkasses, her heart did quake For very ruth, which did it almost rive, That she his fury willed him to slake: For else he sure had left not one alive, But all, in his revenge, of spirite would deprive.

Tho, when she had his execution stayd, She for that yron prison did enquire, In which her wretched love was captive layd: Which breaking open with indignant ire, She entred into all the partes entire: Where when she saw that lothly uncouth sight Of men disguiz'd in womanishe attire, Her heart gan grudge for very deepe despight

Of so unmanly maske in misery misdight.

At last when as to her owne Love she came, Whom like disguize no lesse deformed had, At sight thereof abasht with secrete shame She turnd her head aside, as nothing glad To have beheld a spectacle so bad; And then too well believ'd that which tofore Jealous suspect as true untruely drad: Which vaine conceipt now nourishing no more, She sought with ruth to salve his sad misfortunes sore.

Not so great wonder and astonishment Did the most chast Penelope possesse To see her Lord, that was reported drent And dead long since in dolorous distresse, Come home to her in piteous wretchednesse, After long travell of full twenty yeares, That she knew not his favours likelynesse, For many scarres and many hoary heares, But stood long staring on him mongst uncertaine feares.

"Ah, my deare Lord! what sight is this?" quoth she, "What May-game hath misfortune made of you? Where is that dreadfull manly looke? where be Those mighty palmes, the which ye wont t'embrew In bloud of Kings, and great hoastes to subdew? Could ought on earth so wondrous change have wrought, As to have robde you of that manly hew? Could so great courage stouped have to ought? Then, farewell fleshly force! I see thy pride is nought."

Thenceforth she streight into a bowre him brought, And causd him those uncomely weedes undight; And in their steede for other rayment sought, Whereof there was great store, and armors bright, Which had bene reft from many a noble Knight, Whom that proud Amazon subdewed had, Whilest Fortune favourd her successe in fight: In which when as she him anew had clad, She was reviv'd, and joyd much in his semblance glad.

So there a while they afterwards remained, Him to refresh, and her late wounds to heale: During which space she there as Princess rained, And changing all that forme of common-weale The liberty of women did repeale, Which they had long usurpt; and, them restoring To mens subjection, did true Justice deale, That all they, as a

Goddesse her adoring, Her wisedome did admire, and hearkned to her loring.

For all those Knights, which long in captive shade Had shrowded bene, she did from thraldome free, And magistrates of all that city made, And gave to them great living and large fee: And that they should for ever faithfull bee, Made them sweare fealty to Artegall; Who when him selfe now well recur'd did see, He purposd to proceed, what so befall, Uppon his first adventure which him forth did call.

Full sad and sorrowfull was Britomart For his departure, her new cause of griefe; Yet wisely moderated her owne smart, Seeing his honor, which she tendred chiefe, Consisted much in that adventures priefe: The care whereof, and hope of his successe, Gave unto her great comfort and reliefe; That womanish complaints she did represse, And tempred for the time her present heavinesse.

There she continu'd for a certaine space, Till through his want her woe did more increase: Then hoping that the change of aire and place Would change her paine, and sorrow somewhat ease, She parted thence her anguish to appease. Meane-while her noble Lord, sir Artegall, Went on his way; ne ever howre did cease Till he redeemed had that Lady thrall: That for another Canto will more fitly fall.

Canto VIII

Prince Arthure and Sir Artegall Free Samient from feare: They slay the Soudan; drive his wife Alicia to despaire.

Nought under heaven so strongly doth allure The sence of man, and all his minde possesse, As beauties lovely baite, that doth procure Great warriours oft their rigour to represse, And mighty hands forget their manlinesse; Drawne with the powre of an heart-robbing eye, And wrapt in fetters of a golden tresse, That can with melting pleasaunce mollifye Their hardned hearts, enur'd to bloud and cruelty.

So whylome learnd that mighty Jewish swaine, Each of whose lockes did match a man in might, To lay his spoiles before his lemans traine: So also did that great

Oetean Knight For his loves sake his Lions skin undight; And so did warlike Antony neglect The worlds whole rule for Cleopatras sight. Such wondrous powre hath wemens faire aspect To captive men, and make them all the world reject.

Yet could it not sterne Artegall retaine, Nor hold from suite of his avowed quest, Which he had undertane to Gloriane; But left his love, albe her strong request, Faire Britomart in languor and unrest, And rode him selfe uppon his first intent, Ne day nor night did ever idly rest; Ne wight but onely Talus with him went, The true guide of his way and vertuous government.

So travelling, he chaunst far off to heed A Damzell, flying on a palfrey fast Before two Knights that after her did speed With all their powre, and her full fiercely chast In hope to have her overhent at last: Yet fled she fast, and both them farre outwent, Carried with wings of feare, like fowle aghast, With locks all loose, and rayment all to-rent; And ever as she rode her eye was backeward bent.

Soone after these he saw another Knight, That after those two former rode apace With speare in rest, and prickt with all his might: So ran they all, as they had bene at bace, They being chased that did others chase. At length he saw the hindmost overtake One of those two, and force him turne his face; However loth he were his way to slake, Yet mote he algates now abide, and answere make.

But th'other still pursu'd the fearefull Mayd; Who still from him as fast away did flie, Ne once for ought her speedy passage stayd, Till that at length she did before her spie Sir Artegall; to whom she straight did hie With gladfull hast, in hope of him to get Succour against her greedy enimy: Who seeing her approch gan forward set To save her from her feare, and him from force to let.

But he, like hound full greedy of his pray, Being impatient of impediment, Continu'd still his course, and by the way Thought with his speare him quight have overwent. So both together, ylike felly bent, Like fiercely met. But Artegall was stronger, And better skild in Tilt and Turnament, And bore him quite out of his

saddle, longer Then two speares length: So mischiefe overmatcht the wronger.

And in his fall misfortune him mistooke; For on his head unhappily he pight, That his owne waight his necke asunder broke, And left there dead. Meane-while the other Knight Defeated had the other faytour quight, And all his bowels in his body brast: Whom leaving there in that dispiteous plight, He ran still on, thinking to follow fast His other fellow Pagan which before him past.

Instead of whom finding there ready prest Sir Artegall, without discretion He at him ran with ready speare in rest; Who, seeing him come still so fiercely on, Against him made againe. So both anon Together met, and strongly either strooke And broke their speares; yet neither has forgon His horses backe, yet to and fro long shooke And tottred, like two towres which through a tempest quooke.

But, when againe they had recovered sence, They drew their swords, in mind to make amends For what their speares had fayld of their pretence: Which when the Damzell, who those deadly ends Of both her foes had seene, and now her frends For her beginning a more fearefull fray, She to them runnes in hast, and her haire rends, Crying to them their cruell hands to stay, Untill they both doe heare what she to them will say.

They stayd their hands, when she thus gan to speake: “Ah gentle Knights! what meane ye thus unwise Upon your selves anothers wrong to wreake? I am the wrong’d, whom ye did enterprise Both to redresse, and both redrest likewise: Witnesse the Paynims both, whom ye may see There dead on ground. What doe ye then devise Of more revenge? if more, then I am shee Which was the roote of all: end your revenge on mee.”

Whom when they heard so say, they lookt about To weete if it were true as she had told; Where when they saw their foes dead out of doubt, Eftsoones they gan their wrothfull hands to hold, And Ventailes reare each other to behold. Tho when as Artegall did Arthure vew, So faire a creature and so wondrous bold, He much

admired both his heart and hew, And touched with intire affection nigh him drew;

Saying, “Sir Knight, of pardon I you pray, That all unweeting have you wrong’d thus sore, Suffring my hand against my heart to stray; Which if ye please forgive, I will therefore Yeeld for amends my selfe yours evermore, Or what so penaunce shall by you be red.” To whom the Prince: “Certes me needeth more To crave the same; whom errour so misled, As that I did mistake the living for the ded.

“But, sith ye please that both our blames shall die, Amends may for the trespasse soone be made, Since neither is endamadg’d much thereby.” So can they both them selves full eath perswade To faire accordaunce, and both faults to shade, Either embracing other lovingly, And swearing faith to either on his blade, Never thenceforth to nourish enmity, But either others cause to maintaine mutually.

Then Artegall gan of the Prince enquire, What were those knights which there on ground were layd, And had receiv’d their follies worthy hire, And for what cause they chased so that Mayd? “Certes I wote not well,” (the Prince then sayd) “But by adventure found them faring so, As by the way unweetingly I strayd: And lo! the Damzell selfe, whence all did grow, Of whom we may at will the whole occasion know.”

Then they that Damzell called to them nie, And asked her what were those two her fone, From whom she earst so fast away did flie: And what was she her selfe so woe-begone, And for what cause pursu’d of them attone. To whom she thus: “Then wote ye well, that I Doe serve a Queene that not far hence doth wone, A Princesse of great powre and majestie, Famous through all the world, and honor’d far and nie.

“Her name Mercilla most men use to call; That is a mayden Queene of high renowne, For her great bounty knowen over all And soveraine grace, with which her royall crowne She doth support, and strongly beateth downe The malice of her foes, which her envy And at her happinesse do fret and frowne; Yet she her selfe the more doth magnify, And even to her foes her mercies multiply.

“Mongst many which maligne her happy state, There is a mighty man, which wonnes hereby, That with most fell despight and deadly hate Seekes to subvert her Crowne and dignity, And all his powre doth thereunto apply: And her good Knights, of which so brave a band Serves her as any Princesse under sky, He either spoiles, if they against him stand, Or to his part allures, and bribeth under hand.

“Ne him sufficeth all the wrong and ill, Which he unto her people does each day; But that he seekes by traytrous traines to spill Her person, and her sacred selfe to slay: That, O ye Heavens, defend! and turne away From her unto the miscreant him selfe; That neither hath religion nor fay, But makes his God of his ungodly pelfe, And Idols serves: so let his Idols serve the Elfe!

“To all which cruell tyranny, they say, He is provokt, and stird up day and night By his bad wife that hight Adicia; Who counsels him, through confidence of might, To breake all bonds of law and rules of right: For she her selfe professeth mortall foe To Justice, and against her still doth fight, Working to all that love her deadly woe, And making all her Knights and people to doe so.

“Which my liege Lady seeing, thought it best With that his wife in friendly wise to deale, For stint of strife and stablishment of rest Both to her selfe and to her common-weale, And all forepast displeasures to repeale. So me in message unto her she sent, To treat with her, by way of enterdeale, Of finall peace and faire attonement Which might concluded be by mutuall consent.

“All times have wont safe passage to afford To messengers that come for causes just: But this proude Dame, disdayning all accord, Not onely into bitter termes forth brust, Reviling me and rayling as she lust, But lastly, to make proofe of utmost shame, Me like a dog she out of dores did thrust, Miscalling me by many a bitter name, That never did her ill, ne once deserved blame.

“And lastly, that no shame might wanting be, When I was gone, soone after me she sent These two false Knights, whom there ye lying see, To be by them dishonoured

and shent: But, thankt be God, and your good hardiment, They have the price of their owne folly payd." So said this Damzell, that hight Samient; And to those knights for their so noble ayd Her selfe most gratefull shew'd, and heaped thanks repayd.

But they now having throughly heard and seene Al those great wrongs, the which that mayd complained To have bene done against her Lady Queene By that proud dame which her so much disdained, Were moved much thereat; and twixt them fained With all their force to worke avengement strong Uppon the Souldan selfe, which it mayntained, And on his Lady, th'author of that wrong, And uppon all those Knights that did to her belong.

But, thinking best by counterfet disguise To their deseigne to make the easier way, They did this complot twixt them selves devise: First, that Sir Artegall should him array Like one of those two Knights which dead there lay; And then that Damzell, the sad Samient, Should as his purchast prize with him convay Unto the Souldans court, her to present Unto his scornefull Lady that for her had sent.

So as they had deviz'd, Sir Artegall Him clad in th'armour of a Pagan knight, And taking with him, as his vanquisht thrall, That Damzell, led her to the Souldans right: Where soone as his proud wife of her had sight, Forth of her window as she looking lay, She weened streight it was her Paynim Knight, Which brought that Damzell as his purchast pray; And sent to him a Page that mote direct his way.

Who bringing them to their appointed place, Offred his service to disarme the Knight; But he refusing him to let unlace, For doubt to be discovered by his sight, Kept himselfe still in his straunge armour dight: Soone after whom the Prince arrived there, And sending to the Souldan in despight A bold defyance, did of him requere That Damsell whom he held as wrongfull prisonere.

Wherewith the Souldan all with furie fraught, Swearing and banning most blasphemously, Commaunded straight his armour to be brought; And, mounting

straight upon a charret hye, (With yron wheeles and hookes arm’d dreadfully, And drawne of cruell steedes which he had fed With flesh of men, whom through fell tyranny He slaughtred had, and ere they were halfe ded Their bodies to his beastes for provender did spred,)

So forth he came, all in a cote of plate Burnisht with bloudie rust; whiles on the greene The Briton Prince him readie did awayte, In glistering armes right goodly well-beseene, That shone as bright as doth the heaven sheene: And by his stirrup Talus did attend, Playing his pages part, as he had beene Before directed by his Lord; to th’end He should his flale to final execution bend.

Thus goe they both together to their geare, With like fierce minds, but meanings different; For the proud Souldan, with presumpteous cheare And countenance sublime and insolent, Sought onely slaughter and avengement; But the brave Prince for honour and for right, Gainst tortious powre and lawlesse regiment, In the behalfe of wronged weake did fight: More in his causes truth he trusted then in might.

Like to the Thracian Tyrant, who they say Unto his horses gave his guests for meat, Till he himselfe was made their greedie pray, And torne in pieces by Alcides great; So thought the Souldan, in his follies threat, Either the Prince in peeces to have torne With his sharp wheeles, in his first rages heat, Or under his fierce horses feet have borne, And trampled downe in dust his thoughts disdained scorne.

But the bold child that perill well espying, If he too rashly to his charet drew, Gave way unto his horses speedie flying, And their resistlesse rigour did eschew: Yet, as he passed by, the Pagan threw A shivering dart with so impetuous force, That had he not it shun’d with heedfull vew, It had himselfe transfixed or his horse, Or made them both one masse withouten more remorse.

Oft drew the Prince unto his charret nigh, In hope some stroke to fasten on him neare, But he was mounted in his seat so high, And his wingfooted coursers him did beare So fast away that, ere his readie speare He could advance, he farre was gone

and past: Yet still he him did follow every where, And followed was of him likewise full fast, So long as in his steedes the flaming breath did last.

Againe the Pagan threw another dart, Of which he had with him abundant store On every side of his embatteld cart, And of all other weapons lesse or more, Which warlike uses had deviz'd of yore: The wicked shaft, guyded through th'ayrie wyde By some bad spirit that it to mischiefe bore, Stayd not, till through his curat it did glyde, And made a griesly wound in his enriven side.

Much was he grieved with that haplesse throe, That opened had the welspring of his blood; But much the more, that to his hatefull foe He mote not come to wreake his wrathfull mood: That made him rave, like to a Lyon wood, Which being wounded of the huntsmans hand Cannot come neare him in the covert wood, Where he with boughes hath built his shady stand, And fenst himselfe about with many a flaming brand.

Still when he sought t'approch unto him ny His charret wheeles about him whirled round, And made him backe againe as fast to fly; And eke his steedes, like to an hungry hound That hunting after game hath carrion found, So cruelly did him pursew and chace, That his good steed, all were he much renound For noble courage and for hardie race, Durst not endure their sight, but fled from place to place.

Thus long they trast and traverst to and fro, Seeking by every way to make some breach; Yet could the Prince not nigh unto him goe, That one sure stroke he might unto him reach, Whereby his strengthes assay he might him teach. At last from his victorious shield he drew The vaile, which did his powrefull light empeach, And comming full before his horses vew, As they upon him prest, it plaine to them did shew.

Like lightening flash that hath the gazer burned, So did the sight thereof their sense dismay, That backe againe upon themselves they turned, And with their ryder ranne perforce away: Ne could the Souldan them from flying stay With raynes or wonted

rule, as well he knew: Nought feared they what he could do or say, But th'onely feare that was before their vew, From which like mazed deare dismayfully they flew.

Fast did they fly as them their feete could beare High over hilles, and lowly over dales, As they were follow'd of their former feare. In vaine the Pagan bannes, and sweares, and rayles, And backe with both his hands unto him hayles The resty raynes, regarded now no more: He to them calles and speakes, yet nought avayles; They heare him not, they have forgot his lore, But go which way they list, their guide they have forlore.

As when the fine-mouthed steedes, which drew The Sunnes bright wayne to Phaëtons decay, Soone as they did the monstrous Scorpion vew With ugly craples crawling in their way, The dreadfull sight did them so sore affray, That their well-knowen courses they forwent; And, leading th'ever-burning lampe astray, This lower world nigh all to ashes brent, And left their scorched path yet in the firmament.

Such was the furie of these head-strong steeds, Soone as the infants sunlike shield they saw, That all obedience both to words and deeds They quite forgot, and scornd all former law: Through woods, and rocks, and mountaines they did draw The yron charet, and the wheeles did teare, And tost the Paynim without feare or awe; From side to side they tost him here and there, Crying to them in vaine that nould his crying heare.

Yet still the Prince pursew'd him close behind, Oft making offer him to smite, but found No easie meanes according to his mind: At last they have all overthrowne to ground Quite topside turvey, and the Pagan hound Amongst the yron hookes and graples keene Torne all to rags, and rent with many a wound; That no whole peece of him was to be seene, But scattred all about, and strow'd upon the greene.

Like as the cursed son of Thesëus, That following his chace in dewy morne, To fly

his stepdames loves outrageous, Of his owne steedes was all to peeces torne, And his faire limbs left in the woods forlorne; That for his sake Diana did lament, And all the wooddy Nymphes did wayle and mourne: So was this Souldan rapt and all to-rent, That of his shape appear'd no litle moniment.

Onely his shield and armour, which there lay, Though nothing whole, but all to-brusd and broken, He up did take, and with him brought away, That mote remaine for an eternall token To all mongst whom this storie should be spoken, How worthily, by heavens high decree, Justice that day of wrong her selfe had wroken; That all men, which that spectacle did see, By like ensample mote for ever warned bee.

So on a tree before the Tyrants dore He caused them be hung in all mens sight, To be a moniment for evermore. Which when his Ladie from the castles hight Beheld, it much appald her troubled spright: Yet not, as women wont, in dolefull fit She was dismayd, or faynted through affright, But gathered unto her her troubled wit, And gan eftsoones devize to be aveng'd for it.

Streight downe she ranne, like an enraged cow That is berobbed of her youngling dere, With knife in hand, and fatally did vow To wreake her on that mayden messengere, Whom she had causd be kept as prisonere By Artegall, misween'd for her owne Knight, That brought her backe: And, comming present there, She at her ran with all her force and might, All flaming with revenge and furious despight.

Like raging Ino, when with knife in hand She threw her husbands murdred infant out; Or fell Medea, when on Colchicke strand Her brothers bones she scattered all about; Or as that madding mother, mongst the rout Of Bacchus Priests, her owne deare flesh did teare: Yet neither Ino, nor Medea stout, Nor all the Mœnades so furious were, As this bold woman when she saw that Damzell there.

But Artegall, being thereof aware, Did stay her cruell hand ere she her raught; And, as she did her selfe to strike prepare, Out of her fist the wicked weapon caught: With

that, like one enfelon’d or distraught, She forth did rome whether her rage her bore, With franticke passion and with furie fraught; And, breaking forth out at a posterne dore, Unto the wyld wood ranne, her dolours to deplore.

As a mad bytch, when as the franticke fit Her burning tongue with rage inflamed hath, Doth runne at randon, and with furious bit Snatching at every thing doth wreake her wrath On man and beast that commeth in her path. There they doe say that she transformed was Into a Tygre, and that Tygres scath In crueltie and outrage she did pas, To prove her surname true, that she imposed has.

Then Artegall, himselfe discovering plaine, Did issue forth gainst all that warlike rout Of knights and armed men, which did maintaine That Ladies part, and to the Souldan lout: All which he did assault with courage stout, All were they nigh an hundred knights of name, And like wyld Goates them chaced all about, Flying from place to place with cowheard shame; So that with finall force them all he overcame.

Then caused he the gates be opened wyde; And there the Prince, as victour of that day, With tryumph entertayn’d and glorifyde, Presenting him with all the rich array And roiall pompe, which there long hidden lay, Purchast through lawlesse powre and tortious wrong Of that proud Souldan whom he earst did slay. So both, for rest, there having stayd not long, Marcht with that mayd; fit matter for another song.

Canto IX

Arthur and Artegall catch Guyle, Whom Talus doth dismay; They to Mercillaes Pallace come, And see her rich array.

What Tygre, or what other salvage wight, Is so exceeding furious and fell As wrong, when it hath arm’d it selfe with might? Not fit mongst men that doe with reason mell, But mongst wyld beasts, and salvage woods, to dwell; Where still the stronger doth the weake devoure, And they that most in boldnesse doe excell Are dreadded most, and feared for their powre; Fit for Adicia there to build her wicked bowre.

There let her wonne, farre from resort of men, Where righteous Artegall her late exyled; There let her ever keepe her damned den, Where none may be with her lewd parts defyled, Nor none but beasts may be of her despoyled; And turne we to the noble Prince, where late We did him leave, after that he had foyled The cruell Souldan, and with dreadfull fate Had utterly subverted his unrighteous state.

Where having with Sir Artegall a space Well solast in that Souldans late delight, They both, resolving now to leave the place, Both it and all the wealth therein behight Unto that Damzell in her Ladies right, And so would have departed on their way; But she them woo'd, by all the meanes she might, And earnestly besought to wend that day With her, to see her Ladie thence not farre away.

By whose entreatie both they overcommen Agree to goe with her; and by the way, (As often falles) of sundry things did commen: Mongst which that Damzell did to them bewray A straunge adventure, which not farre thence lay; To weet, a wicked villaine, bold and stout, Which wonned in a rocke not farre away, That robbed all the countrie there about, And brought the pillage home, whence none could get it out.

Thereto both his owne wylie wit, (she sayd) And eke the fastnesse of his dwelling place, Both unassaylable, gave him great ayde: For he so crafty was to forge and face, So light of hand, and nymble of his pace, So smooth of tongue, and subtile in his tale, That could deceive one looking in his face: Therefore by name Malengin they him call, Well knowen by his feates, and famous over all.

Through these his slights he many doth confound: And eke the rocke, in which he wonts to dwell, Is wondrous strong and hewen farre under ground, A dreadfull depth; how deepe no man can tell, But some doe say it goeth downe to hell: And all within it full of wyndings is And hidden wayes, that scarse an hound by smell Can follow out those false footsteps of his, Ne none can backe returne that once are gone amis.

Which when those knights had heard, their harts gan earne To understand that villeins dwelling place, And greatly it desir'd of her to learne, And by which way they towards it should trace. "Were not" (sayd she) "that it should let your pace Towards my Ladies presence, by you ment, I would you guyde directly to the place." "Then let not that" (said they) "stay your intent; For neither will one foot, till we that carle have hent."

So forth they past, till they approched ny Unto the rocke where was the villains won: Which when the Damzell neare at hand did spy, She warn'd the knights thereof; who thereupon Gan to advize what best were to be done. So both agreed to send that mayd afore, Where she might sit nigh to the den alone, Wayling, and raysing pittifull uprore, As if she did some great calamitie deplore.

With noyse whereof when as the caytive carle Should issue forth, in hope to find some spoyle, They in awayt would closely him ensnarle, Ere to his den he backward could recoyle, And so would hope him easily to foyle. The Damzell straight went, as she was directed, Unto the rocke; and there, upon the soyle Having her selfe in wretched wize abjected, Gan weepe and wayle, as if great griefe had her affected.

The cry whereof entring the hollow cave Eftsoones brought forth the villaine, as they ment, With hope of her some wishfull boot to have. Full dreadfull wight he was as ever went Upon the earth, with hollow eyes deepe pent, And long curld locks that downe his shoulders shagged; And on his backe an uncouth vestiment Made of straunge stuffe, but all to-worne and ragged, And underneath, his breech was all to-torne and jagged.

And in his hand an huge long staffe he held, Whose top was arm'd with many an yron hboke, Fit to catch hold of all that he could weld, Or in the compasse of his douches tooke; And ever round about he cast his looke: Als at his backe a great wyde net he bore, With which he seldome fished at the brooke, But usd to fish for fooles on the dry shore, Of which he in faire weather wont to take great store.

Him when the damzell saw fast by her side, So ugly creature, she was nigh dismayd, And now for helpe aloud in earnest cride: But when the villame saw her so affrayd, He gan with guilefull words her to perswade To banish feare; and, with Sardonian smyle Laughing on her, his false intent to shade, Gan forth to lay his bayte her to beguyle, That from her self unwares he might her steale the whyle.

Like as the fouler on his guilefull pype Charmes to the birds full many a pleasant lay, That they the whiles may take lesse heedie keepe How he his nets doth for their ruine lay: So did the villaine to her prate and play, And many pleasant trickes before her show, To turne her eyes from his intent away; For he in slights and jugling feates did flow, And of legierdemayne the mysteries did know.

To which whilest she lent her intentive mind, He suddenly his net upon her threw, That oversprad her like a puffe of wind; And snatching her soone up, ere well she knew, Ran with her fast away unto his mew, Crying for helpe aloud: But when as ny He came unto his cave, and there did vew The armed knights stopping his passage by, He threw his burden downe, and fast away did fly.

But Artegall him after did pursew, The whiles the Prince there kept the entrance still. Up to the rocke he ran, and thereon flew Like a wyld Gote, leaping from hill to hill, And dauncing on the craggy cliffes at will; That deadly daunger seem'd in all mens sight To tempt such steps, where footing was so ill; Ne ought avayled for the armed knight To thinke to follow him that was so swift and light.

Which when he saw, his yron man he sent To follow him; for he was swift in chace. He him pursewd where ever that he went; Both over rockes, and hilles, and every place Where so he fled, he followd him apace; So that he shortly forst him to forsake The hight, and downe descend unto the base: There he him courst afresh, and soone did make To leave his proper forme, and other shape to take.

Into a Foxe himselfe he first did tourne; But he him hunted like a Foxe full fast: Then to a bush himselfe he did transforme; But he the bush did beat, till that at last

Into a bird it chaung'd, and from him past, Flying from tree to tree, from wand to wand; But he then stones at it so long did cast, That like a stone it fell upon the land; But he then tooke it up, and held fast in his hand.

So he it brought with him unto the knights, And to his Lord Sir Artegall it lent, Warning him hold it fast for feare of slights: Who whilest in hand it gryping hard he hent, Into a Hedgehogge all unwares it went, And prickt him so that he away it threw: Then ganne it runne away incontinent, Being returned to his former hew; But Talus soone him overtooke, and backward drew,

But, when as he would to a snake againe Have turn'd himselfe, he with his yron flayle Gan drive at him with so huge might and maine, That all his bones as small as sandy grayle He broke, and did his bowels disentrayle, Crying in vaine for helpe, when helpe was past: So did deceipt the selfe-deceiver fayle. There they him left a carrion outcast For beasts and foules to feede upon for their repast.

Thence forth they passed with that gentle Mayd To see her Ladie, as they did agree; To which when she approched, thus she sayd: "Loe! now, right noble knights, arriv'd ye bee Nigh to the place which ye desir'd to see: There shall ye see my soverayne Lady Queene, Most sacred wight, most debonayre and free, That ever yet upon this earth was seene, Or that with Diademe hath ever crowned beene."

The gentle knights rejoyced much to heare The prayses of that Prince so manifold; And, passing litle further, commen were Where they a stately pallace did behold Of pompous show, much more then she had told; With many towres, and tarras mounted hye, And all their tops bright glistering with gold, That seemed to outshine the dimmed skye, And with their brightnesse daz'd the straunge beholders eye.

There they alighting by that Damzell were Directed in, and shewed all the sight; Whose porch, that most magnificke did appeare, Stood open wyde to all men day and night; Yet warded well by one of mickle might That sate thereby, with gyantlike resemblance, To keepe out guyle, and malice, and despight, That under shew

oftimes of fayned semblance Are wont in Princes courts to worke great scath and hindrance:

His name was Awe; by whom they passing in Went up the hall, that was a large wyde roome, And full of people making troublous din And wondrous noyse, as if that there were some Which unto them was dealing righteous doome: By whom they passing through the thickest preasse, The marshall of the hall to them did come, His name hight Order; who, commaunding peace, Them guyded through the throng, that did their clamors ceasse.

They ceast their clamors upon them to gaze; Whom seeing all in armour bright as day, Straunge there to see, it did them much amaze, And with unwonted terror halfe affray, For never saw they there the like array; Ne ever was the name of warre there spoken, But joyous peace and quietnesse alway Dealing just judgements, that mote not be broken For any brybes, or threates of any to be wroken.

There, as they entred at the Scriene, they saw Some one whose tongue was for his trespasse vyle Nayld to a post, adjudged so by law; For that therewith he falsely did revyle And foule blaspheme that Queene for forged guyle, Both with bold speaches which he blazed had, And with lewd poems which he did compyle; For the bold title of a poet bad He on himselfe had ta'en, and rayling rymes had sprad.

Thus there he stood, whylest high over his head There written was the purport of his sin, In cyphers strange, that few could rightly read, Bon Font; but Bon, that once had written bin, Was raced out, and Mal was now put in: So now Malfont was plainely to be red, Eyther for th'evill which he did therein, Or that he likened was to a welhed Of evill words, and wicked sclaunders by him shed.

They, passing by, were guyded by degree Unto the presence of that gratious Queene; Who sate on high, that she might all men see And might of all men royally be seene, Upon a throne of gold full bright and sheene, Adorned all with gemmes of endlesse price, As either might for wealth have gotten bene, Or could be fram'd by workmans

rare device; And all embost with Lyons and with Flour-delice.

All over her a cloth of state was spred, Not of rich tissew, nor of cloth of gold, Nor of ought else that may be richest red, But like a cloud, as likest may be told, That her brode-spreading wings did wyde unfold; Whose skirts were bordred with bright sunny beames, Glistring like gold amongst the plights enrold, And here and there shooting forth silver streames, Mongst which crept litle Angels through the glittering gleames.

Seemed those litle Angels did uphold The cloth of state, and on their purpled wings Did beare the pendants through their nimblesse bold: Besides, a thousand more of such as sings Hymns to high God, and carols heavenly things, Encompassed the throne on which she sate— She, Angel-like, the heyre of ancient kings And mightie Conquerors, in royall state, Whylest kings and kesars at her feet did them prostrate.

Thus she did sit in soverayne Majestie, Holding a Scepter in her royall hand, The sacred pledge of peace and clemencie, With which high God had blest her happie land, Maugre so many foes which did withstand: But at her feet her sword was likewise layde, Whose long rest rusted the bright steely brand; Yet when as foes enforst, or friends sought ayde, She could it sternely draw, that all the world dismayde.

And round about before her feet there sate A bevie of faire Virgins clad in white, That goodly seem'd t'adorne her royall state; All lovely daughters of high Jove, that hight Litse, by him begot in loves delight Upon the righteous Themis; those, they say, Upon Joves judgement-seat wayt day and night; And, when in wrath he threats the worlds decay, They doe his anger calme, and cruell vengeance stay.

They also doe, by his divine permission, Upon the thrones of mortall Princes tend, And often treat for pardon and remission To suppliants, through frayltie which offend: Those did upon Mercillaes throne attend, Just Dice, wise Eunomie, myld

Eirene; And them amongst, her glorie to commend, Sate goodly Temperance in garments clene, And sacred Reverence yborne of heavenly strene.

Thus did she sit in royall rich estate, Admyr'd of many, honoured of all; Whylest underneath her feete, there as she sate, An huge great Lyon lay, that mote appall An hardie courage, like captived thrall With a strong yron chaine and coller bound, That once he could not move, nor quich at all; Yet did he murmure with rebellious sound, And softly royne, when salvage choler gan redound.

So sitting high in dreaded soverayntie, Those two strange knights were to her presence brought; Who, bowing low before her Majestic, Did to her myld obeysance, as they ought, And meekest boone that they imagine mought; To whom she eke inclyning her withall, As a faire stoupe of her high soaring thought, A chearefull countenance on them let fall, Yet tempred with some majestic imperiall.

As the bright sunne, what time his fierie teme Towards the westerne brim begins to draw, Gins to abate the brightnesse of his beme, And fervour of his flames somewhat adaw; So did this mightie Ladie, when she saw Those two strange knights such homage to her make, Bate somewhat of that Majestie and awe That whylome wont to doe so many quake, And with more myld aspect those two to entertake.

Now at that instant, as occasion fell, When these two stranger knights arriv'd in place, She was about affaires of common-wele, Dealing with Justice with indifferent grace, And hearing pleas of people meane and base: Mongst which, as then, there was for to be heard The tryall of a great and weightie case, Which on both sides was then debating hard; But at the sight of these those were awhile debard.

But, after all her princely entertayne, To th' hearing of that former cause in hand Her selfe eftsoones she gan convert againe: Which that those knights likewise mote understand, And witnesse forth aright in forrain land, Taking them up unto her stately throne, Where they mote heare the matter throughly scand On either part, she placed th'one on th'one, The other on the other side, and neare them none.

Then was there brought, as prisoner to the barre, A Ladie of great countenance and place, But that she it with foule abuse did marre; Yet did appeare rare beautie in her face, But blotted with condition vile and base, That all her other honour did obscure, And titles of nobilitie deface: Yet in that wretched semblant she did sure The peoples great compassion unto her allure.

Then up arose a person of deepe reach, And rare insight hard matters to revele; That well could charme his tongue, and time his speach To all assayes; his name was called Zele. He gan that Ladie strongly to appele Of many haynous crymes by her enured; And with sharp reasons rang her such a pele, That those, whom she to pitie had allured, He now t'abhorre and loath her person had procured.

First gan he tell how this, that seem'd so faire And royally arayd, Duessa hight; That false Duessa, which had wrought great care And mickle mischiefe unto many a knight, By her beguyled and confounded quight: But not for those she now in question came, Though also those mote question'd be aright, But for vyld treasons and outrageous shame, Which she against the dred Mercilla oft did frame.

For she whylome (as ye mote yet right well Remember) had her counsels false conspyred With faithlesse Blandamour and Paridell, (Both two her paramours, both by her hyred, And both with hope of shadowes vaine inspyred) And with them practiz'd, how for to depryve Mercilla of her crowne, by her aspyred, That she might it unto her selfe deryve, And tryumph in their blood whom she to death did dryve.

But through high heavens grace, which favour not The wicked driftes of trayterous desynes Gainst loiall Princes, all this cursed plot, Ere proofe it tooke, discovered was betymes, And th'actours won the meede meet for their crymes. Such be the meede of all that by such mene Unto the type of kingdomes title clymes! But false Duessa, now untitled Queene, Was brought to her sad doome, as here was to be seene.

Strongly did Zele her haynous fact enforce, And many other crimes of foule defame Against her brought, to banish all remorse, And aggravate the horror of her blame: And with him, to make part against her, came Many grave persons that against her pled. First was a sage old Syre, that had to name The Kingdomes Care, with a white silver hed, That many high regards and reasons gainst her red.

Then gan Authority her to appose With peremptorie powre, that made all mute; And then the Law of Nations gainst her rose, And reasons brought that no man could refute: Next gan Religion gainst her to impute High Gods beheast, and powre of holy lawes; Then gan the Peoples cry and Commons sute Importune care of their owne publicke cause; And lastly Justice charged her with breach of lawes.

But then, for her, on the contrarie part, Rose many advocates for her to plead: First there came Pittie with full tender hart, And with her joyn'd Regard of womanhead; And then came Daunger, threatning hidden dread And high alliance unto forren powre; Then came Nobilitie of birth, that bread Great ruth through her misfortunes tragicke stowre; And lastly Griefe did plead, and many teares forth powre.

With the neare touch whereof in tender hart The Briton Prince was sore empassionate, And woxe inclined much unto her part, Through the sad terror of so dreadfull fate, And wretched ruine of so high estate; That for great ruth his courage gan relent: Which when as Zele perceived to abate, He gan his earnest fervour to augment, And many fearefull objects to them to present.

He gan t'efforce the evidence anew, And new accusements to produce in place: He brought forth that old hag of hellish hew, The cursed Atè, brought her face to face, Who privie was and partie in the case: She, glad of spoyle and ruinous decay, Did her appeach; and, to her more disgrace, The plot of all her practise did display, And all her traynes and all her treasons forth did lay.

Then brought he forth with griesly grim aspect Abhorred Murder, who, with bloudie knyfe Yet dropping fresh in hand, did her detect, And there with guiltie bloudshed

charged ryfe: Then brought he forth Sedition, breeding stryfe In troublous wits, and mutinous uprore; Then brought he forth Incontinence of lyfe, Even foule Adulterie her face before, And lewd Impietie, that her accused sore.

All which when as the Prince had heard and seene, His former fancies ruth he gan repent, And from her partie eftsoones was drawen cleene: But Artegall, with constant firme intent For zeale of Justice, was against her bent: So was she guiltie deemed of them all. Then Zele began to urge her punishment, And to their Queene for judgement loudly call, Unto Mercilla myld, for Justice gainst the thrall.

But she, whose Princely brest was touched nere With piteous ruth of her so wretched plight, Though plaine she saw, by all that she did heare, That she of death was guiltie found by right, Yet would not let just vengeance on her light; But rather let, instead thereof, to fall Few perling drops from her faire lampes of light; The which she covering with her purple pall Would have the passion hid, and up arose withall.

Canto X

Prince Arthur takes the enterprize, For Belgee for the fight: Gerioneos Seneschall He slayes in Belges right.

Some Clarkes doe doubt in their devicefull art Whether this heavenly thing whereof I treat, To weeten Mercie, be of Justice part, Or drawne forth from her by divine extreate: This well I wote, that sure she is as great, And meriteth to have as high a place, Sith in th'Almighties everlasting seat She first was bred, and borne of heavenly race, From thence pour'd down on men by influence of grace.

For if that Vertue be of so great might Which from just verdict will for nothing start, But to preserve inviolated right Oft spilles the principall to save the part; So much more, then, is that of powre and art That seekes to save the subject of her skill, Yet never doth from doome of right depart, As it is greater prayse to save then spill, And better to reforme then to cut off the ill.

Who then can thee, Mercilla, throughly prayse, That herein doest all earthly Princes pas? What heavenly Muse shall thy great honour rayse Up to the skies, whence first deriv'd it was, And now on earth it selfe enlarged has From th'utmost brinke of the Armericke shore Unto the margent of the Molucas? Those Nations farre thy justice doe adore; But thine owne people do thy mercy prayse much more.

Much more it praysed was of those two knights, The noble Prince and righteous Artegall, When they had seene and heard her doome a-rights Against Duessa, damned by them all; But by her tempred without griefe or gall, Till strong constraint did her thereto enforce: And yet even then ruing her wilfull fall With more then needfull naturall remorse, And yeelding the last honour to her wretched corse.

During all which, those knights continu'd there Both doing and receiving curtesies Of that great Ladie, who with goodly chere Them entertayn'd, fit for their dignities, Approving dayly to their noble eyes Royall examples of her mercies rare And worthie paterns of her clemencies; Which till this day mongst many living are, Who them to their posterities doe still declare.

Amongst the rest, which in that space befell, There came two Springals of full tender yeares, Farre thence from forrein land where they did dwell, To seeke for succour of her and her Peares, With humble prayers and intreatfull teares; Sent by their mother, who, a widow, was Wrapt in great dolours and in deadly feares By a strong Tyrant, who invaded has Her land, and slaine her children ruefully, alas!

Her name was Belgæ; who in former age A Ladie of great worth and wealth had beene, And mother of a frutefull heritage, Even seventeene goodly sonnes; which who had seene In their first flowre, before this fatall teene Them overtooke and their faire blossomes blasted, More happie mother would her surely weene Then famous Niobe, before she tasted Latonaes childrens wrath that all her issue wasted,

But this fell Tyrant, through his tortious powre, Had left her now but five of all that brood: For twelve of them he did by times devoure, And to his Idols sacrifice their

blood, Whylest he of none was stopped nor withstood: For soothly he was one of matchlesse might, Of horrible aspect and dreadfull mood, And had three bodies in one wast empight, And th'armes and legs of three to succour him in fight.

And sooth they say that he was borne and bred Of Gyants race, the sonne of Geryon; He that whylome in Spaine so sore was dred For his huge powre and great oppression, Which brought that land to his subjection, Through his three bodies powre in one combynd; And eke all strangers, in that region Arry ving, to his kyne for food assynd; The fayrest kyne alive, but of the fiercest kynd:

For they were all, they say, of purple hew, Kept by a cowheard, hight Eurytion, A cruell carle, the which all strangers slew, Ne day nor night did sleepe t'attend them on, But walkt about them ever and anone With his two-headed dogge that Orthrus hight; Orthrus begotten by great Typhaon And foule Echidna in the house of night: But Hercules them all did overcome in fight.

His sonne was this Geryoneo hight; Who, after that his monstrous father fell Under Alcides club, streight tooke his flight From that sad land where he his syre did quell, And came to this, where Belgè then did dwell And flourish in all wealth and happinesse, Being then new made widow (as befell) After her Noble husbands late decesse; Which gave beginning to her woe and wretchednesse.

Then this bold Tyrant, of her widowhed Taking advantage, and her yet fresh woes, Himselfe and service to her offered, Her to defend against all forrein foes That should their powre against her right oppose: Whereof she glad, now needing strong defence, Him entertayn'd and did her champion chose; Which long he usd with carefull diligence, The better to confirme her fearelesse confidence.

By meanes whereof she did at last commit All to his hands, and gave him soveraine powre To doe whatever he thought good or fit: Which having got, he gan forth from that howre To stirre up strife and many a tragicke stowre; Giving her dearest children one by one Unto a dreadfull Monster to devoure, And setting up an Idole of

his owne, The image of his monstrous parent Geryone.

So tyrannizing and oppressing all, The woefull widow had no meanes now left, But unto gratious great Mercilla call For ayde against that cruell Tyrants theft, Ere all her children he from her had reft: Therefore these two, her eldest sonnes, she sent To seeke for succour of this Ladies gieft; To whom their sute they humbly did present In th' hearing of full many Knights and Ladies gent.

Amongst the which then fortuned to bee The noble Briton Prince with his brave Peare; Who when he none of all those knights did see Hastily bent that enterprise to heare, Nor undertake the same for cowheard feare, He stepped forth with courage bold and great, Admyr'd of all the rest in presence there, And humbly gan that mightie Queene entreat To graunt him that adventure for his former feat.

She gladly graunted it: then he straightway Himselfe unto his journey gan prepare, And all his armours readie dight that day, That nought the morrow next mote stay his fare. The morrow next appeared with purple hayre Yet dropping fresh out of the Indian fount, And bringing light into the heavens fayre, When he was readie to his steede to mount Unto his way, which now was all his care and count.

Then taking humble leave of that great Queene, Who gave him roiall giftes and riches rare, As tokens of her thankefull mind beseene, And leaving Artegall to his owne care, Upon his voyage forth he gan to fare With those two gentle youthes, which him did guide And all his way before him still prepare. Ne after him did Artigall abide, But on his first adventure forward forth did ride.

It was not long till that the Prince arrived Within the land where dwelt that Ladie sad; Whereof that Tyrant had her now deprived, And into moores and marshes banisht had, Out of the pleasant soyle and cities glad, In which she wont to harbour happily: But now his cruelty so sore she drad, That to those fennes for fastnesse she did fly, And there her selfe did hyde from his hard tyranny.

There he her found in sorrow and dismay, All solitarie without living wight; For all

her other children, through affray, Had hid themselves, or taken further flight: And eke her selfe, through sudden strange affright When one in armes she saw, began to fly; But, when her owne two sonnes she had in sight, She gan take hart and looke up joyfully; For well she wist this knight came succour to supply.

And, running unto them with greedy joyes, Fell straight about their neckes as they did kneele, And bursting forth in teares, “Ah! my sweet boyes,” (Sayd she) “yet now I gin new life to feele; And feeble spirits, that gan faint and reele, Now rise againe at this your joyous sight. Alreadie seemes that fortunes headlong wheele Begins to turne, and sunne to shine more bright Then it was wont, through comfort of this noble knight.”

Then turning unto him; “And you, Sir knight,” (Said she) “that taken have this toylesome paine For wretched woman, miserable wight, May you in heaven immortall guerdon gaine For so great travell as you doe sustaine! For other meede may hope for none of mee, To whom nought else but bare life doth remaine; And that so wretched one, as ye do see, Is liker lingring death then loathed life to bee.”

Much was he moved with her piteous plight, And low dismounting from his loftie steede Gan to recomfort her all that he might, Seeking to drive away deepe-rooted dreede With hope of helpe in that her greatest neede. So thence he wished her with him to wend Unto some place where they mote rest and feede, And she take comfort which God now did send: Good hart in evils doth the evils much amend.

“Ay me!” (sayd she) “and whether shall I goe? Are not all places full of forraine powres? My pallaces possessed of my foe, My cities sackt, and their sky-threating towres Raced and made smooth fields now full of flowres? Onely these marishes and myrie bogs, In which the fearefull ewftes do build their bowres, Yeeld me an hostry mongst the croking frogs, And harbour here in safety from those ravenous dogs.”

“Nathlesse,” (said he) “deare Ladie, with me goe; Some place shall us receive and

harbour yield; If not, we will it force, maugre your foe, And purchase it to us with speare and shield: And if all fayle, yet farewell open field; The earth to all her creatures lodging lends." With such his chearefull speaches he doth wield Her mind so well, that to his will she bends; And, bynding up her locks and weeds, forth with him wends.

They came unto a Citie farre up land, The which whylome that Ladies owne had bene; But now by force extort out of her hand By her strong foe, who had defaced cleene Her stately towres and buildings sunny sheene, Shut up her haven, mard her marchants trade, Robbed her people that full rich had beene, And in her necke a Castle huge had made, The which did her commaund without needing perswade.

That Castle was the strength of all that state, Untill that state by strength was pulled downe; And that same citie, so now ruinate, Had bene the keye of all that kingdomes crowne; Both goodly Castle, and both goodly Towne, Till that th'offended heavens list to lowre Upon their blisse, and balefull fortune frowne: When those gainst states and kingdomes do conjure, Who then can thinke their hedlong ruine to recure?

But he had brought it now in servile bond, And made it beare the yoke of Inquisition, Stryving long time in vaine it to withstond; Yet glad at last to make most base submission, And life enjoy for any composition: So now he hath new lawes and orders new Imposd on it with many a hard condition, And forced it, the honour that is dew To God, to doe unto his Idole most untrew.

To him he hath before this Castle greene Built a faire Chappell, and an Altar framed Of costly Ivory full rich beseene, On which that cursed Idole, farre proclamed, He hath set up, and him his God hath named; Ofrring to him in sinfull sacrifice The flesh of men, to Gods owne likenesse framed, And powring forth their bloud in brutishe wize, That any yron eyes to see it would agrize.

And, for more horror and more crueltie, Under that cursed Idols altar-stone An hideous monster doth in darknesse lie, Whose dreadfull shape was never seene of

none That lives on earth; but unto those alone The which unto him sacrificed bee: Those he devoures, they say, both flesh and bone. What else they have is all the Tyrants fee; So that no whit of them remayning one may see.

There eke he placed a strong garrisone, And set a Seneschall of dreaded might, That by his powre oppressed every one, And vanquished all ventrous knights in fight; To whom he wont shew all the shame he might, After that them in battell he had wonne: To which when now they gan approch in sight, The Ladie counseld him the place to shonne, Where as so many knights had fouly bene fordonne.

Her fearefull speaches nought he did regard, But, ryding streight under the Castle wall, Called aloud unto the watchfull ward Which there did wayte, willing them forth to call Into the field their Tyrants Seneschall: To whom when tydings thereof came, he streight Cals for his armes, and arming him withall Eftsoones forth pricked proudly in his might, And gan with courage fierce addresse him to the fight.

They both encounter in the middle plaine, And their sharpe speares doe both together smite Amid their shields, with so huge might and maine That seem'd their soules they wold have ryven quight Out of their breasts with furious despight: Yet could the Seneschals no entrance find Into the Princes shield where it empight, (So pure the metall was and well refynd,) But shivered all about, and scattered in the wynd:

Not so the Princes, but with restlesse force Into his shield it readie passage found, Both through his haberjeon and eke his corse; Which tombling downe upon the senselesse ground Gave leave unto his ghost from thraldome bound To wander in the griesly shades of night. There did the Prince him leave in deadly swound, And thence unto the castle marched right, To see if entrance there as yet obtaine he might.

But, as he nigher drew, three knights he spyde, All arm'd to point, issuing forth apace, Which towards him with all their powre did ryde, And meeting him right in

the middle race Did all their speares attonce on him enchace. As three great Culverings for battrie bent, And leveld all against one certaine place, Doe all attonce their thunders rage forth rent, That makes the wals to stagger with astonishment:

So all attonce they on the Prince did thonder, Who from his saddle swarved nought asyde, Ne to their force gave way, that was great wonder; But like a bulwarke firmely did abyde, Rebutting him, which in the midst did ryde, With so huge rigour, that his mortall speare Past through his shield and pierst through either syde; That downe he fell uppon his mother deare, And powred forth his wretched life in deadly dreare.

Whom when his other fellowes saw, they fled As fast as feete could carry them away; And after them the Prince as swiftly sped, To be aveng'd of their unknightly play. There, whilest they entring th'one did th'other stay, The hindmost in the gate he overhent, And, as he pressed in, him there did slay: His carkasse, tumbling on the threshold, sent His groning soule unto her place of punishment.

The other which was entred laboured fast To sperre the gate; but that same lumpe of clay, Whose grudging ghost was thereout fled and past, Right in the middest of the threshold lay, That it the Posterne did from closing stay: The whiles the Prince hard preased in betweene, And entraunce wonne: Streight th'other fled away, And ran into the Hall, where he did weene Him selfe to save; but he there slew him at the skreene.

Then all the rest which in that Castle were, Seeing that sad ensample them before, Durst not abide, but fled away for feare, And them convayd out at a Posterne dore. Long sought the Prince; but when he found no more T'oppose against his powre he forth issued Unto that Lady, where he her had lore, And her gan cheare with what she there had vewed, And what she had not seene within unto her shewed:

Who with right humble thankes him goodly greeting For so great prowesse as he there had proved, Much greater then was ever in her weeting, With great admiraunce

inwardly was moved, And honourd him with all that her behoved. Thenceforth into that Castle he her led With her two sonnes, right deare of her beloved, Where all that night them selves they cherished, And from her balefull minde all care he banished.

Canto XI

Prince Arthure overcomes the great Gerioneo in fight: Doth slay the Monster, and restore Belge unto her right.

It often fals, in course of common life, That right long time is overborne of wrong Through avarice, or powre, or guile, or strife, That weakens her, and makes her party strong; But Justice, though her dome she doe prolong, Yet at the last she will her owne cause right: As by sad Beigè seemes; whose wrongs though long She suffred, yet at length she did requight, And sent redresse thereof by this brave Briton Knight.

Whereof when newes was to that Tyrant brought, How that the Lady Belgè now had found A Champion, that had with his Champion fought, And laid his Seneschall low on the ground, And eke him selfe did threaten to confound; He gan to burne in rage, and friese in feare, Doubting sad end of principle unsound: Yet, sith he heard but one that did appeare, He did him selfe encourage and take better cheare.

Nathelesse him selfe he armed all in hast, And forth he far'd with all his many bad, Ne stayed step, till that he came at last Unto the Castle which they conquerd had: There with huge terrour, to be more ydrad, He sternely marcht before the Castle gate, And, with bold vaunts and ydle threatning, bad Deliver him his owne, ere yet too late, To which they had no right, nor any wrongfull state.

The Prince staid not his aunswere to devize, But, opening streight the Sparre, forth to him came, Full nobly mounted in right warlike wize; And asked him, if that he were the same, Who all that wrong unto that wofull Dame So long had done, and from her native land Exiled her, that all the world spake shame. He boldly aunswerd

him, He there did stand That would his doings justifie with his owne hand.

With that so furiously at him he flew, As if he would have overrun him streight; And with his huge great yron axe gan hew So hideously uppon his armour bright, As he to peeces would have chopt it quight, That the bold Prince was forced foote to give To his first rage, and yeeld to his despight; The whilest at him so dreadfully he drive, That seem'd a marble rocke asunder could have rive.

Thereto a great advauntage eke he has Through his three double hands thrise multiplyde, Besides the double strength which in them was: For stil, when fit occasion did betyde, He could his weapon shift from side to syde, From hand to hand; and with such nimblesse sly Could wield about, that, ere it were espide, The wicked stroke did wound his enemy Behinde, beside, before, as he it list apply.

Which uncouth use when as the Prince perceived, He gan to watch the wielding of his hand, Least by such slight he were unwares deceived; And ever, ere he saw the stroke to land, He would it meete and warily withstand. One time when he his weapon faynd to shift, As he was wont, and chang'd from hand to hand, He met him with a counterstroke so swift, That quite smit off his arme as he it up did lift.

Therewith all fraught with fury and disdaine, He brayd aloud for very fell despight; And sodainely, t'avenge him selfe againe Gan into one assemble all the might Of all his hands, and heaved them on hight, Thinking to pay him with that one for all: But the sad steele seizd not, where it was hight, Uppon the childe, but somewhat short did fall, And lighting on his horses head him quite did mall.

Downe streight to ground fell his astonisht steed, And eke to th'earth his burden with him bare; But he him selfe full lightly from him freed, And gan him selfe to fight on foote prepare: Whereof when as the Gyant was aware, He wox right blyth, as he had got thereby, And laught so loud, that all his teeth wide bare One might have seene enraung'd disorderly, Like to a rancke of piles that pitched are awry.

Eftsoones againe his axe he raught on hie, Ere he were throughly buckled to his

geare, And can let drive at him so dreadfullie, That had he chaunced not his shield to reare, Ere that huge stroke arrived on him neare, He had him surely cloven quite in twaine: But th'Adamantine shield which he did beare So well was tempred, that for all his maine It would no passage yeeld unto his purpose vaine.

Yet was the stroke so forcibly applide, That made him stagger with uncertaine sway, As if he would have tottered to one side: Wherewith full wroth he fiercely gan assay That curt'sie with like kindnesse to repay, And smote at him with so importune might, That two more of his armes did fall away, Like fruitlesse braunches, which the hatchets slight Hath pruned from the native tree, and cropped quight.

With that all mad and furious he grew, Like a fell mastiffe through enraging heat, And curst, and band, and blasphemies forth threw Against his Gods, and fire to them did threat, And hell unto him selfe with horrour great. Thenceforth he car'd no more which way he strooke, Nor where it light; but gan to chaufe and sweat, And gnasht his teeth, and his head at him shooke, And sternely him beheld with grim and ghastly looke.

Nought fear'd the childe his lookes, ne yet his threats, But onely wexed now the more aware To save him selfe from those his furious heats, And watch advauntage how to worke his care, The which good Fortune to him offred faire; For as he in his rage him overstrooke, He, ere he could his weapon backe repaire, His side all bare and naked overtooke, And with his mortal steel quite through the body strooke.

Through all three bodies he him strooke attonce, That all the three attonce fell on the plaine, Else should he thrise have needed for the nonce Them to have stricken, and thrise to have slaine. So now all three one sencelesse lumpe remaine, Enwallow'd in his owne blacke bloudy gore, And byting th'earth for very deaths disdaine; Who, with a cloud of night him covering, bore Downe to the house of dole, his daies there to deplore.

Which when the Lady from the Castle saw, Where she with her two sonnes did

looking stand, She towards him in hast her selfe did draw To greet him the good fortune of his hand: And all the people, both of towne and land, Which there stood gazing from the Citties wall Uppon these warriours, greedy t'understand To whether should the victory befall, Now when they saw it falne, they eke him greeted all.

But Belgè, with her sonnes, prostrated low Before his feete in all that peoples sight, Mongst joyes mixing some tears, mongst wele some wo, Him thus bespake: "O most redoubted Knight, The which hast me, of all most wretched wight, That earst was dead, restor'd to life againe, And these weake impes replanted by thy might, What guerdon can I give thee for thy paine, But even that which thou savedst thine still to remaine?"

He tooke her up forby the lilly hand, And her recomforted the best he might, Saying; "Deare Lady, deedes ought not be scand By th'authors manhood, nor the doers might, But by their trueth and by the causes right: That same is it which fought for you this day. What other meed, then, need me to requight, But that which yeeldeth vertues meed alway? That is, the vertue selfe, which her reward doth pay."

She humbly thankt him for that wondrous grace, And further sayd: "Ah! Sir, but mote ye please, Sith ye thus farre have tendred my poore case, As from my chiefest foe me to release, That your victorious arme will not yet cease, Till ye have rooted all the relickes out Of that vilde race, and stablished my peace." "What is there else" (sayd he) "left of their rout? Declare it boldly, Dame, and doe not stand in dout."

"Then wote you, Sir, that in this Church hereby There stands an Idole of great note and name, The which this Gyant reared first on hie, And of his owne vaine fancies thought did frame: To whom, for endlesse horrour of his shame, He offred up for daily sacrifize My children and my people, burnt in flame With all the tortures that he could devize, The more t'aggrate his God with such his blouddy guize.

"And underneath this Idoll there doth lie An hideous monster that doth it defend, And feedes on all the carkasses that die In sacrifize unto that cursed feend; Whose

ugly shape none ever saw, nor kend, That ever scap'd: for of a man, they say, It has the voice, that speaches forth doth send, Even blasphemous words, which she doth bray Out of her poysnous entrails fraught with dire decay."

Which when the Prince heard tell, his heart gan earne For great desire that Monster to assay, And prayd the place of her abode to learne; Which being shew'd, he gan him selfe streightway Thereto addresse, and his bright shield display. So to the Church he came, where it was told The Monster underneath the Altar lay: There he that Idoll saw of massy gold Most richly made, but there no Monster did behold.

Upon the Image with his naked blade Three times, as in defiance, there he strooke; And the third time out of an hidden shade There forth issewd from under th'Altars smooke A dreadfull feend with fowle deformed looke, That stretcht it selfe as it had long lyen still; And her long taile and fethers strongly shooke, That all the Temple did with terrour fill; Yet him nought terrified that feared nothing ill.

An huge great Beast it was, when it in length Was stretched forth, that nigh fild all the place, And seem'd to be of infinite great strength: Horrible, hideous, and of hellish race, Borne of the brooding of Echidna base, Or other like infernall furies kinde; For of a Mayd she had the outward face, To hide the horrour which did lurke behinde, The better to beguile whom she so fond did finde.

Thereto the body of a dog she had, Full of fell ravin and fierce greedinesse; A Lions clawes, with powre and rigour clad, To rend and teare what so she can oppresse; A Dragons taile, whose sting without redresse Full deadly wounds where so it is empight; And Eagles wings, for scope and speedinesse, That nothing may escape her reaching might, Whereto she ever list to make her hardy flight.

Much like in foulnesse and deformity Unto that Monster, whom the Theban Knight, The father of that fatall progeny, Made kill her selfe for very hearts despight That he had red her Riddle, which no wight Could ever loose but suffred deadly doole: So also did this Monster use like slight To many a one which came unto her schoole,

Whom she did put to death, deceived like a foole.

She comming forth, when as she first beheld The armed Prince with shield so blazing bright Her ready to assaile, was greatly queld, And much dismayd with that dismayfull sight, That backe she would have turnd for great affright: But he gan her with courage fierce assay, That forst her turne againe in her despight To save her selfe, least that he did her slay; And sure he had her slaine, had she not turnd her way.

Tho, when she saw that she was forst to fight, She flew at him like to an hellish feend, And on his shield tooke hold with all her might, As if that it she would in peeces rend, Or reave out of the hand that did it hend: Strongly he strove out of her greedy gripe To loose his shield, and long while did contend; But, when he could not quite it, with one stripe Her Lions clawes he from her feete away did wipe.

With that aloude she gan to bray and yell, And fowle blasphemous speaches forth did cast, And bitter curses, horrible to tell; That even the Temple, wherein she was plast, Did quake to heare, and nigh asunder brast: Tho with her huge long taile she at him strooke, That made him stagger and stand halfe agast, With trembling joynts, as he for terrour shooke; Who nought was terrifide, but greater courage tooke.

As when the Mast of some well-timbred hulke Is with the blast of some outragious storme Blowne downe, it shakes the bottome of the bulke, And makes her ribs to cracke as they were torne; Whilest still she stands, as stonisht and forlorne: So was he stound with stroke of her huge taile; But, ere that it she backe againe had borne, He with his sword it strooke, that without faile He jointed it, and mard the swinging of her flaile.

Then gan she cry much louder then afore, That all the people there without it heard, And Beige selfe was therewith stonied sore, As if the onely sound thereof she feard. But then the feend her selfe more fiercely reard Uppon her wide great wings, and strongly flew With all her body at his head and beard, That had he not foreseene

with heedfull vew, And thrown his shield atween, she had him done to rew.

But, as she prest on him with heavy sway, Under her wombe his fatall sword he thrust, And for her entrailes made an open way To issue forth; the which, once being brust, Like to a great Mill-damb forth fiercely gusht, And powred out of her infernall sinke Most ugly filth; and poyson therewith rusht, That him nigh choked with the deadly stinke. Such loathly matter were small lust to speake or thinke.

Then downe to ground fell that deformed Masse, Breathing out clouds of sulphure fowle and blacke, In which a puddle of contagion was, More loathd then Lerna, or then Stygian lake, That any man would nigh awhaped make: Whom when he saw on ground, he was full glad, And streight went forth his gladnesse to partake With Belgè, who watcht all this while full sad, Wayting what end would be of that same daunger drad.

Whom when she saw so joyously come forth, She gan rejoyce and shew triumphant chere, Lauding and praysing his renowmed worth By all the names that honorable were. Then in he brought her, and her shewed there The present of his paines, that Monsters spoyle, And eke that Idoll deem'd so costly dere, Whom he did all to peeces breake, and foyle In filthy durt, and left so in the loathely soyle.

Then all the people which beheld that day Gan shout aloud, that unto heaven it rong; And all the damzels of that towne in ray Come dauncing forth, and joyous carrols song: So him they led through all their streetes along Crowned with girlonds of immortall baies; And all the vulgar did about them throng To see the man, whose everlasting praise They all were bound to all posterities to raise.

There he with Belgæ did awhile remaine Making great feast and joyous merriment, Untill he had her settled in her raine With safe assuraunce and establishment: Then to his first emprize his mind he lent, Full loath to Belgæ and to all the rest; Of whom yet taking leave thence forth he went, And to his former journey him addrest; On which long way he rode, ne ever day did rest.

But turne we now to noble Artegall; Who, having left Mercilla, streight way went On his first quest, the which him forth did call, To weet, to worke Irenaes franchisement, And eke Grantortoes worthy punishment. So forth he fared, as his manner was, With onely Talus wayting diligent, Through many perils; and much way did pas, Till nigh unto the place at length approcht he has.

There as he traveld by the way, he met An aged wight wayfaring all alone, Who through his yeares long since aside had set The use of armes, and battell quite forgone: To whom as he approcht, he knew anone That it was he which whilome did attend On faire Irene in her affliction, When first to Faery court he saw her wend, Unto his soveraine Queene her suite for to commend.

Whom by his name saluting, thus he gan: “Haile, good Sir Sergis, truest Knight alive, Well tride in all thy Ladies troubles than When her that Tyrant did of Crowne deprive; What new occasion doth thee hither drive, Whiles she alone is left, and thou here found? Or is she thrall, or doth she not survive?” To whom he thus: “She liveth sure and sound, But by that Tyrant is in wretched thraldome bound:

“For she presuming on th’appointed tyde, In which ye promist, as ye were a Knight, To meete her at the salvage Hands syde, And then and there for triall of her right With her unrighteous enemy to fight, Did thither come; where she, afrayd of nought, By guilefull treason and by subtill slight Surprized was, and to Grantorto brought, Who her imprisond hath, and her life often sought.

“And now he hath to her prefixt a day, By which if that no champion doe appeare, Which will her cause in battailous array Against him justifie, and prove her cleare Of all those crimes that he gainst her doth reare, She death shall sure aby.” Those tidings sad Did much abash Sir Artegall to heare, And grieved sore that through his fault she had Fallen into that Tyrants hand and usage bad.

Then thus replide: “Now sure and by my life, Too much am I to blame for that faire Maide, That have her drawne to all this troublous strife, Through promise to afford

her timely aide, Which by default I have not yet defraide: But witnesse unto me, ye heavens! that know How cleare I am from blame of this upbraide; For ye into like thraldome me did throw, And kept from complishing the faith which I did owe.

“But now aread, Sir Sergis, how long space Hath he her lent a Champion to provide?” “Ten daies,” (quoth he) “he graunted hath of grace, For that he weeneth well before that tide None can have tidings to assist her side: For all the shores, which to the sea accoste, He day and night doth ward both farre and wide, That none can there arrive without an hoste: So her he deemes already but a damned ghoste.”

“Now turne againe,” (Sir Artegall then sayd) “For, if I live till those ten daies have end, Assure your selfe, Sir Knight, she shall have ayd, Though I this dearest life for her doe spend.” So backeward he attone with him did wend: Tho, as they rode together on their way, A rout of people they before them kend, Flocking together in confusde array; As if that there were some tumultuous affray.

To which as they approcht the cause to know, They saw a Knight in daungerous distresse Of a rude rout him chasing to and fro, That sought with lawlesse powre him to oppresse, And bring in bondage of their brutishnesse: And farre away, amid their rakehell bands, They spide a Lady left all succourlesse, Crying, and holding up her wretched hands To him for aide, who long in vaine their rage withstands.

Yet still he strives, ne any perill spares, To reskue her from their rude violence; And like a Lion wood amongst them fares, Dealing his dreadfull blowes with large dispence, Gainst which the pallid death findes no defence; But all in vaine: their numbers are so great, That naught may boot to banishe them from thence; For soone as he their outrage backe doth beat, They turne afresh, and oft renew their former threat.

And now they doe so sharpely him assay, That they his shield in peeces battred have, And forced him to throw it quite away, Fro dangers dread his doubtfull life to save; Albe that it most safety to him gave, And much did magnifie his noble name:

For, from the day that he thus did it leave, Amongst all Knights he blotted was with blame, And counted but a recreant Knight with endles shame.

Whom when they thus distressed did behold, They drew unto his aide; but that rude rout Them also gan assaile with outrage bold, And forced them, how ever strong and stout They were, as well approv'd in many a doubt, Backe to recule; untill that yron man With his huge flaile began to lay about; From whose sterne presence they diffused ran, Like scattred chaffe the which the wind away doth fan.

So when that Knight from perill cleare was freed, He drawing neare began to greete them faire, And yeeld great thankes for their so goodly deed, In saving him from daungerous despaire Of those which sought his life for to empaire: Of whom Sir Artegall gan then enquire The whole occasion of his late misfare, And who he was, and what those villaines were, The which with mortall malice him pursu'd so nere.

To whom he thus: "My name is Burbon hight, Well knowne, and far renowmed heretofore, Untill late mischiefe did uppon me light, That all my former praise hath blemisht sore: And that faire Lady, which in that uprore Ye with those caytives saw, Flourdelis hight, Is mine owne love, though me she have forlore, Whether withheld from me by wrongfull might, Or with her owne good will, I cannot read aright.

"But sure to me her faith she first did plight To be my love, and take me for her Lord; Till that a Tyrant, which Grandtorto hight, With golden giftes and many a guilefull word Entyced her to him for to accord. O! who may not with gifts and words be tempted? Sith which she hath me ever since abhord, And to my foe hath guilefully consented: Ay me, that ever guyle in wemen was invented!

"And now he hath this troupe of villains sent By open force to fetch her quite away: Gainst whom my selfe I long in vaine have bent To rescue her, and daily meanes assay; Yet rescue her thence by no meanes I may, For they doe me with multitude oppresse, And with unequall might doe overlay, That oft I driven am to great distresse, And forced to forgoe th'attempt remedilesse."

“But why have ye” (said Artegall) “forborne Your owne good shield in daungerous dismay? That is the greatest shame and foulest scorne, Which unto any knight behappen may, To loose the badge that should his deedes display.” To whom Sir Burbon, blushing halfe for shame: “That shall I unto you” (quoth he) “bewray, Least ye therefore mote happily me blame, And deeme it doen of will, that through inforcement came.

“True is that I at first was dubbed knight By a good knight, the knight of the Redcrosse; Who, when he gave me armes in field to fight, Gave me a shield, in which he did endosse His deare Redeemers badge upon the bosse: The same long while I bore, and therewithall Fought many battels without wound or losse; Therewith Grandtorto selfe I did appall, And made him oftentimes in field before me fall.

“But for that many did that shield envie, And cruell enemies increased more, To stint all strife and troublous enmitie, That bloudie scutchin, being battered sore, I layd aside, and have of late forbore, Hoping thereby to have my love obtayned; Yet can I not my love have nathemore, For she by force is still fro me detayned, And with corruptfull brybes is to untruth mis-trayned.”

To whom thus Artegall: “Certes, Sir knight, Hard is the case the which ye doe complaine? Yet not so hard (for nought so hard may light That it to such a streight mote you constraine) As to abandon that which doth containe Your honours stile, that is, your warlike shield. All perill ought be lesse, and lesse all paine Then losse of fame in disaventrous field: Dye, rather then doe ought that mote dishonour yield.

“Not so,” (quoth he) “for yet, when time doth serve, My former shield I may resume againe: To temporize is not from truth to swerve, Ne for advantage terme to entertaine, When as necessitie doth it constraine.” “Fie on such forgerie!” (sayd Artegall) “Under one hood to shadow faces twaine: Knights ought be true, and truth is one in all: Of all things, to dissemble, fouly may befall!”

“Yet let me you of courtesie request” (Said Burbon) “to assist me now at need Against these pesants which have me opprest, And forced me to so infamous deed, That yet my love may from their hands be freed.” Sir Artegall, albe he earst did wyte His wavering mind, yet to his aide agreed, And, buckling him eftsoones unto the fight, Did set upon those troupes with all his powre and might.

Who flocking round about them, as a swarme Of flyes upon a birchen bough doth cluster, Did them assault with terrible allarme; And over all the fields themselves did muster, With bils and glayves making a dreadfull luster, That forst at first those knights backe to retyre: As when the wrathfull Boreas doth bluster, Nought may abide the tempest of his yre; Both man and beast doe fly, and succour doe inquyre.

But, when as overblowen was that brunt, Those knights began afresh them to assayle, And all about the fields like Squirrels hunt; But chiefly Talus with his yron flayle, Gainst which no flight nor rescue mote avayle, Made cruell havocke of the baser crew, And chaced them both over hill and dale. The raskall manie soone they overthrew; But the two knights themselves their captains did subdew.

At last they came whereas that Ladie bode, Whom now her keepers had forsaken quight To save themselves, and scattered were abrode. Her halfe dismayd they found in doubtfull plight, As neither glad nor sorie for their sight; Yet wondrous faire she was, and richly clad In roiall robes, and many jewels dight; But that those villens through their usage bad Them fouly rent, and shamefully defaced had.

But Burbon, streight dismounting from his steed, Unto her ran with greedie great desyre, And catching her fast by her ragged weed Would have embraced her with hart entyre; But she backstarting with disdainefull yre Bad him avaunt, ne would unto his lore Allured be for prayer nor for meed: Whom when those knights so froward and forlore Beheld, they her rebuked and upbrayded sore.

Sayd Artegall: “What foule disgrace is this To so faire Ladie, as ye seeme in sight, To blot your beautie, that unblemisht is, With so foule blame as breach of faith once

plight, Or change of love for any worlds delight! Is ought on earth so pretious or deare As prayse and honour? Or is ought so bright And beautifull as glories beames appeare, Whose goodly light then Phœbus lampe doth shine more cleare?

“Why then will ye, fond Dame, attempted bee Unto a strangers love, so lightly placed, For guiftes of gold or any worldly glee, To leave the love that ye before embraced, And let your fame with falshood be defaced? Fie on the pelfe for which good name is sold, And honour with indignitie debased! Dearer is love then life, and fame then gold; But dearer then them both your faith once plighted hold.”

Much was the Ladie in her gentle mind Abasht at his rebuke, that bit her neare, Ne ought to answere thereunto did find; But, hanging down her head with heavie cheare, Stood long amaz’d as she amated weare: Which Burbon seeing her againe assayd; And, clasping twixt his armes, her up did reare Upon his steede, whiles she no whit gainesayd: So bore her quite away, nor well nor ill apayd.

Nathlesse the yron man did still pursew That raskall many with unpitied spoyle; Ne ceassed not, till all their scattred crew Into the sea he drove quite from that soyle, The which they troubled had with great turmoyle. But Artegall, seeing his cruell deed, Commaunded him from slaughter to recoyle, And to his voyage gan againe proceed; For that the terme, approching fast, required speed.

Canto XII

Artegall doth Sir Burbon side, And blames for changing shield: He with the great Grantorto fights And slaieth him in field.

O sacred hunger of ambitious mindes, And impotent desire of men to raine! Whom neither dread of God, that devils bindes, Nor lawes of men, that common-weales containe, Nor bands of nature, that wilde beastes restraine, Can keepe from outrage and from doing wrong, Where they may hope a kingdome to obtaine: No faith so firme, no trust can be so strong, No love so lasting then, that may enduren long.

Witnesse may Burbon be; whom all the bands Which may a Knight assure had surely bound, Untill the love of Lordship and of lands Made him become most faithless and unsound: And witnesse be Gerioneo found, Who for like cause faire Belgè did oppresse, And right and wrong most cruelly confound: And so be now Grantorto, who no lesse Then all the rest burst out to all outragiousnesse.

Gainst whom Sir Artegall, long having since Taken in hand th'exploit, (being theretoo Appointed by that mightie Faerie Prince, Great Gloriane, that Tyrant to fordoo,) Through other great adventures hethertoo Had it forslackt: But now time drawing ny To him assynd her high beheast to doo, To the sea-shore he gan his way apply, To weete if shipping readie he mote there descry.

Tho when they came to the sea coast they found A ship all readie (as good fortune fell) To put to sea, with whom they did compound To passe them over where them list to tell. The winde and weather served them so well, That in one day they with the coast did fall; Whereas they readie found, them to rep ell, Great hostes of men in order martiall, Which them forbad to land, and footing did forstall.

But nathemore would they from land refraine: But, when as nigh unto the shore they drew That foot of man might sound the bottome plaine, Talus into the sea did forth issew Though darts from shore and stones they at him threw; And wading through the waves with stedfast sway, Maugre the might of all those troupes in vew, Did win the shore; whence he them chast away, And made to fly like doves whom the Eagle doth affray.

The whyles Sir Artegall with that old knight Did forth descend, there being none them neare, And forward marched to a towne in sight. By this came tydings to the Tyrants eare, By those which earst did fly away for feare, Of their arrival: wherewith troubled sore He all his forces streight to him did reare, And forth issuing with his scouts afore, Meant them to have encountred ere they left the shore:

But ere he marched farre he with them met, And fiercely charged them with all his

force: But Talus sternely did upon them set, And brusht and battred them without remorse, That on the ground he left full many a corse; Ne any able was him to withstand, But he them overthrew both man and horse, That they lay scattred over all the land, As thicke as doth the seede after the sowers hand:

Till Artegall him seeing so to rage Willd him to stay, and signe of truce did make: To which all harkning did a while asswage Their forces furie, and their terror slake; Till he an Herauld cald, and to him spake, Willing him wend unto the Tyrant streight, And tell him that not for such slaughters sake He thether came, but for to trie the right Of fayre Irenaes cause with him in single fight:

And willed him for to reclayme with speed His scattred people, ere they all were slaine, And time and place convenient to areed, In which they two the combat might darraine. Which message when Grantorto heard, full fayne And glad he was the slaughter so to stay; And pointed for the combat twixt them twayne The morrow next, ne gave him longer day: So sounded the retraite, and drew his folke away.

That night Sir Artegall did cause his tent There to be pitched on the open plaine; For he had given streight commaundement That none should dare him once to entertaine; Which none durst breake, though many would right faine For faire Irena, whom they loved deare: But yet old Sergis did so well him paine, That from close friends, that dar'd not to appeare, He all things did purvay which for them needfull weare.

The morrow next, that was the dismall day Appointed for Irenas death before, So soone as it did to the world display His chearefull face, and light to men restore, The heavy Mayd, to whom none tydings bore Of Artegals arryvall her to free, Lookt up with eyes full sad and hart full sore, Weening her lifes last howre then neare to bee, Sith no redemption nigh she did not heare nor see.

Then up she rose, and on her selfe did dight Most squalid garments, fit for such a day; And with dull countenance and with doleful spright She forth was brought in

sorrowfull dismay For to receive the doome of her decay: But comming to the place, and finding there Sir Artegall, in battailous array Wayting his foe, it did her dead hart cheare, And new life to her lent in midst of deadly feare.

Like as a tender Rose in open plaine, That with untimely drought nigh withered was, And hung the head, soone as few drops of raine Thereon distill and deaw her daintie face, Gins to looke up, and with fresh wonted grace Dispreds the glorie of her leaves gay; Such was Irenas countenance, such her case, When Artegall she saw in that array, There wayting for the Tyrant till it was farre day.

Who came at length with proud presumpteous gate Into the field, as if he fearelesse were, All armed in a cote of yron plate Of great defence to ward the deadly feare; And on his head a steele-cap he did weare Of colour rustie-browne, but sure and strong; And in his hand an huge Polaxe did beare, Whose steale was yron-studded, but not long, With which he wont to fight to justifie his wrong:

Of stature huge and hideous he was, Like to a Giant for his monstrous hight, And did in strength most sorts of men surpas, Ne ever any found his match in might; Thereto he had great skill in single fight: His face was ugly and his countenance sterne, That could have frayd one with the very sight, And gaped like a gulfe when he did gerne; That whether man or monster one could scarse discerne.

Soone as he did within the listes appeare, With dreadfull looke he Artegall beheld, As if he would have daunted him with feare; And, grinning griesly, did against him weld His deadly weapon which in hand he held: But th'Elfin swayne, that oft had seene like sight, Was with his ghastly count'nance nothing queld; But gan him streight to buckle to the fight, And cast his shield about to be in readie plight.

The trompets sound, and they together goe With dreadfull terror and with fell intent; And their huge strokes full daungerously bestow, To doe most dammage where as most they ment: But with such force and furie violent The Tyrant thundred his thicke blowes so fast, That through the yron walles their way they rent, And even to

the vitall parts they past, Ne ought could them endure, but all they cleft or brast.

Which cruell outrage when as Artegall Did well avize, thenceforth with warie heed He shund his strokes, where ever they did fall, And way did give unto their gracelesse speed: As when a skilfull Marriner doth reed A storme approching that doth perill threat, He will not bide the daunger of such dread, But strikes his sayles, and vereth his mainsheat, And lends unto it leave the emptie ayre to beat.

So did the Faerie knight himselfe abeare, And stouped oft his head from shame to shield: No shame to stoupe, ones head more high to reare; And, much to gaine, alitle for to yield: So stoutest knights doen oftentimes in field. But still the tyrant sternely at him layd, And did his yron axe so nimbly wield, That many wounds into his flesh it made, And with his burdenous blowes him sore did overlade.

Yet when as fit advantage he did spy, The whiles the cursed felon high did reare His cruell hand to smite him mortally, Under his stroke he to him stepping neare Right in the flanke him strooke with deadly dreare, That the gore-bloud thence gushing grievously Did underneath him like a pond appeare, And all his armour did with purple dye: Thereat he brayed loud, and yelled dreadfully.

Yet the huge stroke, which he before intended, Kept on his course as he did it direct, And with such monstrous poise adowne descended, That seemed nought could him from death protect; But he it well did ward with wise respect, And twixt him and the blow his shield did cast, Which thereon seizing tooke no great effect; But, byting deepe therein did sticke so fast That by no meanes it backe againe he forth could wrast.

Long while he tug’d and strove to get it out, And all his powre applyed thereunto, That he therewith the knight drew all about: Nathlesse, for all that ever he could doe, His axe he could not from his shield undoe; Which Artegall perceiving strooke no more, But loosing soone his shield did it forgoe; And, whiles he combred was therewith so sore, He gan at him let drive more fiercely then afore.

So well he him pursew'd, that at the last He stroke him with Chrysaor on the hed, That with the souse thereof full sore aghast He staggered to and fro in doubtfull sted. Againe, whiles he him saw so ill bested, He did him smite with all his might and maine, That, falling, on his mother earth he fed: Whom when he saw prostrated on the plaine, He lightly reft his head to ease him of his paine.

Which when the people round about him saw, They shouted all for joy of his successe, Glad to be quit from that proud Tyrants awe, Which with strong powre did them long time oppresse; And, running all with greedie joyfulnesse To faire Irena, at her feet did fall, And her adored with due humblenesse As their true Liege and Princesse naturall; And eke her champions glorie sounded over all.

Who streight her leading with meete majestie Unto the pallace where their kings did rayne, Did her therein establish peaceablie, And to her kingdomes seat restore agayne: And all such persons, as did late maintayne That Tyrants part with close or open ayde, He sorely punished with heavie payne; That in short space, whiles there with her he stayd, Not one was left that durst her once have disobayd.

During which time that he did there remayne, His studie was true Justice how to deale, And day and night employ'd his busie paine How to reforme that ragged common-weale: And that same yron man, which could reveale All hidden crimes, through all that realme he sent To search out those that usd to rob and steale, Or did rebell gainst lawfull government; On whom he did inflict most grievous punishment.

But, ere he coulde reforme it thoroughly, He through occasion called was away To Faerie Court, that of necessity His course of Justice he was forst to stay, And Talus to revoke from the right way In which he was that Realme for to redresse: But envies cloud still dimmeth vertues ray. So, having freed Irena from distresse, He tooke his leave of her there left in heavinesse.

Tho, as he backe returned from that land, And there arriv'd againe whence forth he set, He had not passed farre upon the strand, When as two old ill favour'd Hags he

met, By the way side being together set; Two griesly creatures: and, to that their faces Most foule and filthie were, their garments yet, Being all rag'd and tatter'd, their disgraces Did much the more augment, and made most ugly cases.

The one of them, that elder did appeare, With her dull eyes did seeme to looke askew, That her mis-shape much helpt; and her foule heare Hung loose and loathsomely: Thereto her hew Was wan and leane, that all her teeth arew, And all her bones might through her cheekes be red: Her lips were, like raw lether, pale and blew: And as she spake therewith she slavered; Yet spake she seldom, but thought more the lesse she sed.

Her hands were foule and durtie, never washt In all her life, with long nayles over-raught, Like puttocks clawes; with th'one of which she scracht Her cursed head, although it itched naught: The other held a snake with venime fraught, On which she fed and gnawed hungrily, As if that long she had not eaten ought; That round about her jawes one might descry The bloudie gore and poyson dropping lothsomely.

Her name was Envie, knowen well thereby, Whose nature is to grieve and grudge at all That ever she sees doen prays-worthily; Whose sight to her is greatest crosse may fall, And vexeth so that makes her eat her gall; For, when she wanteth other thing to eat, She feedes on her owne maw unnaturall, And of her owne foule entrayles makes her meat; Meat fit for such a monsters monsterous dyeat:

And if she hapt of any good to heare, That had to any happily betid, Then would she inly fret, and grieve, and teare Her flesh for felnesse, which she inward hid: But if she heard of ill that any did, Or harme that any had, then would she make Great cheare, like one unto a banquet bid, And in anothers losse great pleasure take, As she had got thereby and gayned a great stake.

The other nothing better was then shee, Agreeing in bad will and cancred kynd; But in bad maner they did disagree, For what so Envie good or bad did fynd She did

conceale, and murder her owne mynd; But this, what ever evill she conceived, Did spred abroad and throw in th'open wynd: Yet this in all her words might be perceived, That all she sought was mens good name to have bereaved.

For, whatsoever good by any sayd Or doen she heard, she would streightwayes invent How to deprave or slaunderously upbrayd, Or to misconstrue of a mans intent, And turne to ill the thing that well was ment: Therefore she used often to resort To common haunts, and companies frequent, To hearke what any one did good report, To blot the same with blame, or wrest in wicked sort.

And if that any ill she heard of any, She would it eeke, and make much worse by telling, And take great joy to publish it to many, That every matter worse was for her melling: Her name was hight Detraction, and her dwelling Was neare to Envie, even her neighbour next; A wicked hag, and Envy selfe excelling In mischiefe; for her selfe she onely vext, But this same both her selfe and others eke perplext.

Her face was ugly, and her mouth distort, Foming with poyson round about her gils, In which her cursed tongue, full sharpe and short, Appear'd like Aspis sting that closely kils, Or cruelly does wound whom so she wils: A distaffe in her other hand she had, Upon the which she litle spinnes, but spils; And faynes to weave false tales and leasings bad, To throw amongst the good which others had disprad.

These two now had themselves combynd in one, And linckt together gainst Sir Artegall; For whom they wayted as his mortall fone, How they might make him into mischiefe fall, For freeing from their snares Irena thrall: Besides, unto themselves they gotten had A monster, which the Blatant Beast men call, A dreadfull feend, of gods and men ydrad, Whom they by slights allur'd, and to their purpose lad.

Such were these Hags, and so unhandsome drest: Who when they nigh approching had espyde Sir Artegall, return'd from his late quest, They both arose, and at him loudly cryde, As it had bene two shepheards curres had scryde A ravenous Wolfe amongst the scattered flockes: And Envie first, as she that first him eyde, Towardes

him runs, and, with rude flaring lockes About her eares, does beat her brest and forhead knockes.

Then from her mouth the gobbet she does take, The which whyleare she was so greedily Devouring, even that halfe-gnawen snake, And at him throwes it most despightfully: The cursed Serpent, though she hungrily Earst chawd thereon, yet was not all so dead But that some life remayned secretly; And, as he past afore withouten dread, Bit him behind, that long the marke was to be read.

Then th'other comming neare gan him revile, And fouly rayle with all she could invent; Saying that he had, with unmanly guile And foule abusion, both his honour blent, And that bright sword, the sword of Justice lent, Had stayned with reprochfull crueltie In guiltlesse blood of many an innocent: As for Grandtorto, him with treacherie And traynes having surpriz'd, he fouly did to die.

Thereto the Blatant Beast, by them set on, At him began aloud to barke and bay With bitter rage and fell contention, That all the woods and rockes nigh to that way Began to quake and tremble with dismay; And all the aire rebellowed againe, So dreadfully his hundred tongues did bray: And evermore those hags them selves did paine To sharpen him, and their owne cursed tongs did straine.

And still among most bitter wordes they spake, Most shamefull, most unrighteous, most untrew, That they the mildest man alive would make Forget his patience, and yeeld vengeaunce dew To her, that so false sclaunders at him threw: And more, to make them pierce and wound more deepe, She with the sting which in her vile tongue grew Did sharpen them, and in fresh poyson steepe: Yet he past on, and seem'd of them to take no keepe.

But Talus, hearing her so lewdly raile, And speake so ill of him that well deserved, Would her have chastiz'd with his yron flaile, If her Sir Artegall had not preserved, And him forbidden, who his heast observed: So much the more at him still did she scold, And stones did cast; yet he for nought would swerve From his right course,

but still the way did hold To Faerie Court; where what him fell shall else be told.

Book VI

The Legend of Calidore, or of Courtesy

The waies, through which my weary steps I guyde In this delightfull land of Faery, Are so exceeding spacious and wyde, And sprinckled with such sweet variety Of all that pleasant is to eare or eye, That I, nigh ravisht with rare thoughts delight, My tedious travell doe forget thereby; And, when I gin to feele decay of might, It strength to me supplies, and chears my dulled spright.

Such secret comfort and such heavenly pleasures, Ye sacred imps, that on Parnasso dwell, And there the keeping have of learnings threasures Which doe all worldly riches farre excell, Into the mindes of mortall men doe well, And goodly fury into them infuse, Guyde ye my footing, and conduct me well In these strange waies where never foote did use, Ne none can find but who was taught them by the Muse.

Revele to me the sacred noursery Of vertue, which with you doth there remaine, Where it in silver bowre does hidden ly From view of men, and wicked worlds disdaine; Since it at first was by the Gods with paine Planted in earth, being derived at furst From heavenly seedes of bounty soveraine, And by them long with carefull labour nurst, Till it to ripenesse grew, and forth to honour burst.

Amongst them all growes not a fayrer flowre Then is the bloosme of comely courtesie; Which though it on a lowly stalke doe bowre, Yet brancheth forth in brave nobilitie, And spreds it selfe through all civilitie: Of which though present age doe plenteous seeme, Yet, being matcht with plaine Antiquitie, Ye will them all but fayned showes esteeme, Which carry colours faire that feeble eies misdeeme.

But, in the triall of true curtesie, Its now so farre from that which then it was, That it indeed is nought but forgerie, Fashion’d to please the eies of them that pas, Which see not perfect things but in a glas: Yet is that glasse so gay, that it can blynd The

wisest sight to thinke gold that is bras; But vertues seat is deepe within the mynd, And not in outward shows, but inward thoughts defynd.

But where shall I in all Antiquity So faire a patterne finde, where may be seene The goodly praise of Princely curtesie, As in your selfe, O soveraine Lady Queene? In whose pure minde, as in a mirrour sheene, It showes, and with her brightnesse doth inflame The eyes of all which thereon fixed beene, But meriteth indeede an higher name: Yet so from low to high uplifted is your fame.

Then pardon me, most dreaded Soveraine, That from your selfe I doe this vertue bring, And to your selfe doe it returne againe. So from the Ocean all rivers spring, And tribute backe repay as to their King: Right so from you all goodly vertues well Into the rest which round about you ring, Faire Lords and Ladies which about you dwell, And doe adorne your Court where courtesies excell.

Canto I

Calidore saves from Maleffort A Damsell used vylde: Doth vanquish Crudor; and doth make Brians wexe more mylde.

Of court, it seemes, men Courtesie doe call, For that it there most useth to abound; And well beseemeth that in Princes hall That vertue should be plentifully found, Which of all goodly manners is the ground, And roote of civill conversation: Right so in Faery court it did redound, Where curteous Knights and Ladies most did won Of all on earth, and made a matchlesse paragon.

But mongst them all was none more courteous Knight Then Calidore, beloved over-all, In whom, it seemes, that gentlenesse of spright And manners mylde were planted naturall; To which he adding comely guize withall And gracious speach, did steale mens hearts away: Nathlesse thereto he was full stout and tall, And well approv'd in batteilous affray, That him did much renowme, and far his fame display.

Ne was there Knight ne was there Lady found In Faery court, but him did deare

embrace For his faire usage and conditions sound, The which in all mcns liking gayned place, And with the greatest purchast greatest grace: Which he could wisely use, and well apply, To please the best, and th'evill to embase; For he loathd leasing and base flattery, And loved simple truth and stedfast honesty.

And now he was in travell on his way, Uppon an hard adventure sore bestad, Whenas by chaunce he met uppon a day With Artegall, returning yet halfe sad From his late conquest which he gotten had: Who when as each of other had a sight, They knew them selves, and both their persons rad; When Calidore thus first: "Haile, noblest Knight Of all this day on ground that breathen living spright!

"Now tell, if please you, of the good successe Which ye have had in your late enterprize." To whom Sir Artegall gan to expresse His whole exploite and valorous emprize, In order as it did to him arize. "Now, happy man," (sayd then Sir Calidore) "Which have, so goodly as ye can devize, Atchiev'd so hard a quest, as few before; That shall you most renowmed make for evermore.

"But where ye ended have, now I begin To tread an endlesse trace, withouten guyde Or good direction how to enter in, Or how to issue forth in waies untryde, In perils strange, in labours long and wide; In which although good Fortune me befall, Yet shall it not by none be testifyde." "What is that quest," (quoth then Sir Artegall) "That you into such perils presently doth call?"

"The Blattant Beast" (quoth he) "I doe pursew, And through the world incessantly doe chase, Till I him overtake, or else subdew: Yet know I not or how, or in what place To find him out, yet still I forward trace." "What is that Blattant Beast?" (then he replide.) "It is a Monster bred of hellishe race," (Then answered he) "which often hath annoyd Good Knights and Ladies true, and many else destroyd.

"Of Cerberus whilome he was begot And fell Chimaera, in her darkesome den, Through fowle commixture of his filthy blot; Where he was fostred long in Stygian fen, Till he to perfect ripenesse grew; and then Into this wicked world he forth was

sent To be the plague and scourge of wretched men, Whom with vile tongue and venemous intent He sore doth wound, and bite, and cruelly torment."

"Then, since the salvage Island I did leave," Sayd Artegall, "I such a Beast did see, The which did seeme a thousand tongues to have, That all in spight and malice did agree; With which he bayd and loudly barkt at mee, As if that he attonce would me devoure: But I, that knew my selfe from perill free, Did nought regard his malice nor his powre; But he the more his wicked poyson forth did poure."

"That surely is that Beast" (saide Calidore) "Which I pursue, of whom I am right glad To heare these tidings, which of none afore Through all my weary travell I have had; Yet now some hope your words unto me add." "Now God you speed," (quoth then Sir Artegall) "And keepe your body from the daunger drad, For ye have much adoe to deale withall." So both tooke goodly leave, and parted severall.

Sir Calidore thence travelled not long, When as by chaunce a comely Squire he found, That thorough some more mighty enemies wrong Both hand and foote unto a tree was bound; Who, seeing him from farre, with piteous sound Of his shrill cries him called to his aide: To whom approching, in that painefull stound When he him saw, for no demaunds he staide, But first him losde, and afterwards thus to him saide.

"Unhappy Squire! what hard mishap thee brought Into this bay of perill and disgrace? What cruell hand thy wretched thraldome wrought, And thee captyved in this shamefull place?" To whom he answered thus: "My haplesse case Is not occasiond through my misdesert, But through misfortune, which did me abase Unto this shame, and my young hope subvert, Ere that I in her guilefull traines was well expert.

"Not farre from hence, uppon yond rocky hill, Hard by a streight, there stands a castle strong, Which doth observe a custome lewd and ill, And it hath long mayntaind with mighty wrong: For may no Knight nor Lady passe along That way,

(and yet they needs must passe that way, By reason of the streight, and rocks among) But they that Ladies lockes doe shave away, And that knights berd, for toll which they for passage pay."

"A shamefull use as ever I did heare," Sayd Calidore, "and to be overthrowne. But by what meanes did they at first it reare, And for what cause? tell, if thou have it knowne." Sayd then that Squire; "The Lady, which doth owne This Castle, is by name Briana hight, Then which a prouder Lady liveth none: She long time hath deare lov'd a doughty Knight, And sought to win his love by all the meanes she might.

"His name is Crudor; who, through high disdaine And proud despight of his selfe-pleasing mynd, Refused hath to yeeld her love againe, Untill a Mantle she for him doe fynd With beards of Knights and locks of Ladies lynd: Which to provide she hath this Castle dight, And therein hath a Seneschall assynd, Cald Maleffort, a man of mickle might, Who executes her wicked will with worse despight.

"He, this same day, as I that way did come With a faire Damzell, my beloved deare, In execution of her lawlesse doome Did set uppon us flying both for feare; For little bootes against him hand to reare. Me first he tooke unhable to withstond, And whiles he her pursued every where, Till his returne unto this tree he bond; Ne wote I surely whether her he yet have fond."

Thus whiles they spake they heard a ruefull shrieke Of one loud crying, which they streightway ghest That it was she the which for helpe did seeke. Tho, looking up unto the cry to lest, They saw that Carle from farre, with hand unblest Hayling that mayden by the yellow heare, That all her garments from her snowy brest, And from her head her lockes he nigh did teare, Ne would he spare for pitty, nor refraine for feare.

Which haynous sight when Calidore beheld, Eftsoones he loosd that Squire, and so him left With hearts dismay and inward dolour queld, For to pursue that villaine,

which had reft That piteous spoile by so injurious theft; Whom overtaking, loude to him he cryde: “Leave, faytor, quickely that misgotten weft To him that hath it better justifyde, And turne thee soone to him of whom thou art defyde.”

Who, hearkning to that voice, him selfe upreard, And seeing him so fiercely towardes make, Against him stoutly ran, as nought afeard, But rather more enrag’d for those words sake; And with sterne count’naunce thus unto him spake: “Art thou the caytive that defyest me? And for this Mayd, whose party thou doest take, Wilt give thy beard, though it but little bee? Yet shall it not her lockes for raunsome fro me free.”

With that he fiercely at him flew, and layd On hideous strokes with most importune might, That oft he made him stagger as unstayd, And oft recuile to shunne his sharpe despight: But Calidore, that was well skild in fight, Him long forbore, and still his spirite spar’d, Lying in waite how him he damadge might; But when he felt him shrinke, and come to ward, He greater grew, and gan to drive at him more hard.

Like as a water-streame, whose swelling sourse Shall drive a Mill, within strong bancks is pent, And long restrayned of his ready course, So soone as passage is unto him lent, Breakes forth, and makes his way more violent; Such was the fury of Sir Calidore: When once he felt his foeman to relent, He fiercely him pursu’d, and pressed sore; Who as he still decayd so he encreased more.

The heavy burden of whose dreadfull might Whenas the Carle no longer could sustaine, His heart gan faint, and streight he tooke his flight Toward the Castle, where, if need constraine, His hope of refuge used to remaine: Whom Calidore perceiving fast to flie, He him pursu’d and chaced through the plaine, That he for dread of death gan loude to crie Unto the ward to open to him hastilie.

They, from the wall him seeing so aghast, The gate soone opened to receive him in; But Calidore did follow him so fast, That even in the Porch he him did win, And cleft his head asunder to his chin. The carkasse tumbling downe within the dore Did

choke the entraunce with a lumpe of sin, That it could not be shut; whilest Calidore Did enter in, and slew the Porter on the flore.

With that the rest the which the Castle kept About him flockt, and hard at him did lay; But he them all from him full lightly swept, As doth a Steare, in heat of sommers day, With his long taile the bryzes brush away. Thence passing forth into the hall he came, Where of the Lady selfe in sad dismay He was ymett, who with uncomely shame Gan him salute, and fowle upbrayd with faulty blame.

“False traytor Knight!” (said she) “no Knight at all, But scorne of armes, that hast with guilty hand Murdred my men, and slaine my Seneschall, Now comest thou to rob my house unmand, And spoile my selfe that can not thee withstand? Yet doubt thou not, but that some better Knight Then thou, that shall thy treason understand, Will it avenge, and pay thee with thy right; And if none do, yet shame shal thee with shame requight.”

Much was the Knight abashed at that word; Yet answer’d thus: “Not unto me the shame, But to the shamefull doer it afford. Bloud is no blemish, for it is no blame To punish those that doe deserve the same; But they that breake bands of civilitie, And wicked customes make, those doe defame Both noble armes and gentle curtesie. No greater shame to man then inhumanitie.

“Then doe your selfe, for dread of shame, forgoe This evill manner which ye here maintaine, And doe instead thereof mild curt’sie showe To all that passe: That shall you glory gaine More then his love, which thus ye seeke t’obtaine.” Wherewith all full of wrath she thus replyde: “Vile recreant! know that I doe much disdaine Thy courteous lore, that doest my love deride, Who scornes thy ydle scoffe, and bids thee be defyde.”

“To take defiaunce at a Ladies word” (Quoth he) “I hold it no indignity; But were he here, that would it with his sword Abett, perhaps he mote it deare aby.” “Cowherd!” (quoth she) “were not that thou wouldst fly Ere he doe come, he should be soone in

place." "If I doe so," (sayd he) "then liberty I leave to you for aye me to disgrace With all those shames, that erst ye spake me to deface."

With that a Dwarfe she cald to her in hast, And taking from her hand a ring of gould, A privy token which betweene them past, Bad him to flie with all the speed he could To Crudor; and desire him that he would Vouchsafe to reskue her against a Knight, Who through strong powre had now her self in hould, Having late slaine her Seneschall in fight, And all her people murdred with outragious might:

The Dwarfe his way did hast, and went all night; But Calidore did with her there abyde The comming of that so much threatned Knight; Where that discourteous Dame with scornfull pryde And fowle entreaty him indignifyde, That yron heart it hardly could sustaine: Yet he, that could his wrath full wisely guyde, Did well endure her womanish disdaine, And did him selfe from fraile impatience refraine.

The morrow next, before the lampe of light Above the earth upreard his flaming head, The Dwarfe, which bore that message to her knight, Brought aunswere backe, that ere he tasted bread He would her succour, and alive or dead Her foe deliver up into her hand: Therefore he wild her doe away all dread; And, that of him she mote assured stand, He sent to her his basenet as a faithfull band.

Thereof full blyth the Lady streight became, And gan t'augment her bitternesse much more; Yet no whit more appalled for the same, Ne ought dismayed was Sir Calidore, But rather did more chearefull seeme therefore: And having soone his armes about him dight, Did issue forth to meete his foe afore; Where long he stayed not, when as a Knight He spide come pricking on with all his powre and might.

Well weend he streight that he should be the same Which tooke in hand her quarrell to maintaine; Ne stayd to aske if it were he by name, But coucht his speare, and ran at him amaine. They bene ymett in middest of the plaine With so fell fury and dispiteous forse, That neither could the others stroke sustaine, But rudely rowld to ground, both man and horse, Neither of other taking pitty nor remorse.

But Calidore uprose againe full light, Whiles yet his foe lay fast in sencelesse swound; Yet would he not him hurt although he might; For shame he weend a sleeping wight to wound. But when Briana saw that drery stound, There where she stood uppon the Castle wall, She deem'd him sure to have bene dead on ground; And made such piteous mourning therewithall, That from the battlements she ready seem'd to fall.

Nathlesse at length him selfe he did upreare In lustlesse wise; as if against his will, Ere he had slept his fill, he wakened were, And gan to stretch his limbs; which feeling ill Of his late fall, awhile he rested still: But, when he saw his foe before in vew, He shooke off luskishnesse; and courage chill Kindling afresh, gan battell to renew, To prove if better foote then horsebacke would ensew.

There then began a fearefull cruell fray Betwixt them two for maystery of might; For both were wondrous practicke in that play, And passing well expert in single fight, And both inflam'd with furious despight; Which as it still encreast, so still increast Their cruell strokes and terrible affright; Ne once for ruth their rigour they releast, Ne once to breath awhile their angers tempest ceast.

Thus long they trac'd and traverst to and fro, And tryde all waies how each mote entrance make Into the life of his malignant foe: They hew'd their helmes, and plates asunder brake, As they had potshares bene; for nought mote slake Their greedy vengeaunces but goary blood, That at the last like to a purple lake Of bloudy gore congeal'd about them stood, Which from their riven sides forth gushed like a flood.

At length it chaunst that both their hands on hie At once did heave with all their powre and might, Thinking the utmost of their force to trie, And prove the finall fortune of the fight; But Calidore, that was more quicke of sight And nimbler handed then his enemie, Prevented him before his stroke could light, And on the helmet smote him formerlie, That made him stoupe to ground with meeke humilitie:

And, ere he could recover foote againe, He, following that faire advantage fast, His stroke redoubled with such might and maine, That him upon the ground he groveling cast; And leaping to him light would have unlast His Helme, to make unto his vengeance way: Who, seeing in what daunger he was plast, Cryde out; “Ah mercie, Sir! doe me not slay, But save my life, which lot before your foot doth lay.”

With that his mortall hand a while he stayd; And, having somewhat calm’d his wrathfull heat With goodly patience, thus he to him sayd: “And is the boast of that proud Ladies threat, That menaced me from the field to beat, Now brought to this? By this now may ye learne Strangers no more so rudely to entreat, But put away proud looke and usage sterne, The which shal nought to you but foule dishonor yearne.

“For nothing is more blamefull to a knight, That court’sie doth as well as armes professe, However strong and fortunate in fight, Then the reproch of pride and cruelnesse. In vaine he seeketh others to suppresse, Who hath not learnd him selfe first to subdew: All flesh is frayle and full of ficklenesse, Subject to fortunes chance, still chaunging new: What haps to day to me to morrow may to you.

“Who will not mercie unto others shew, How can he mercy ever hope to have? To pay each with his owne is right and dew; Yet since ye mercie now doe need to crave, I will it graunt, your hopelesse life to save, With these conditions which I will propound: First, that ye better shall your selfe behave Unto all errant knights, whereso on ground; Next, that ye Ladies ayde in every stead and stound.”

The wretched man, that all this while did dwell In dread of death, his heasts did gladly heare, And promist to performe his precept well, And whatsoever else he would requere. So, suffring him to rise, he made him sweare By his owne sword, and by the crosse thereon, To take Briana for his loving fere Withouten dowre or composition; But to release his former foule condition.

All which accepting, and with faithfull oth Bynding himselfe most firmely to obay,

He up arose, however liefe or loth, And swore to him true fealtie for aye. Then forth he cald from sorrowfull dismay The sad Briana which all this beheld; Who comming forth yet full of late affray Sir Calidore upcheard, and to her teld All this accord to which he Cruder had compeld.

Whereof she now more glad then sory earst, All overcome with infinite affect For his exceeding courtesie, that pearst Her stubborne hart with inward deepe effect, Before his feet her selfe she did project; And him adoring as her lives deare Lord, With all due thankes and dutifull respect, Her selfe acknowledg'd bound for that accord, By which he had to her both life and love restord.

So all returning to the Castle glad, Most joyfully she them did entertaine; Where goodly glee and feast to them she made, To show her thankefull mind and meaning faine, By all the meanes she mote it best explaine: And, after all, unto Sir Calidore She freely gave that Castle for his paine, And her selfe bound to him for evermore; So wondrously now chaung'd from that she was afore.

But Calidore himselfe would not retaine Nor land nor fee for hyre of his good deede, But gave them streight unto that Squire againe, Whom from her Seneschall he lately freed, And to his damzell, as their rightfull meed For recompence of all their former wrong. There he remaind with them right well agreed, Till of his wounds he wexed hole and strong; And then to his first quest he passed forth along.

Canto II

Calidore sees young Tristram slay A proud discourteous Knight: He makes him Squire, and of him learnes His state and present plight.

What vertue is so fitting for a knight, Or for a Ladie whom a knight should love, As Curtesie; to beare themselves aright To all of each degree as doth behove? For whether they be placed high above Or low beneath, yet ought they well to know Their good; that none them rightly may reprove Of rudenesse for not yeelding what

they owe: Great skill it is such duties timely to bestow.

Thereto great helpe dame Nature selfe doth lend; For some so goodly gratious are by kind, That every action doth them much commend, And in the eyes of men great liking find, Which others that have greater skill in mind, Though they enforce themselves, cannot attaine; For everie thing to which one is inclin'd Doth best become and greatest grace doth gaine: Yet praise likewise deserve good thewes enforst with paine.

That well in courteous Calidore appeares; Whose every deed and word, that he did say, Was like enchantment, that through both the eares And both the eyes did steale the hart away. He now againe is on his former way To follow his first quest, when as he spyde A tall young man, from thence not farre away, Fighting on foot, as well he him descryde, Against an armed knight that did on horsebacke ryde.

And them beside a Ladie faire he saw Standing alone on foot in foule array; To whom himselfe he hastily did draw To weet the cause of so uncomely fray, And to depart them, if so be he may: But, ere he came in place, that youth had kild That armed knight, that low on ground he lay: Which when he saw, his hart was inly child With great amazement, and his thought with wonder fild.

Him stedfastly he markt, and saw to bee A goodly youth of amiable grace, Yet but a slender slip, that scarse did see Yet seventeene yeares, but tall and faire of face, That sure he deem'd him borne of noble race: All in a woodmans jacket he was clad Of Lincolne greene, belayd with silver lace; And on his head an hood with aglets sprad, And by his side his hunters home he hanging had.

Buskins he wore of costliest cordwayne, Pinckt upon gold, and paled part per part, As then the guize was for each gentle swayne: In his right hand he held a trembling dart, Whose fellow he before had sent apart; And in his left he held a sharpe bore-speare, With which he wont to launch the salvage hart Of many a Lyon and of many a Beare, That first unto his hand in chase did happen neare.

Whom Calidore awhile well having vewed At length bespake; “What meanes this, gentle Swaine? Why hath thy hand too bold it selfe embrewed In blood of knight, the which by thee is slaine, By thee no knight; which armes impugneth plaine?” “Certes,” (said he) “loth were I to have broken The law of armes: yet breake it should againe, Rather then let my selfe of wight be stroken, So long as these two armes were able to be wroken.

“For not I him, as this his Ladie here May witnesse well, did offer first to wrong, Ne surely thus unarm’d I likely were; But he me first through pride and puissance strong Assayld, not knowing what to armes doth long.” “Perdie great blame” (then said Sir Calidore) “For armed knight a wight unarm’d to wrong: But then aread, thou gentle chyld, wherefore Betwixt you two began this strife and sterne uprore.”

“That shall I, sooth,” (said he) “to you declare. I, whose unryper yeares are yet unfit For thing of weight or worke of greater care, Doe spend my dayes and bend my carelesse wit To salvage chace, where I thereon may hit In all this forrest and wyld wooddie raine: Where, as this day I was enraunging it, I chaunst to meete this knight, who there lyes slaine, Together with this Ladie, passing on the plaine.

“The knight, as ye did see, on horsebacke was, And this his Ladie (that him ill became) On her faire feet by his horse side did pas Through thicke and thin, unfit for any Dame: Yet not content, more to increase his shame, When so she lagged, as she needs mote so, He with his speare, that was to him great blame, Would thumpe her forward and inforce to goe, Weeping to him in vaine and making piteous woe.

“Which when I saw, as they me passed by, Much was I moved in indignant mind, And gan to blame him for such cruelty Towards a Ladie, whom with usage kind He rather should have taken up behind; Wherewith he wroth, and full of proud disdaine, Tooke in foule scorne that I such fault did find, And me in lieu thereof revil’d againe, Threatning to chastize me, as doth t’a chyld pertaine.

“Which I no lesse disdayning, backe returned His scornefull taunts unto his teeth

againe, That he streightway with haughtie choler burned, And with his speare strooke me one stroke or twaine; Which I, enforst to beare though to my paine, Cast to requite; and with a slender dart, Fellow of this I beare, throwne not in vaine, Strooke him, as seemeth, underneath the hart, That through the wound his spirit shortly did depart."

Much did Sir Calidore admyre his speach Tempred so well, but more admyr'd the stroke That through the mayles had made so strong a breach Into his hart, and had so sternely wroke His wrath on him that first occasion broke; Yet rested not, but further gan inquire Of that same Ladie, whether what he spoke Were soothly so, and that th'unrighteous ire Of her owne knight had given him his owne due hire?

Of all which when as she could nought deny, But cleard that stripling of th'imputed blame, Sayd then Sir Calidore; "Neither will I Him charge with guilt, but rather doe quite clame: For what he spake, for you he spake it, Dame; And what he did, he did him selfe to save: Against both which that knight wrought knightlesse shame; For knights and all men this by nature have, Towards all womenkind them kindly to behave.

But, sith that he is gone irrevocable, Please it you, Ladie, to us to aread What cause could make him so dishonourable To drive you so on foot, unfit to tread And lackey by him, gainst all womanhead." "Certes, Sir knight," (sayd she) "full loth I were To rayse a lyving blame against the dead; But since it me concernes my selfe to clere, I will the truth discover as it chaunst whylere.

"This day, as he and I together roade Upon our way to which we weren bent, We chaunst to come foreby a covert glade Within a wood, whereas a Ladie gent Sate with a knight in joyous jolliment Of their franke loves, free from all gealous spyes. Faire was the Ladie, sure, that mote content An hart not carried with too curious eyes, And unto him did shew all lovely courtesyes.

"Whom when my knight did see so lovely faire, He inly gan her lover to envy, And

wish that he part of his spoyle might share: Whereto when as my presence he did spy To be a let, he bad me by and by For to alight: but when as I was loth My loves owne part to leave so suddenly, He with strong hand downe from his steed me throw'th And with presumpteous powre against that knight streight go'th.

"Unarm'd all was the knight, as then more meete For Ladies service, and for loves delight, Then fearing any foeman there to meete: Whereof he taking oddes, streight bids him dight Himselfe to yeeld his Love, or else to fight: Whereat the other starting up dismayd, Yet boldly answer'd, as he rightly might, To leave his love he should be ill apayd, In which he had good right gaynst all that it gainesayd.

"Yet since he was not presently in plight Her to defend, or his to justifie, He him requested, as he was a knight, To lend him day his better right to trie, Or stay till he his armes, which were thereby, Might lightly fetch: But he was fierce and whot, Ne time would give, nor any termes aby, But at him flew, and with his speare him smot; From which to thinke to save himselfe it booted not.

"Meane while his Ladie, which his outrage saw, Whilest they together for the quarrey strove, Into the covert did her selfe withdraw, And closely hid her selfe within the grove. My knight hers soone, as seemes, to daunger drove, And left sore wounded: but, when her he mist, He woxe halfe mad; and in that rage gan rove And range through all the wood, where so he wist She hidden was, and sought her so long as him list.

"But, when as her he by no meanes could find, After long search and chauff he turned backe Unto the place where me he left behind: There gan he me to curse and ban, for lacke Of that faire bootie, and with bitter wracke To wreake on me the guilt of his owne wrong: Of all which I yet glad to beare the packe Strove to appease him, and perswaded long; But still his passion grew more violent and strong.

"Then, as it were t'avenge his wrath on mee, When forward we should fare he flat refused To take me up (as this young man did see) Upon his steed, for no just cause

accused, But forst to trot on foot, and foule misused, Pounching me with the butt end of his speare, In vaine complayning to be so abused; For he regarded neither playnt nor teare, But more enforst my paine, the more my plaints to heare.

“So passed we till this young man us met; And being moov’d with pittie of my plight Spake, as was meet, for ease of my regret: Whereof befell what now is in your sight.” “Now sure,” (then said Sir Calidore) “and right, Me seemes, that him befell by his owne fault: Who ever thinkes through confidence of might, Or through support of count’nance proud and hault, To wrong the weaker, oft falles in his owne assault.”

Then turning: backe unto that gentle boy, Which had himselfe so stoutly well acquit, Seeing his face so lovely sterne and coy, And hearing th’answeres of his pregnant wit, He praysd it much, and much admyred it; That sure he weend him borne of noble blood, With whom those graces did so goodly fit: And when he long had him beholding stood, He burst into these wordes, as to him seemed good:

“Faire gentle swayne, and yet as stout as fayre, That in these woods amongst the Nymphs dost wonne, Which daily may to thy sweete lookes repayre, As they are wont unto Latonaes sonne After his chace on woodie Cynthus donne; Well may I, certes, such an one thee read, As by thy worth thou worthily hast wonne, Or surely borne of some Heroicke sead, That in thy face appeares and gratious goodlyhead.

“But, should it not displease thee it to tell, (Unlesse thou in these woods thy selfe conceale For love amongst the woodie Gods to dwell) I would thy selfe require thee to reveale, For deare affection and unfayned zeale Which to thy noble personage I beare, And wish thee grow in worship and great weale; For, since the day that armes I first did reare, I never saw in any greater hope appeare.”

To whom then thus the noble Youth: “May be, Sir knight, that, by discovering my estate, Harme may arise unweeting unto me; Nathelesse, sith ye so courteous seemed late, To you I will not feare it to relate. Then wote ye that I am a Briton

borne, Sonne of a King, (how ever thorough fate Or fortune I my countrie have forlorne, And lost the crowne which should my head by right adorne,)

“And Tristram is my name, the onely heire Of good king Meliogras which did rayne In Cornewale, till that he through lives despeire Untimely dyde, before I did attaine Ripe yeares of reason my right to maintaine: After whose death his brother, seeing mee An infant, weake a kingdome to sustaine, Upon him tooke the roiall high degree, And sent me, where him list, instructed for to bee.

“The widow Queene my mother, which then hight Faire Emiline, conceiving then great feare Of my fraile safetie, resting in the might Of him that did the kingly Scepter beare, Whose gealous dread induring not a peare Is wont to cut off all that doubt may breed, Thought best away me to remove somewhere Into some forrein land, where as no need Of dreaded daunger might his doubtfull humor feed.

“So, taking counsell of a wise man red, She was by him adviz’d to send me quight Out of the countrie wherein I was bred, The which the fertile Lionesse is hight, Into the land of Faerie, where no wight Should weet of me, nor worke me any wrong: To whose wise read she hearkning sent me streight Into this land, where I have wond thus long Since I was ten yeares old, now growen to stature strong.

“All which my daies I have not lewdly spent, Nor spilt the blossome of my tender yeares In ydlesse; but, as was convenient, Have trayned bene with many noble feres In gentle thewes and such like seemly leres: Mongst which my most delight hath alwaies been To hunt the salvage chace, amongst my peres, Of all that raungeth in the forrest greene, Of which none is to me unknowne that ev’r was seene.

“Ne is there hauke which mantleth her on pearch, Whether high towring or accoasting low, But I the measure of her flight doe search, And all her pray and all her diet know. Such be our joyes which in these forrests grow: Onely the use of armes, which most I joy, And fitteth most for noble swayne to know, I have not tasted yet; yet past a boy, And being now high time these strong joynts to imploy.

“Therefore, good Sir, sith now occasion fit Doth fall, whose like hereafter seldome may, Let me this crave, unworthy though of it, That ye will make me Squire without delay, That from henceforth in batteilous array I may beare armes, and learne to use them right; The rather, since that fortune hath this day Given to me the spoile of this dead knight, These goodly gilden armes which I have won in fight.”

All which when well Sir Calidore had heard, Him much more now then earst he gan admire For the rare hope which in his yeares appear’d, And thus replide: “Faire chyld, the high desire To love of armes, which in you doth aspire, I may not, certes, without blame denie, But rather wish that some more noble hire (Though none more noble then is chevalrie) I had, you to reward with greater dignitie.”

There him he causd to kneele, and made to sweare Faith to his knight, and truth to Ladies all, And never to be recreant for feare Of perill, or of ought that might befall: So he him dubbed, and his Squire did call. Full glad and joyous then young Tristram grew; Like as a flowre, whose silken leaves small Long shut up in the bud from heavens vew, At length breakes forth, and brode displayes his smyling hew.

Thus when they lone had treated to and fro, And Calidore betooke him to depart, Chyld Tristram prayd that he with him might goe On his adventure, vowing not to start, But wayt on him in every place and part: Whereat Sir Calidore did much delight, And greatly joy’d at his so noble hart, In hope he sure would prove a doughtie knight: Yet for the time this answere he to him behight.

“Glad would I surely be, thou courteous Squire, To have thy presence in my present quest, That mote thy kindled courage set on fire, And flame forth honour in thy noble brest; But I am bound by vow, which I profest To my dread Soveraine, when I it assayd, That in atchievement of her high behest I should no creature joyne unto mine ayde: Forthy I may not graunt that ye so greatly prayde.

“But since this Ladie is all desolate, And needeth safegard now upon her way, Ye may doe well, in this her needfull state, To succour her from daunger of dismay,

That thankfull guerdon may to you repay." The noble ympe, of such new service fayne, It gladly did accept, as he did say: So taking courteous leave they parted twayne, And Calidore forth passed to his former payne.

But Tristram, then despoyling that dead knight Of all those goodly implements of prayse, Long fed his greedie eyes with the faire sight Of the bright mettall shyning like Sunne rayes, Handling and turning them a thousand wayes: And, after having them upon him dight, He tooke that Ladie, and her up did rayse Upon the steed of her owne late dead knight; So with her marched forth, as she did him behight.

There to their fortune leave we them awhile, And turne we backe to good Sir Calidore; Who, ere he thence had traveild many a mile, Came to the place whereas ye heard afore This knight, whom Tristram slew, had wounded sore Another knight in his despiteous pryde: There he that knight found lying on the flore With many wounds full perilous and wyde, That all his garments and the grasse in vermeill dyde.

And there beside him sate upon the ground His wofull Ladie, piteously complayning With loud laments that most unluckie stound, And her sad selfe with carefull hand constrayning, To wype his wounds, and ease their bitter payning. Which sorie sight when Calidore did vew With heavie eyne, from teares uneath refrayning, His mightie hart their mournefull case can rew, And for their better comfort to them nigher drew.

Then speaking to the Ladie thus he said: "Ye dolefull Dame, let not your griefe empeach To tell what cruell hand hath thus arayd This knight unarm'd with so unknightly breach Of armes, that, if I yet him nigh may reach, I may avenge him of so foule despight." The Ladie, hearing his so courteous speach, Gan reare her eyes as to the chearefull light, And from her sory hart few heavie words forth sight:

In which she shew'd, how that discourteous knight, (Whom Tristram slew) them in that shadow found Joying together in unblam'd delight; And him unarm'd, as now

he lay on ground, Charg'd with his speare, and mortally did wound, Withouten cause, but onely her to reave From him to whom she was for ever bound: Yet when she fled into that covert greave, He, her not finding, both them thus nigh dead did leave.

When Calidore this ruefull storie had Well understood, he gan of her demand, What manner wight he was, and how yclad, Which had this outrage wrought with wicked hand. She then, like as she best could understand, Him thus describ'd; to be of stature large, Clad all in gilden armes, with azure band Quartred athwart, and bearing in his targe A Ladie on rough waves row'd in a sommer barge.

Then gan Sir Calidore to ghesse streightway, By many signes which she described had, That this was he whom Tristram earst did slay, And to her said: "Dame, be no longer sad; For he, that hath your Knight so ill bestad, Is now him selfe in much more wretched plight: These eyes him saw upon the cold earth sprad, The meede of his desert for that despight, Which to your selfe he wrought and to your loved knight.

"Therefore, faire Lady, lay aside this griefe, Which ye have gathered to your gentle hart For that displeasure, and thinke what reliefe Were best devise for this your lovers smart; And how ye may him hence, and to what part, Convay to be recur'd." She thankt him deare Both for that newes he did to her impart, And for the courteous care which he did beare Both to her love and to her selfe in that sad dreare.

Yet could she not devise by any wit, How thence she might convay him to some place; For him to trouble she it thought unfit, That was a straunger to her wretched case; And him to beare she thought it thing too base. Which when as he perceiv'd he thus bespake: "Faire Lady, let it not you seeme disgrace To beare this burden on your dainty backe; My selfe will beare a part, coportion of your packe."

So off he did his shield, and downeward layd Upon the ground, like to an hollow beare; And powring balme, which he had long purvayd, Into his wounds, him up

thereon did reare, And twixt them both with parted paines did beare, Twixt life and death, not knowing what was donne. Thence they him carried to a Castle neare, In which a worthy auncient Knight did wonne: Where what ensu'd shall in next Canto be begonne.

Canto III

Calidore brings Priscilla home; Pursues the Blatant Beast: Saves Sérena, whilest Calepine By Turpine is opprest.

True is, that whilome that good Poet sayd, The gentle minde by gentle deeds is knowne: For a man by nothing is so well bewrayd As by his manners; in which plaine is showne Of what degree and what race he is growne: For seldome seene a trotting Stalion get An ambling Colt, that is his proper owne: So seldome seene that one in basenesse set Doth noble courage shew with curteous manners met.

But evermore contrary hath bene tryde, That gentle bloud will gentle manners breed; As well may be in Calidore descryde, By late ensample of that courteous deed Done to that wounded Knight in his great need, Whom on his backe he bore, till he him brought Unto the Castle where they had decreed: There of the Knight, the which that Castle ought, To make abode that night he greatly was besought.

He was to weete a man of full ripe yeares, That in his youth had beene of mickle might, And borne great sway in armes amongst his peares; But now weake age had dimd his candle-light: Yet was he courteous still to every wight, And loved all that did to armes incline; And was the Father of that wounded Knight, Whom Calidore thus carried on his chine; And Aldus was his name; and his sonnes, Aladine.

Who when he saw his sonne so ill bedight With bleeding wounds, brought home upon a beare By a faire Lady and a straunger Knight, Was inly touched with compassion deare, And deare affection of so dolefull dreare, That he these words burst forth: "Ah, sory boy! Is this the hope that to my hoary heare Thou brings? aie

me! is this the timely joy, Which I expected long, now turnd to sad annoy?

“Such is the weakenesse of all mortall hope, So tickle is the state of earthly things, That, ere they come unto their aymed scope, They fall too short of our fraile reckonings, And bring us bale and bitter sorrowings, Instead of comfort which we should embrace: This is the state of Keasars and of Kings! Let none therefore, that is in meaner place, Too greatly grieve at any his unlucky case.”

So well and wisely did that good old Knight Temper his griefe, and turned it to cheare, To cheare his guests whom he had stayd that night, And make their welcome to them well appeare. That to Sir Calidore was easie geare; But that faire Lady would be cheard for nought, But sigh’d and sorrow’d for her lover deare, And inly did afflict her pensive thought With thinking to what case her name should now be brought:

For she was daughter to a noble Lord Which dwelt thereby, who sought her to affy To a great pere; but she did disaccord, Ne could her liking to his love apply, But lov’d this fresh young Knight who dwelt her ny, The lusty Aladine, though meaner borne And of lesse livelood and hability, Yet full of valour the which did adorne His meanesse much, and make her th’others riches scorne.

So, having both found fit occasion, They met together in that lucklesse glade; Where that proud Knight in his presumption The gentle Aladine did earst invade, Being unarm’d and set in secret shade. Whereof she now bethinking, gan t’advize How great a hazard she at earst had made Of her good fame; and further gan devize How she the blame might salve with coloured disguize.

But Calidore with all good courtesie Fain’d her to frolicke, and to put away The pensive fit of her melancholie; And that old Knight by all meanes did assay To make them both as merry as he may. So they the evening past till time of rest; When Calidore in seemly good array Unto his bowre was brought, and there undrest Did sleepe all night through weary travell of his quest.

But faire Priscilla (so that Lady hight) Would to no bed, nor take no kindely sleepe, But by her wounded love did watch all night, And all the night for bitter anguish weepe, And with her teares his wounds did wash and steepe: So well she washt them, and so well she wacht him, That of the deadly swound, in which full deepe He drenched was, she at the length dispacht him, And drove away the stound which mortally attacht him.

The morrow next, when day gan to uplooke, He also gan uplooke with drery eye, Like one that out of deadly dreame awooke: Where when he saw his faire Priscilla by, He deepely sigh'd, and groaned inwardly, To thinke of this ill state in which she stood; To which she for his sake had weetingly Now brought her selfe, and blam'd her noble blood: For first, next after life, he tendered her good.

Which she perceiving did with plenteous teares His care more then her owne compassionate, rorgethill of her owne to mmde his feares: So both conspiring gan to intimate Each others griefe with zeale affectionate, And twixt them twaine with equall care to cast How to save hole her hazarded estate; For which the onely helpe now left them last Seem'd to be Calidore: all other helpes were past.

Him they did deeme, as sure to them he seemed, A courteous Knight and full of faithfull trust; Therefore to him their cause they best esteemed Whole to commit, and to his dealing just. Earely, so soone as Titans beames forth brust Through the thicke clouds in which they steeped lay All night in darkenesse, duld with yron rust, Calidore rising up as fresh as day Gan freshly him addresse unto his former way.

But first him seemed fit that wounded Knight To visite, after this nights perillous passe, And to salute him, if he were in plight, And eke that Lady, his faire lovely lasse. There he him found much better then he was; And moved speach to him of things of course, The anguish of his paine to overpasse: Mongst which he namely did to him discourse Of former daies mishap, his sorrowes wicked sourse.

Of which occasion Aldine taking hold Gan breake to him the fortunes of his love,

And all his disadventures to unfold, That Calidore it dearly deepe did move: In th'end, his kyndly courtesie to prove, He him by all the bands of love besought, And as it mote a faithfull friend behove, To safe-conduct his love, and not for ought To leave, till to her fathers house he had her brought.

Sir Calidore his faith thereto did plight It to performe: so after little stay, That she her selfe had to the journey dight, He passed forth with her in faire array, Fearlesse who ought did thinke or ought did say, Sith his own thought he knew most cleare from wite: So, as they past together on their way, He can devize this counter-cast of slight, To give faire colour to that Ladies cause in sight.

Streight to the carkasse of that Knight he went, The cause of all this evill, who was slaine The day before by just avengement Of noble Tristram, where it did remaine: There he the necke thereof did cut in twaine, And tooke with him the head, the signe of shame. So forth he passed thorough that daies paine, Till to that Ladies fathers house he came; Most pensive man, through feare what of his childe became.

There he arriving boldly did present The fearefull Lady to her father deare, Most perfect pure, and guiltlesse innocent Of blame, as he did on his Knighthood sweare, Since first he saw her, and did free from feare Of a discourteous Knight, who her had reft And by outragious force away did beare: Witnesse thereof he shew'd his head there left, And wretched life forlorne for vengement of his theft.

Most joyfull man her sire was her to see, And heare th'adventure of her late mischaunce; And thousand thankes to Calidore for fee Of his large paines in her deliveraunce Did yeeld: Ne lesse the Lady did advaunce. Thus having her restored trustily, As he had vow'd, some small continuance He there did make, and then most carefully Unto his first exploite he did him selfe apply.

So, as he was pursuing of his quest, He chaunst to come whereas a jolly Knight In covert shade him selfe did safely rest, To solace with his Lady in delight: His warlike armes he had from him undight, For that him selfe he thought from daunger

free, And far from envious eyes that mote him spight; And eke the Lady was full faire to see, And courteous withall, becomming her degree.

To whom Sir Calidore approaching nye, Ere they were well aware of living wight, Them much abasht, but more him selfe thereby, That he so rudely did uppon them light, And troubled had their quiet loves delight: Yet since it was his fortune, not his fault, Him selfe thereof he labour'd to acquite, And pardon crav'd for his so rash default, That he gainst courtesie so fowly did default.

With which his gentle words and goodly wit He soone allayd that Knights conceiv'd displeasure, That he besought him downe by him to sit, That they mote treat of things abrode at leasure, And of adventures, which had in his measure Of so long waies to him befallen late. So downe he sate, and with delightfull pleasure His long adventures gan to him relate, Which he endured had through daungerous debate:

Of which whitest they discoursed both together, The faire Serena (so his Lady hight) Allur'd with myldnesse of the gentle wether And pleasaunce of the place, the which was dight With divers flowres distinct with rare delight, Wandred about the fields, as liking led Her wavering lust after her wandring sight, To make a garland to adorne her hed, Without suspect of ill or daungers hidden dred.

All sodainely out of the Forrest nere The Blatant Beast forth rushing unaware Caught her, thus loosely wandring here and there, And in his wide great mouth away her bare Crying aloud to shew her sad misfare Unto the Knights, and calling oft for ayde; Who with the horrour of her haplesse care Hastily starting up, like men dismayde, Ran after fast to reskue the distressed mayde.

The Beast, with their pursuit incited more, Into the wood was bearing her apace For to have spoyled her, when Calidore, Who was more light of foote and swift in chace, Him overtooke in middest of his race; And, fiercely charging him with all his might, Forst to forgoe his pray there in the place, And to betake him selfe to fearefull flight; For he durst not abide with Calidore to fight.

Who nathelesse, when he the Lady saw There left on ground, though in full evill plight, Yet knowing that her Knight now neare did draw, Staide not to succour her in that affright, But follow'd fast the Monster in his flight: Through woods and hils he follow'd him so fast, That he nould let him breath, nor gather spright, But forst him gape and gaspe, with dread aghast, As if his lungs and lites were nigh asunder brast.

And now by this Sir Calepine (so hight) Came to the place where he his Lady found In dolorous dismay and deadly plight, All in gore bloud there tumbled on the ground, Having both sides through grypt with griesly wound, His weapons soone from him he threw away, And stouping downe to her in drery swound Uprear'd her from the ground whereon she lay, And in his tender armes her forced up to stay.

So well he did his busie paines apply, That the faint sprite he did revoke againe To her fraile mansion of mortality: Then up he tooke her twixt his armes twaine, And setting on his steede her did sustaine With carefull hands, soft footing her beside; Till to some place of rest they mote attaine, Where she in safe assuraunce mote abide, Till she recured were of those her woundes wide.

Now when as Phœbus with his fiery waine Unto his Inne began to draw apace; Tho wexing weary of that toylesome paine, In travelling on foote so long a space, Not wont on foote with heavy armes to trace, Downe in a dale forby a rivers syde He chaunst to spie a faire and stately place, To which he meant his weary steps to guyde, In hope there for his love some succour to provyde.

But, comming to the rivers side, he found That hardly passable on foote it was; Therefore there still he stood as in a stound, Ne wist which way he through the foord mote pas: Thus whilest he was in this distressed case, Devising what to doe, he nigh espyde An armed Knight approaching to the place With a faire Lady lincked by his syde, The which themselves prepard thorough the foord to ride.

Whom Calepine saluting (as became) Besought of courtesie, in that his neede, For safe conducting of his sickely Dame Through that same perillous foord with better

heede, To take him up behinde upon his steed; To whom that other did this taunt returne: “Perdy, thou peasant Knight mightst rightly reed Me then to be full base and evill borne, If I would beare behinde a burden of such scorne.

“But, as thou hast thy steed forlorne with shame, So fare on foote till thou another gayne, And let thy Lady likewise doe the same, Or beare her on thy backe with pleasing payne, And prove thy manhood on the billowes vayne.” With which rude speach his Lady much displeased Did him reprove, yet could him not restrayne, And would on her owne Palfrey him have eased, For pitty of his Dame whom she saw so diseased.

Sir Calepine her thanckt; yet, inly wroth Against her Knight, her gentlenesse refused, And carelesly into the river goth, As in despight to be so fowle abused Of a rude churle, whom often he accused Of fowle discourtesie, unfit for Knight, And, strongly wading through the waves unused, With speare in th’one hand stayd him selfe upright, With th’other staide his Lady up with steddy might.

And all the while that same discourteous Knight Stood on the further bancke beholding him; At whose calamity, for more despight, He laught, and mockt to see him like to swim: But when as Calepine came to the brim, And saw his carriage past that perill well, Looking at that same Carle with count’nance grim, His heart with vengeaunce inwardly did swell, And forth at last did breake in speaches sharpe and fell:

“Unknightly Knight, the blemish of that name, And blot of all that armes uppon them take, Which is the badge of honour and of fame, Loe! I defie thee; and here challenge make, That thou for ever doe those armes forsake, And be for ever held a recreant Knight, Unlesse thou dare, for thy deare Ladies sake And for thine owne defence, on foote alight To justifie thy fault gainst me in equall fight.”

The dastard, that did heare him selfe defyde, Seem’d not to weigh his threatfull words at all, But laught them out, as if his greater pryde Did scorne the challenge of

so base a thrall; Or had no courage, or else had no gall. So much the more was Calepine offended, That him to no revenge he forth could call, But both his challenge and him selfe contemned, No cared as a coward so to be condemned.

But he, nought weighing what he sayd or did, Turned his steede about another way, And with his Lady to the Castle rid, Where was his won: ne did the other stay, But after went directly as he may, For his sicke charge some harbour there to seeke; Where he arriving with the fall of day Drew to the gate, and there with prayers meeke And myld entreaty lodging did for her beseeke.

But the rude Porter that no manners had Did shut the gate against him in his face, And entraunce boldly unto him forbad: Nathelesse the Knight, now in so needy case, Gan him entreat even with submission base, And humbly praid to let them in that night; Who to him aunswer'd, that there was no place Of lodging fit for any errant Knight, Unlesse that with his Lord he formerly did fight.

"Full loth am I," (quoth he) "as now at earst When day is spent, and rest us needeth most, And that this Lady, both whose sides are pearst With wounds, is ready to forgo the ghost; Ne would I gladly combate with mine host, That should to me such curtesie afford, Unlesse that I were thereunto enforst: But yet aread to me, how hight thy Lord, That doth thus strongly ward the Castle of the Ford?"

"His name," (quoth he) "if that thou list to learne, Is hight Sir Turpine, one of mickle might And manhood rare, but terrible and stearne In all assaies to every errant Knight, Because of one that wrought him fowle despight." "Ill seemes," (sayd he) "if he so valiaunt be, That he should be so sterne to stranger wight; For seldome yet did living creature see That curtesie and manhood ever disagree.

"But go thy waies to him, and fro me say, That here is at his gate an errant Knight, That house-rome craves; yet would be loth t'assay The proofe of battell now in doubtfull night, Or curtesie with rudenesse to requite: Yet, if he needes will fight, crave leave till morne, And tell with all the lamentable plight In which this Lady

languisheth forlorne, That pitty craves, as he of woman was yborne."

The groome went streight way in, and to his Lord Declar'd the message which that Knight did move: Who, sitting with his Lady then at bord, Not onely did not his demaund approve, But both himselfe revil'd and eke his love; Albe his Lady, that Blandina hight, Him of ungentle usage did reprove, And earnestly entreated, that they might Finde favour to be lodged there for that same night.

Yet would he not perswaded be for ought, Ne from his currish will a whit reclame. Which answer when the groome returning brought To Calepine, his heart did inly flame With wrathfull fury for so foule a shame, That he could not thereof avenged bee; But most for pitty of his dearest Dame, Whom now in deadly daunger he did see, Yet had no meanes to comfort, nor procure her glee.

But all in vaine; for-why no remedy He saw the present mischiefe to redresse, But th'utmost end perforce for to aby, Which that nights fortune would for him addresse. So downe he tooke his Lady in distresse, And layd her underneath a bush to sleepe, Cover'd with cold, and wrapt in wretchednesse; Whiles he him selfe all night did nought but weepe, And wary watch about her for her safegard keepe.

The morrow next, so soone as joyous day Did shew it selfe in sunny beames bedight, Serena full of dolorous dismay, Twixt darkenesse dread and hope of living light, Uprear'd her head to see that chearefull sight. Then Calepine, however inly wroth, And greedy to avenge that vile despight, Yet for the feeble Ladies sake, full loth To make there lenger stay, forth on his journey goth.

He goth on foote all armed by her side, Upstaying still her selfe uppon her steede, Being unhable else alone to ride, So sore her sides, so much her wounds did bleede; Till that at length, in his extreamest neede, He chaunst far off an armed Knight to spy Pursuing him apace with greedy speede; Whom well he wist to be some enemy, That meant to make advantage of his misery.

Wherefore he stayd, till that he nearer drew, To weet what issue would thereof

betyde: Tho, whenas he approched nigh in vew, By certaine signes he plainly him descryde To be the man that with such scornefull pryde Had him abusde and shamed yesterday; Therefore, misdoubting least he should misguyde His former malice to some new assay, He cast to keepe him selfe so safely as he may.

By this the other came in place likewise, And couching close his speare and all his powre, As bent to some malicious enterprise, He bad him stand t'abide the bitter stoure Of his sore vengeaunce, or to make avoure Of the lewd words and deedes which he had done: With that ran at him, as he would devoure His life attonce; who nought could do but shun The perill of his pride, or else be overrun.

Yet he him still pursew'd from place to place, With full intent him cruelly to kill, And like a wilde goate round about did chace Flying the fury of his bloudy will: But his best succour and refuge was still Behind his Ladies back; who to him cryde, And called oft with prayers loud and shrill, As ever he to Lady was affyde, To spare her Knight, and rest with reason pacifyde:

But he the more thereby enraged was, And with more eager felnesse him pursew'd; So that at length, after long weary chace, Having by chaunce a close advantage vew'd, He over raught him, having long eschew'd His violence in vaine; and with his spere Strooke through his shoulder, that the blood ensew'd In great aboundance, as a well it were That forth out of an hill fresh gushing did appere.

Yet ceast he not for all that cruell wound, But chaste him still for all his Ladies cry; Not satisfyde till on the fatall ground He saw his life powrd forth despiteously; The which was certes in great jeopardy, Had not a wondrous chaunce his reskue wrought, And saved from his cruell villany. Such chaunces oft exceed all humaine thought! That in another Canto shall to end be brought.

Canto IV

Calepine by a Salvage Man From Turpine reskewed is And whylest an Infant from a

beare He saves, his Love doth misse.

Like as a ship with dreadfull storme long tost, Having spent all her mastes and her ground-hold, Now farre from harbour likely to be lost, At last some fisher-barke doth neare behold, That giveth comfort to her courage cold: Such was the state of this most courteous knight Being oppressed by that faytour bold, That he remayned in most perilous plight, And his sad Ladie left in pitifull affright:

Till that, by fortune passing all foresight, A salvage man, which in those woods did wonne, Drawne with that Ladies loud and piteous shright, Toward the same incessantly did ronne To understand what there was to be donne: There he this most discourteous craven found, As fiercely yet as when he first begonne, Chasing the gentle Calepine around, Ne sparing him the more for all his grievous wound.

The salvage man, that never till this houre Did taste of pittie, neither gentlesse knew, Seeing his sharpe assault and cruell stoure, Was much emmoved at his perils vew, That even his ruder hart began to rew, And feele compassion of his evill plight, Against his foe that did him so pursew; From whom he meant to free him, if he might, And him avenge of that so villenous despight.

Yet armes or weapon had he none to fight, Ne knew the use of warlike instruments, Save such as sudden rage him lent to smite; But naked, without needfull vestiments To clad his corpse with meete habiliments, He cared not for dint of sword nor speere, No more then for the stroke of strawes or bents: For from his mothers wombe, which him did beare, He was invulnerable made by Magicke leare.

He stayed not t'advize which way were best His foe t'assayle, or how himselfe to gard, But with fierce fury and with force infest Upon him ran; who being well prepard His first assault full warily did ward, And with the push of his sharp-pointed speare Full on the breast him strooke, so strong and hard That forst him backe recoyle and reele areare, Yet in his bodie made no wound nor bloud appeare.

With that the wyld man more enraged grew, Like to a Tygre that hath mist his pray,

And with mad moode againe upon him flew, Regarding neither speare that mote him slay, Nor his fierce steed that mote him much dismay. The salvage nation doth all dread despize: Tho on his shield he griple hold did lay, And held the same so hard, that by no wize He could him force to loose, or leave his enterprize.

Long did he wrest and wring it to and fro, And every way did try, but all in vaine; For he would not his greedie grype forgoe, But hayld and puld with all his might and maine, That from his steed him nigh he drew againe: Who having now no use of his long speare So nigh at hand, nor force his shield to straine, Both speare and shield, as things that needlesse were, He quite forsooke, and fled himselfe away for feare.

But after him the wyld man ran apace, And him pursewed with importune speed, (For he was swift as any Bucke in chace) And, had he not in his extreamest need Bene helped through the swiftnesse of his steed, He had him overtaken in his flight. Who, ever as he saw him nigh succeed, Gan cry aloud with horrible affright, And shrieked out, a thing uncomely for a knight.

But, when the Salvage saw his labour vaine In following of him that fled so fast, He wearie woxe, and backe return'd againe With speede unto the place, whereas he last Had left that couple nere their utmost cast: There he that knight full sorely bleeding found, And eke the Ladie fearefully aghast, Both for the perill of the present stound, And also for the sharpnesse of her rankling wound:

For though she were right glad so rid to bee From that vile lozell which her late offended; Yet now no lesse encombrance she did see, And perill, by this salvage man pretended, Gainst whom she saw no meanes to be defended, By reason that her knight was wounded sore: Therefore her selfe she wholy recommended To Gods sole grace, whom she did oft implore To send her succour, being of all hope forlore.

But the wyld man, contrarie to her feare, Came to her creeping like a fawning hound, And by rude tokens made to her appeare His deepe compassion of her dolefull stound, Kissing his hands, and crouching to the ground; For other language

had he none, nor speach, But a soft murmure and confused sound Of senselesse words, which nature did him teach T'expresse his passions, which his reason did empeach.

And, comming likewise to the wounded knight, When he beheld the streames of purple blood Yet flowing fresh, as moved with the sight, He made great mone after his salvage mood; And, running streight into the thickest wood, A certaine herbe from thence unto him brought, Whose vertue he by use well understood; The juyce whereof into his wound he wrought, And stopt the bleeding straight, ere he it staunched thought.

Then taking up that Recreants shield and speare, Which earst he left, he signes unto them made With him to wend unto his wonning neare; To which he easily did them perswade. Farre in the forrest, by a hollow glade Covered with mossie shrubs, which spredding brode Did underneath them make a gloomy shade, Where foot of living creature never trode, Ne scarse wyld beasts durst come, there was this wights abode.

Thether he brought these unacquainted guests, To whom faire semblance, as he could, he shewed By signes, by lookes, and all his other gests; But the bare ground with hoarie mosse bestrewed Must be their bed; their pillow was unsowed: And the frutes of the forrest was their feast; For their bad Stuard neither plough'd nor sowed, Ne fed on flesh, ne ever of wyld beast Did taste the bloud, obaying natures first beheast.

Yet, howsoever base and meane it were, They tooke it well, and thanked God for all, Which had them freed from that deadly feare, And sav'd from being to that caytive thrall. Here they of force (as fortune now did fall) Compelled were themselves awhile to rest, Glad of that easement, though it were but small; That having there their wounds awhile redrest, They mote the abler be to passe unto the rest.

During which time that wyld man did apply His best endevour and his daily paine In seeking all the woods both farre and nye For herbes to dresse their wounds; still

seeming faine When ought he did, that did their lyking gaine. So as ere long he had that knightes wound Recured well, and made him whole againe; But that same Ladies hurt no herbe he found Which could redresse, for it was inwardly unsound.

Now when as Calepine was woxen strong, Upon a day he cast abrode to wend, To take the ayre and heare the thrushes song, Unarm'd, as fearing neither foe nor frend, And without sword his person to defend: There him befell, unlocked for before, An hard adventure with unhappie end, A cruell Beare, the which an infant bore Betwixt his bloodie jawes, besprinckled all with gore.

The litle babe did loudly scrike and squall, And all the woods with piteous plaints did fill, As if his cry did meane for helpe to call To Calepine, whose eares those shrieches shrill, Percing his hart, with pities point did thrill; That after him he ran with zealous haste To rescue th'infant, ere he did him kill: Whom though he saw now somewhat overpast, Yet by the cry he follow'd, and pursewed fast.

Well then him chaunst his heavy armes to want, Whose burden mote empeach his needfull speed, And hinder him from libertie to pant; For having long time, as his daily weed, Them wont to weare, and wend on foot for need, Now wanting them he felt himselfe so light, That like an Hauke, which feeling her selfe freed From bels and jesses which did let her flight, Him seem'd his feet did fly and in their speed delight.

So well he sped him, that the wearie Beare Ere long he overtooke and forst to stay; And without weapon him assayling neare, Compeld him soone the spoyle adowne to lay. Wherewith the beast enrag'd to loose his pray Upon him turned, and, with greedie force And furie to be crossed in his way, Gaping full wyde, did thinke without remorse To be aveng'd on him and to devoure his corse.

But the bold knight no whit thereat dismayd, But catching up in hand a ragged stone Which lay thereby (so fortune him did ayde) Upon him ran, and thrust it all attone Into his gaping throte, that made him grone And gaspe for breath, that he nigh

choked was, Being unable to digest that bone; Ne could it upward come, nor downward passe, Ne could he brooke the coldnesse of the stony masse.

Whom when as he thus combred did behold, Stryving in vaine that nigh his bowels brast, He with him closd, and, laying mightie hold Upon his throte, did gripe his gorge so fast, That wanting breath him downe to ground he cast; And, then oppressing him with urgent paine, Ere long enforst to breath his utmost blast, Gnashing his cruell teeth at him in vaine, And threatning his sharpe clawes, now wanting powre to traine.

Then tooke he up betwixt his armes twaine The litle babe, sweet relickes of his pray; Whom pitying to heare so sore complaine, From his soft eyes the teares he wypt away, And from his face the filth that did it ray; And every litle limbe he searcht around, And every part that under sweath-bands lay, Least that the beasts sharpe teeth had any wound Made in his tender flesh; but whole them all he found.

So, having all his bands againe uptyde, He with him thought backe to returne againe; But when he lookt about on every syde, To weet which way were best to entertaine To bring him to the place where he would faine, He could no path nor tract of foot descry, Ne by inquirie learne, nor ghesse by ayme; For nought but woods and forrests farre and nye, That all about did close the compasse of his eye.

Much was he then encombred, ne could tell Which way to take: now West he went awhile, Then North, then neither, but as fortune fell: So up and downe he wandred many a mile With weary travell and uncertaine toile, Yet nought the nearer to his journeys end; And evermore his lovely litle spoile Crying for food did greatly him offend: So all that day in wandring vainely he did spend.

At last, about the setting of the Sunne, Him selfe out of the forest he did wynd, And by good fortune the plaine champion wonne: Where, looking all about where he mote fynd Some place of succour to content his mynd, At length he heard under the forrests syde A voice, that seemed of some woman kynd, Which to her selfe

lamenting loudly cryde, And oft complayn'd of fate, and fortune oft defyde.

To whom approching, when as she perceived A stranger wight in place, her plaint she stayd, As if she doubted to have bene deceived, Or loth to let her sorrowes be bewrayd: Whom when as Calepine saw so dismayd, He to her drew, and with faire blandishment Her chearing up, thus gently to her sayd: "What be you, wofull Dame, which thus lament, And for what cause, declare; so mote ye not repent."

To whom she thus: "What need me, Sir, to tell That which your selfe have earst ared so right? A wofull dame ye have me termed well; So much more wofull, as my wofull plight Cannot redressed be by living wight!" "Nathlesse," (quoth he) "if need doe not you bynd, Doe it disclose to ease your grieved spright: Oftimes it haps that sorrowes of the mynd Find remedie unsought, which seeking cannot fynd."

Then thus began the lamentable Dame: "Sith then ye needs will know the griefe I hoord, I am th'unfortunate Matilde by name, The wife of bold Sir Bruin, who is Lord Of all this land, late conquer'd by his sword From a great Gyant, called Cormoraunt, Whom he did overthrow by yonder foord; And in three battailes did so deadly daunt, That he dare not returne for all his daily vaunt.

"So is my Lord now seiz'd of all the land, As in his fee, with peaceable estate, And quietly doth hold it in his hand, Ne any dares with him for it debate: And to these happie fortunes cruell fate Hath joyn'd one evill, which doth overthrow All these our joyes, and all our blisse abate; And like in time to further ill to grow, And all this land with endlesse losse to overflow.

"For th'heavens, envying our prosperitie, Have not vouchsaft to graunt unto us twaine The gladfull blessing of posteritie, Which we might see after our selves remaine In th'heritage of our unhappie paine: So that for want of heires it to defend, All is in time like to returne againe To that foule feend, who dayly doth attend To leape into the same after our lives end.

"But most my Lord is grieved herewithall, And makes exceeding mone, when he

does thinke That all this land unto his foe shall fall, For which he long in vaine did sweate and swinke, That now the same he greatly doth forthinke. Yet was it sayd, there should to him a sonne Be gotten, not begotten; which should drinke And dry up all the water which doth ronne In the next brooke, by whom that feend shold be fordonne.

“Well hop’t he then, when this was propheside, That from his sides some noble chyld should rize, The which through fame should farre be magnifide, And this proud gyant should with brave emprize Quite overthrow; who now ginnes to despize The good Sir Bruin growing farre in yeares, Who thinkes from me his sorrow all doth rize. Lo! this my cause of griefe to you appeares; For which I thus doe mourne, and poure forth ceaselesse teares.”

Which when he heard, he inly touched was With tender ruth for her unworthy griefe; And, when he had devized of her case, He gan in mind conceive a fit reliefe For all her paine, if please her make the priefe; And, having cheared her, thus said: “Faire Dame, In evils counsell is the comfort chiefe; Which though I be not wise enough to frame, Yet, as I well it meane, vouchsafe it without blame.

“If that the cause of this your languishment Be lacke of children to supply your place, Lo! how good fortune doth to you present This litle babe, of sweete and lovely face, And spotlesse spirit in which ye may enchace Whatever formes ye list thereto apply, Being now soft and fit them to embrace; Whether ye list him traine in chevalry, Or noursle up in lore of learn’d Philosophy.

“And, certes, it hath oftentimes bene seene, That of the like, whose linage was unknowne, More brave and noble knights have raysed beene (As their victorious deedes have often showen, Being with fame through many Nations blowen,) Then those which have bene dandled in the lap: Therefore some thought that those brave imps were sowen Here by the Gods, and fed with heavenly sap, That made them grow so high t’all honorable hap.”

The Ladie, hearkning to his sensefull speach, Found nothing that he said unmeet nor geason, Having oft seene it tryde as he did teach: Therefore inclyning to his goodly reason, Agreeing well both with the place and season, She gladly did of that same babe accept, As of her owne by liverey and seisin; And, having over it a litle wept, She bore it thence, and ever as her owne it kept.

Right glad was Calepine to be so rid Of his young charge whereof he skilled nought, Ne she lesse glad; for she so wisely did, And with her husband under hand so wrought, That, when that infant unto him she brought, She made him think it surely was his owne; And it in goodly thewes so well upbrought, That it became a famous knight well knowne, And did right noble deedes; the which elswhere are showne.

But Calepine, now being left alone Under the greenewoods side in sorie plight, Withouten armes or steede to ride upon, Or house to hide his head from heavens spight, Albe that Dame, by all the meanes she might, Him oft desired home with her to wend, And offred him, his courtesie to requite, Both horse and armes and what so else to lend, Yet he them all refusd, though thankt her as a frend;

And, for exceeding griefe which inly grew That he his love so lucklesse now had lost, On the cold ground maugre himselfe he threw For fell despight to be so sorely crost; And there all night himselfe in anguish tost, Vowing that never he in bed againe His limbes would rest, ne lig in ease embost, Till that his Ladies sight he mote attaine, Or understand that she in safetie did remaine.

Canto V

The Salvage serves Serena well, Till she Prince Arthure fynd; Who her together with his Squyre, With th’Hermit leaves behynd.

O what an easie thing is to descry The gentle bloud, how ever it be wrapt In sad misfortunes foule deformity And wretched sorrowes, which have often hapt! For howsoever it may grow mis-shapt, Like this wyld man being undisciplynd, That to

all vertue it may seeme unapt, Yet will it shew some sparkes of gentle mynd, And at the last breake forth in his owne proper kynd.

That plainely may in this wyld man be red, Who, though he were still in this desert wood, Mongst salvage beasts both rudely borne and bred, Ne ever saw faire guize, ne learned good, Yet shewd some token of his gentle blood By gentle usage of that wretched Dame: For certes he was borne of noble blood, How ever by hard hap he hether came, As ye may know when time shall be to tell the same.

Who, when as now long time he lacked had The good Sir Calepine, that farre was strayd, Did wexe exceeding sorrowfull and sad, As he of some misfortune were afrayd; And, leaving there this Ladie all dismayd, Went forth streightway into the forrest wyde To seeke if he perchance asleep were layd, Or what so else were unto him betyde: He sought him farre and neare, yet him no where he spyde.

Tho, backe returning to that sorie Dame, He shewed semblant of exceeding mone By speaking signes, as he them best could frame, Now wringing both his wretched hands in one, Now beating his hard head upon a stone, That ruth it was to see him so lament: By which she well perceiving what was done, Gan teare her hayre, and all her garments rent, And beat her breast, and piteously her selfe torment.

Upon the ground her selfe she fiercely threw, Regardlesse of her wounds yet bleeding rife, That with their bloud did all the flore imbrew, As if her breast, new launcht with murdrous knife, Would streight dislodge the wretched wearie life. There she long groveling and deepe groning lay, As if her vitall powers were at strife With stronger death, and feared their decay: Such were this Ladies pangs and dolorous assay.

Whom when the Salvage saw so sore distrest, He reared her up from the bloudie ground, And sought by all the meanes that he could best Her to recure out of that stony swound, And staunch the bleeding of her dreary wound: Yet nould she be recomforted for nought, Nor cease her sorrow and impatient stound, But day and

night did vexe her carefull thought, And ever more and more her owne affliction wrought.

At length, when as no hope of his retourne She saw now left, she cast to leave the place, And wend abrode, though feeble and forlorne, To seeke some comfort in that sorie case. His steede, now strong through rest so long a space, Well as she could she got, and did bedight; And being thereon mounted forth did pace Withouten guide her to conduct aright, Or gard her to defend from bold oppressors might.

Whom when her Host saw readie to depart, He would not suffer her alone to fare, But gan himselfe addresse to take her part. Those warlike armes which Calepine whyleare Had left behind he gan eftsoones prepare, And put them all about himselfe unfit, His shield, his helmet, and his curats bare; But without sword upon his thigh to sit: Sir Calepine himselfe away had hidden it.

So forth they traveld, an uneven payre That mote to all men seeme an uncouth sight; A salvage man matcht with a Ladie fayre, That rather seem'd the conquest of his might, Gotten by spoyle then purchaced aright: But he did her attend most carefully, And faithfully did serve both day and night Withouten thought of shame or villeny, Ne ever shewed signe of foule disloyalty.

Upon a day, as on their way they went, It chaunst some furniture about her steed To be disordred by some accident, Which to redresse she did th'assistance need Of this her groome; which he by signes did reede, And streight his combrous armes aside did lay Upon the ground withouten doubt or dreed; And in his homely wize began to assay T'amend what was amisse, and put in right aray.

Bout which whilest he was busied thus hard, Lo! where a knight, together with his squire, All arm'd to point came ryding thetherward; Which seemed, by their portance and attire, To be two errant knights, that did inquire After adventures, where they mote them get. Those were to weet (if that ye it require) Prince Arthur and young Timias, which met By straunge occasion that here needs forth be set.

After that Timias had againe recured The favour of Belphebe (as ye heard) And of her grace did stand againe assured, To happie blisse he was full high uprear'd, Nether of envy nor of chaunge afeard: Though many foes did him maligne therefore, And with unjust detraction him did beard, Yet he himselfe so well and wisely bore, That in her soveraine lyking he dwelt evermore.

But of them all which did his ruine seeke, Three mightie enemies did him most despight, Three mightie ones, and cruell minded eeke, That him not onely sought by open might To overthrow, but to supplant by slight: The first of them by name was cald Despetto, Exceeding all the rest in powre and hight; The second, not so strong but wise, Decetto; The third, nor strong nor wise, but spightfullest, Defetto.

Oftimes their sundry powres they did employ, And several deceipts, but all in vaine; For neither they by force could him destroy, Ne yet entrap in treasons subtill traine. Therefore, conspiring all together plaine, They did their counsels now in one compound: Where singled forces faile, conjoynd may gaine. The Blatant Beast the fittest meanes they found To worke his utter shame, and throughly him confound.

Upon a day, as they the time did waite, When he did raunge the wood for salvage game, They sent that Blatant Beast to be a baite To draw him from his deare beloved dame Unwares into the daunger of defame; For well they wist that Squire to be so bold, That no one beast in forrest, wylde or tame, Met him in chase but he it challenge would, And plucke the pray oftimes out of their greedy hould.

The hardy boy, as they devised had, Seeing the ugly Monster passing by, Upon him set, of perill nought adrad, Ne skilfull of the uncouth jeopardy; And charged him so fierce and furiously, That his great force unable to endure, He forced was to turne from him and fly: Yet ere he fled he with his tooth impure Him heedlesse bit, the whiles he was thereof secure.

Securely he did after him pursew, Thinking by speed to overtake his flight; Who through thicke woods and brakes and briers him drew, To weary him the more and

waste his spight, So that he now has almost spent his spright, Till that at length unto a woody glade He came, whose covert stopt his further sight: There his three foes shrowded in guilefull shade Out of their ambush broke, and gan him to invade.

Sharpely they all attonce did him assaile, Burning with inward rancour and despight, And heaped strokes did round about him haile With so huge force, that seemed nothing might Beare off their blowes from percing thorough quite: Yet he them all so warily did ward, That none of them in his soft flesh did bite; And all the while his backe for best safegard He lent against a tree, that backeward onset bard.

Like a wylde Bull, that, being at a bay, Is bayted of a mastiffe and a hound And a curre-dog, that doe him sharpe assay On every side, and beat about him round; But most that curre, barking with bitter sownd, And creeping still behinde, doth him incomber, That in his chauffe he digs the trampled ground, And threats his horns, and bellowes like the thonder: So did that Squire his foes disperse and drive asonder.

Him well behoved so; for his three foes Sought to encompasse him on every side, And dangerously did round about enclose: But most of all Defetto him annoyde, Creeping behinde him still to have destroyde; So did Decetto eke him circumvent; But stout Despetto in his greater pryde Did front him, face to face against him bent: Yet he them all withstood, and often made relent.

Till that at length, nigh tyrd with former chace, And weary now with carefull keeping ward, He gan to shrinke and somewhat to give place, Full like ere long to have escaped hard; When as unwares he in the forrest heard A trampling steede, that with his neighing fast Did warne his rider be uppon his gard; With noise whereof the Squire, now nigh aghast, Revived was, and sad dispaire away did cast.

Eftsoones he spide a Knight approching nye; Who, seeing one in so great daunger set Mongst many foes, him selfe did faster hye To reskue him, and his weake part abet, For pitty so to see him overset: Whom soone as his three enemies did vew, They fled, and fast into the wood did get. Him booted not to thinke them to pursew,

The covert was so thicke that did no passage shew.

Then turning to that swaine him well he knew To be his Timias, his owne true Squire; Whereof exceeding glad he to him drew, And, him embracing twixt his armes entire, Him thus bespake: “My liefe, my lifes desire, Why have ye me alone thus long yleft? Tell me what worlds despight, or heavens yre, Hath you thus long away from me bereft? Where have ye all this while bin wandring, where bene weft?”

With that he sighed deepe for inward tyne: To whom the Squire nought aunswered againe, But, shedding few soft teares from tender eyne, His dear affect with silence did restraine, And shut up all his plaint in privy paine. There they awhile some gracious speaches spent, As to them seemed fit time to entertaine; After all which up to their steedes they went, And forth together rode, a comely couplement.

So now they be arrived both in sight Of this wyld man, whom they full busie found About the sad Serena things to dight, With those brave armours lying on the ground, That seem’d the spoile of some right well renownd: Which when that Squire beheld, he to them stept Thinking to take them from that hylding hound; But he it seeing lightly to him lept, And sternely with strong hand it from his handling kept.

Gnashing his grinded teeth with griesly looke, And sparkling fire out of his furious eyne, Him with his fist unwares on th’head he strooke, That made him downe unto the earth encline; Whence soone upstarting much he gan repine, And laying hand upon his wrathfull blade Thought therewithall forthwith him to have slaine; Who it perceiving hand upon him layd, And greedily him griping his avengement stayd.

With that aloude the faire Serena cryde Unto the Knight, them to dispart in twaine; Who to them stepping did them soone divide, And did from further violence restraine, Albe the wyld-man hardly would refraine. Then gan the Prince of her for to demand What and from whence she was, and by what traine She fell into that salvage villaines hand? And whether free with him she now were, or in band?

To whom she thus: “I am, as now ye see, The wretchedst Dame that lives this day on ground; Who both in minde, the which most grieveth me, And body have receiv’d a mortall wound, That hath me driven to this drery stound. I was erewhile the love of Calepine; Who whether he alive be to be found, Or by some deadly chaunce be done to pine Since I him lately lost, uneath is to define.

“In salvage forrest I him lost of late, Where I had surely long ere this bene dead, Or else remained in most wretched state, Had not this wylde man in that wofull stead Kept and delivered me from deadly dread. In such a salvage wight, of brutish kynd, Amongst wilde beastes in desert forrests bred, It is most straunge and wonderfull to fynd So milde humanity and perfect gentle mynd.

“Let me therefore this favour for him finde, That ye will not your wrath upon him wreake, Sith he cannot expresse his simple mmde, Ne yours conceive, ne but by tokens speake: Small praise to prove your powre on wight so weake.” With such faire words she did their heat asswage, And the strong course of their displeasure breake, That they to pitty turnd their former rage, And each sought to supply the office of her page.

So having all things well about her dight, She on her way cast forward to proceede, And they her forth conducted, where they might Finde harbour fit to comfort her great neede; For now her wounds corruption gan to breed: And eke this Squire, who likewise wounded was Of that same Monster late, for lacke of heed Now gan to faint, and further could not pas Through feeblenesse, which all his limbes oppressed has.

So forth they rode together all in troupe To seeke some place the which mote yeeld some ease To these sicke twaine, that now began to droupe: And all the way the Prince sought to appease The bitter anguish of their sharpe disease By all the courteous meanes he could invent; Somewhile with merry purpose, fit to please, And otherwhile with good encouragement To make them to endure the pains did

them torment.

Mongst which Serena did to him relate The foule discourt'sies and unknightly parts, Which Turpine had unto her shewed late, Without compassion of her cruell smarts: Although Blandina did with all her arts Him otherwise perswade all that she might, Yet he of malice, without her desarts, Not onely her excluded late at night, But also trayterously did wound her weary Knight.

Wherewith the Prince sore moved there avoud That soone as he returned backe againe, He would avenge th'abuses of that proud And shamefull Knight of whom she did complaine. This wize did they each other entertaine To passe the tedious travell of the way, Till towards night they came unto a plaine, By which a little Hermitage there lay, Far from all neighbourhood the which annoy it may.

And nigh thereto a little Chappell stoode, Which being all with Yvy overspred Deckt all the roofe, and, shadowing the roode, Seem'd like a grove faire braunched over-hed: Therein the Hermite, which his life here led In streight observaunce of religious vow, Was wont his howres and holy things to bed; And therein he likewise was praying now, Whenas these Knights arriv'd, they wist not where nor how.

They stayd not there, but streightway in did pas: Whom when the Hermite present saw in place, From his devotion streight he troubled was; Which breaking off he toward them did pace With stayed steps and grave beseeming grace: For well it seem'd that whilome he had beene Some goodly person, and of gentle race, That could his good to all; and well did weene How each to entertaine with curt'sie well beseene.

And soothly it was sayd by common fame, So long as age enabled him thereto, That he had bene a man of mickle name, Renowmed much in armes and derring doe; But being aged now, and weary to Of warres delight and worlds contentious toyle, The name of knighthood he did disavow; And, hanging up his armes and warlike spoyle, From all this worlds incombraunce did himselfe assoyle.

He thence them led into his Hermitage, Letting their steedes to graze upon the greene. Small was his house, and like a little cage, For his owne turne, yet inly neate and clene, Deckt with greene boughes and flowers gay beseene: Therein he them full faire did entertaine Not with such forged showes, as fitter beene For courting fooles that curtesies would faine, But with entire affection and appearaunce plaine.

Yet was their fare but homely, such as hee Did use his feeble body to sustaine, The which full gladly they did take in gree, Such as it was, ne did of want complaine, But being well suffiz'd them rested faine. But fair Serene all night could take no rest, Ne yet that gentle Squire, for grievous paine Of their late woundes, the which the Blatant Beast Had given them, whose griefe through suffraunce sore increast.

So all that night they past in great disease, Till that the morning, bringing earely light To guide mens labours, brought them also ease, And some asswagement of their painefull plight. Then up they rose, and gan them selves to dight Unto their journey; but that Squire and Dame So faint and feeble were, that they ne might Endure to travell, nor one foote to frame: Their hearts were sicke; their sides were sore; their feete were lame.

Therefore the Prince, whom great affaires in mynd Would not permit to make there lenger stay, Was forced there to leave them both behynd In that good Hermits charge; whom he did pray To tend them well. So forth he went his way, And with him eke the salvage, (that whyleare Seeing his royall usage and array Was greatly growne in love of that brave pere,) Would needes depart; as shall declared be elsewhere.

Canto VI

The Hermit heales both Squire and Dame Of their sore maladies: He Turpine doth defeate and shame For his late villenies.

No wound, which warlike hand of enemy Inflicts with dint of sword, so sore doth

light As doth the poysnous sting, which infamy Infixeth in the name of noble wight: For by no art, nor any leaches might, It ever can recured be againe; Ne all the skill, which that immortall spright Of Podalyrius did in it retaine, Can remedy such hurts: such hurts are hellish paine.

Such were the wounds the which that Blatant Beast Made in the bodies of that Squire and Dame; And, being such, were now much more increast For want of taking heede unto the same, That now corrupt and curelesse they became: Howbe that carefull Hermite did his best, With many kindes of medicines meete, to tame The poysnous humour which did most infest Their ranckling wounds, and every day them duely drest.

For he right well in Leaches craft was seene; And through the long experience of his dayes, Which had in many fortunes tossed beene And past through many perillous assayes, He knew the diverse went of mortall wayes, And in the mindes of men had great insight; Which with sage counsell, when they went astray, He could enforme, and them reduce aright, And all the passions heale which wound the weaker spright.

For whylome he had bene a doughty Knight, As any one that lived in his daies, And proved oft in many perillous fight, Of which he grace and glory wonne alwaies, And in all battels bore away the baies: But being now attacht with timely age, And weary of this worlds unquiet waies, He tooke him selfe unto this Hermitage, In which he liv'd alone, like carelesse bird in cage.

One day, as he was searching of their wounds, He found that they had festred privily; And ranckling inward with unruly stounds, The inner parts now gan to putrify, That quite they seem'd past helpe of surgery; And rather needed to be disciplinde With holesome reede of sad sobriety, To rule the stubborne rage of passion blinde: Give salves to every sore, but counsell to the minde.

So, taking them apart into his cell, He to that point fit speaches gan to frame, As he the art of words knew wondrous well, And eke could doe as well as say the same;

And thus he to them sayd: “Faire daughter Dame, And you, faire Sonne, which here thus long now lie In piteous languor since ye hither came, In vaine of me ye hope for remedie, And I likewise in vaine doe salves to you applie:

“For in your selfe your onely helpe doth lie To heale your selves, and must proceed alone From your owne will to cure your maladie. Who can him cure that will be cur’d of none? If therefore health ye seeke, observe this one: First learne your outward senses to refraine From things that stirre up fraile affection; Your eies, your eares, your tongue, your talk restraine From that they most affect, and in due termes containe.

“For from those outward sences, ill affected, The seede of all this evill first doth spring, Which at the first, before it had infected, Mote easie be suppresst with little thing; But being growen strong it forth doth bring Sorrow, and anguish, and impatient paine, In th’inner parts; and lastly, scattering Contagious poyson close through every vaine, It never rests till it have wrought his finall bane.

“For that beastes teeth, which wounded you tofore, Are so exceeding venemous and keene, Made all of rusty yron ranckling sore, That where they bite it booteth not to weene With salve, or antidote, or other mene, It ever to amend: ne marvaile ought, For that same beast was bred of hellish strene, And long in darksome Stygian den upbrought, Begot of foule Echidna, as in bookes is taught.

“Echidna is a Monster direfull dred, Whom Gods doe hate, and heavens abhor to see; So hideous is her shape, so huge her hed, That even the hellish fiends affrighted bee At sight thereof, and from her presence flee: Yet did her face and former parts professe A faire young Mayden, full of comely glee; But all her hinder parts did plaine expresse A monstrous Dragon, full of fearefull uglinesse.

“To her the Gods, for her so dreadfull face, In fearefull darkenesse, furthest from the skie And from the earth, appointed have her place Mongst rocks and caves, where she enrold doth lie In hideous horrour and obscurity, Wasting the strength of her

immortall age: There did Typhaon with her company; Cruell Typhaon, whose tempestuous rage Makes th'heavens tremble oft, and him with vowes asswage.

"Of that commixtion they did then beget This hellish Dog, that hight the Blatant Beast; A wicked Monster, that his tongue doth whet Gainst all, both good and bad, both most and least, And pours his poysnous gall forth to infest The noblest wights with notable defame: Ne ever Knight that bore so lofty creast, Ne ever Lady of so honest name, But he them spotted with reproch, or secrete shame.

"In vaine therefore it were with medicine To goe about to salve such kynd of sore, That rather needes wise read and discipline, Then outward salves that may augment it more." "Aye me!" (sayd then Serena, sighing sore) "What hope of helpe doth then for us remaine, If that no salves may us to health restore?" "But sith we need good counsell," (sayd the swaine) "Aread, good Sire, some counsell that may us sustaine."

"The best" (sayd he) "that I can you advize, Is to avoide the occasion of the ill: For when the cause, whence evill doth arize, Removed is, th'effecl surceaseth still. Abstaine from pleasure, and restraine your will; Subdue desire, and bridle loose delight; Use scanted diet, and forbeare your fill; Shun secresie, and talke in open sight: So shall you soone repaire your present evill plight."

Thus having sayd, his sickely patients Did gladly hearken to his grave beheast, And kept so well his wise commaundements, That in short space their malady was ceast, And eke the biting of that harmefull Beast Was throughly heal'd. Tho when they did perceave Their wounds recur'd, and forces reincreast, Of that good Hermite both they tooke their leave, And went both on their way, ne ech would other leave:

But each the other vow'd t'accompany: The Lady, for that she was much in dred, Now left alone in great extremity; The Squire, for that he courteous was indeed, Would not her leave alone in her great need. So both together traveld, till they met With a faire Mayden clad in mourning weed, Upon a mangy jade unmeetely set, And a lewd foole her leading thorough dry and wet.

But by what meanes that shame to her befell, And how thereof her selfe she did acquite, I must awhile forbeare to you to tell; Till that, as comes by course, I doe recite What fortune to the Briton Prince did lite, Pursuing that proud Knight, the which whileare Wrought to Sir Calepine so foule despight; And eke his Lady, though she sickely were, So lewdly had abusde, as ye did lately heare.

The Prince, according to the former token Which faire Serene to him delivered had, Pursu'd him streight; in mynd to bene ywroken Of all the vile demeane and usage bad, With which he had those two so ill bestad: Ne wight with him on that adventure went, But that wylde man; whom though he oft forbad, Yet for no bidding, nor for being shent, Would he restrayned be from his attendement.

Arriving there, as did by chaunce befall, He found the gate wyde ope, and in he rode, Ne stayd, till that he came into the hall; Where soft dismounting, like a weary lode, Upon the ground with feeble feete he trode, As he unable were for very neede To move one foote, but there must make abode: The whiles the salvage man did take his steede, And in some stable neare did set him up to feede.

Ere long to him a homely groome there came, That in rude wise him asked, what he was That durst so boldly, without let or shame, Into his Lords forbidden hall to passe? To whom the Prince, him fayning to embase, Mylde answer made, he was an errant Knight, The which was fall'n into this feeble case Through many wounds, which lately he in fight Received had, and prayd to pitty his ill plight.

But he, the more outrageous and bold, Sternely did bid him quickely thence avaunt, Or deare aby; for-why his Lord of old Did hate all errant Knights which there did haunt, Ne lodging would to any of them graunt; And therefore lightly bad him packe away, Not sparing him with bitter words to taunt, And therewithall rude hand on him did lay, To thrust him out of dore doing his worst assay.

Which when the Salvage, comming now in place, Beheld, eftsoones he all enraged grew, And, running streight upon that villaine base, Like a fell Lion at him fiercely

flew, And with his teeth and nailes, in present vew, Him rudely rent and all to peeces tore; So miserably him all helpelesse slew, That with the noise, whilest he did loudly rore, The people of the house rose forth in great uprore.

Who when on ground they saw their fellow slaine, And that same Knight and Salvage standing by, Upon them two they fell with might and maine, And on them layd so huge and horribly, As if they would have slaine them presently: But the bold Prince defended him so well, And their assault withstood so mightily, That, maugre all their might, he did repell And beat them back, whilest many underneath him fell.

Yet he them still so sharpely did pursew, That few of them he left alive, which fled Those evill tidings to their Lord to shew: Who, hearing how his people badly sped, Came forth in hast; where, when as with the dead He saw the ground all strow'd, and that same Knight And salvage with their bloud fresh steeming red, He woxe nigh mad with wrath and fell despight, And with reprochfull words him thus bespake on hight.

"Art thou he, traytor, that with treason vile Hast slaine my men in this unmanly maner, And now triumphest in the piteous spoile Of these poore folk, whose soules with black dishonor And foule defame doe decke thy bloudy baner? The meede whereof shall shortly be thy shame, And wretched end which still attendeth on her." With that him selfe to battell he did frame; So did his forty yeomen, which there with him came.

With dreadfull force they all did him assaile, And round about with boystrous strokes oppresse, That on his shield did rattle like to haile In a great tempest; that in such distresse He wist not to which side him to addresse: And evermore that craven cowherd Knight Was at his backe with heartlesse heedinesse, Wayting if he un wares him murther might; For cowardize doth still in villany delight.

Whereof whenas the Prince was well aware, He to him turnd with furious intent, And him against his powre gan to prepare; Like a fierce Bull, that being busie bent

To fight with many foes about him ment, Feeling some curre behinde his heeles to bite, Turnes him about with fell avengement: So likewise turnde the Prince upon the Knight, And layd at him amaine with all his will and might.

Who, when he once his dreadfull strokes had tasted, Durst not the furie of his force abyde, But turn'd abacke, and to retyre him hasted Through the thick prease, there thinking him to hyde: But, when the Prince had once him plainely eyde, He foot by foot him followed alway, Ne would him suffer once to shrinke asyde, But joyning close huge lode at him did lay; Who flying still did ward, and warding fly away.

But, when his foe he still so eager saw, Unto his heeles himselfe he did betake, Hoping unto some refuge to withdraw: Ne would the Prince him ever foot forsake Where so he went, but after him did make. He fled from roome to roome, from place to place, Whylest every joynt for dread of death did quake, Still looking after him that did him chace, That made him evermore increase his speedie pace.

At last he up into the chamber came Whereas his love was sitting all alone, Wayting what tydings of her folke became. There did the Prince him overtake anone, Crying in vaine to her him to bemone; And with his sword him on the head did smyte, That to the ground he fell in senselesse swone: Yet, whether thwart or flatly it did lyte, The tempred steele did not into his braynepan byte.

Which when the Ladie saw, with great affright She starting up began to shrieke aloud; And with her garment covering him from sight, Seem'd under her protection him to shroud; And falling lowly at his feet her bowd Upon her knee, intreating him for grace, And often him besought, and prayd, and vowd, That with the ruth of her so wretched case, He stayd his second strooke, and did his hand abase.

Her weed she then withdrawing did him discover; Who now come to himselfe yet would not rize, But still did lie as dead, and quake, and quiver, That even the Prince his basenesse did despize; And eke his Dame, him seeing in such guize, Gan him recomfort and from ground to reare: Who rising up at last in ghastly wize, Like

troubled ghost, did dreadfully appeare, As one that had no life him left through former feare.

Whom when the Prince so deadly saw dismayd, He for such basenesse shamefully him shent, And with sharpe words did bitterly upbrayd: “Vile cowheard dogge! now doe I much repent, That ever I this life unto thee lent, Whereof thou, caytive, so unworthie art, That both thy love, for lacke of hardiment, And eke thy selfe, for want of manly hart, And eke all knights hast shamed with this knightlesse part.

“Yet further hast thou heaped shame to shame, And crime to crime, by this thy cowheard feare: For first, it was to thee reprochfull blame To erect this wicked custome, which I heare Gainst errant Knights and Ladies thou dost reare; Whom when thou mayst thou dost of arms despoile, Or of their upper garment which they weare; Yet doest thou not with manhood, but with guile, Maintaine this evil use, thy foes thereby to foile.

“And lastly, in approvance of thy wrong, To shew such faintnesse and foule cowardize Is greatest shame; for oft it falles, that strong And valiant Knights doe rashly enterprize Either for fame, or else for exercize, A wrongfull quarrell to maintaine by fight; Yet have through prowesse and their brave emprize Gotten great worship in this worldes sight: For greater force there needs to maintaine wrong then right.

“Yet, since thy life unto this Ladie fayre I given have, live in reproch and scorne, Ne ever armes ne ever knighthood dare Hence to professe; for shame is to adorne With so brave badges one so basely borne: But onely breath, sith that I did forgive.” So having from his craven bodie torne Those goodly armes, he them away did give, And onely suffred him this wretched life to live.

There whilest he thus was setling things above, Atwene that Ladie myld and recreant knight, To whom his life he graunted for her love, He gan bethinke him in what perilous plight He had behynd him left that salvage wight Amongst so many foes,

whom sure he thought By this quite slaine in so unequall fight: Therefore descending backe in haste he sought If yet he were alive, or to destruction brought.

There he him found environed about With slaughtred bodies which his hand had slaine, And laying yet afresh, with courage stout, Upon the rest that did alive remaine; Whom he likewise right sorely did constraine, Like scattred sheepe, to seeke for safetie, After he gotten had with busie paine Some of their weapons which thereby did lie, With which he layd about, and made them fast to flie.

Whom when the Prince so felly saw to rage, Approching to him neare, his hand he stayd, And sought by making signes him to asswage; Who them perceiving streight to him obayd, As to his Lord, and downe his weapons layd, As if he long had to his heasts bene trayned. Thence he him brought away, and up convayd Into the chamber, where that Dame remayned With her unworthy knight, who ill him entertayned.

Whom when the Salvage saw from daunger free, Sitting beside his Ladie there at ease, He well remembred that the same was hee, Which lately sought his Lord for to displease: Tho all in rage he on him streight did seaze, As if he would in peeces him have rent: And, were not that the Prince did him appeaze, He had not left one limbe of him unrent: But streight he held his hand at his commaundement.

Thus having all things well in peace ordayned, The Prince himselfe there all that night did rest; Where him Blandina fayrely entertayned With all the courteous glee and goodly feast The which for him she could imagine best: For well she knew the wayes to win good will Of every wight, that were not too infest; And how to please the minds of good and ill, Through tempering of her words and lookes by wondrous skill.

Yet were her words and lookes but false and fayned, To some hid end to make more easie way, Or to allure such fondlings whom she trayned Into her trap unto their owne decay: Thereto, when needed, she could weepe and pray, And when her listed

she could fawne and flatter; Now smyling smoothly, like to sommers day, Now glooming sadly, so to cloke her matter; Yet were her words but wynd, and all her teares but water.

Whether such grace were given her by kynd, As women wont their guilefull wits to guyde, Or learn'd the art to please, I doe not fynd: This well I wote, that she so well applyde Her pleasing tongue, that soone she pacifyde The wrathfull Prince, and wrought her husbands peace: Who nathelesse, not therewith satisfyde, His rancorous despight did not releasse, Ne secretly from thought of fell revenge surceasse:

For all that night, the whyles the Prince did rest In carelesse couch, not weeting what was ment, He watcht in close awayt with weapons prest, Willing to worke his villenous intent On him that had so shamefully him shent: Yet durst he not for very cowardize Effect the same, whylest all the night was spent. The morrow next the Prince did early rize, And passed forth to follow his first enterprize.

Canto VII

Turpine is baffuld: his two Knights Doe gain their treasons meed, Fayre Mirabellaes punishment For Loves disdaine decreed.

Like as the gentle hart it selfe bewrayes In doing gentle deedes with franke delight, Even so the baser mind it selfe displayes In cancred malice and revengefull spight: For to maligne, t'envie, t'use shifting slight, Be arguments of a vile donghill mind, Which, what it dare not doe by open might, To worke by wicked treason wayes doth find, By such discourteous deeds discovering his base kind.

That well appears in this discourteous knight, The coward Turpine, whereof now I treat; Who notwithstanding that in former' fight He of the Prince his life received late, Yet in his mind, malitious and ingrate, He gan devize to be aveng'd anew For all that shame, which kindled inward hate: Therefore, so soone as he was out of vew, Himselfe in hast he arm'd, and did him fast pursew.

Well did he tract his steps as he did ryde, Yet would not neare approch in daungers eye, But kept aloofe for dread to be descryde, Untill fit time and place he mote espy, Where he mote worke him scath and villeny. At last he met two knights to him unknowne, The which were armed both agreeably, And both combynd, whatever chaunce were blowne Betwixt them to divide, and each to make his owne.

To whom false Turpine comming courteously, To cloke the mischiefe which he inly ment, Gan to complaine of great discourtesie, Which a straunge knight, that neare afore him went, Had doen to him, and his deare Ladie shent: Which if they would afford him ayde at need For to avenge in time convenient, They should accomplish both a knightly deed, And for their paines obtaine of him a goodly meed.

The knights beleev'd that all he sayd was trew; And being fresh and full of youthly spright, Were glad to heare of that adventure new, In which they mote make triall of their might Which never yet they had approv'd in fight, And eke desirous of the offred meed: Said then the one of them; "Where is that wight The which hath doen to thee this wrongfull deed, That we may it avenge, and punish him with speed?"

"He rides" (said Turpine) "there not farre afore, With a wyld man soft footing by his syde; That, if ye list to haste a litle more, Ye may him overtake in timely tyde." Eftsoones they pricked forth with forward pryde, And, ere that litle while they ridden had, The gentle Prince not farre away they spyde, Ryding a softly pace with portance sad, Devizing of his love more then of daunger drad.

Then one of them aloud unto him cryde, Bidding him turne againe, false traytour knight, Foule woman-wronger, for he him defyde. With that they both at once with equall spight Did bend their speares, and both with equall might Against him ran; but th'one did misse his marke, And being carried with his force forthright Glaunst swiftly by; like to that heavenly sparke, Which glyding through the ayre lights all the heavens darke.

But th'other, ayming better, did him smite Full in the shield with so impetuous

powre, That all his launce in peeces shivered quite, And scattered all about fell on the flowre: But the stout Prince, with much more steddy stowre, Full on his bever did him strike so sore, That the cold steele, through piercing, did devowre His vitall breath, and to the ground him bore, Where still he bathed lay in his owne bloody gore.

As when a cast of Faulcons make their flight At an Herneshaw, that lyes aloft on wing, The whyles they strike at him with heedlesse might, The wane foule his bill doth backward wring; On which the first, whose force her first doth bring, Her selfe quite through the bodie doth engore, And falleth downe to ground like senselesse thing; But th'other, not so swift as she before, Fayles of her souse, and passing by doth hurt no more.

By this the other, which was passed by, Himselfe recovering was return'd to fight, Where when he saw his fellow lifelesse ly, He much was daunted with so dismall sight; Yet, nought abating of his former spight, Let drive at him with so malitious mynd, As if he would have passed through him quight; But the steele head no stedfast hold could fynd, But glauncing by deceiv'd him of that he desynd.

Not so the Prince; for his well-learned speare Tooke surer hould, and from his horses backe Above a launces length him forth did beare, And gainst the cold hard earth so sore him strake, That all his bones in peeces nigh he brake. Where seeing him so lie, he left his steed, And to him leaping vengeance thought to take Of him for all his former follies meed, With flaming sword in hand his terror more to breed.

The fearfull swayne beholding: death so nie, Cryde out aloud for mercie, him to save; In lieu whereof he would to him descrie Great treason to him meant, his life to reave. The Prince soone hearkned, and his life forgave. Then thus said he: "There is a straunger knight, The which, for promise of great meed, us drave To this attempt to wreake his hid despight, For that himselfe thereto did want sufficient might."

The Prince much mused at such villenie, And sayd: "Now sure ye well have earn'd

your meed; For th'one is dead, and th'other soone shall die, Unlesse to me thou hether bring with speed The wretch that hyr'd you to this wicked deed." He glad of life, and willing eke to wreake The guilt on him which did this mischiefe breed, Swore by his sword, that neither day nor weeke He would surceasse, but him where so he were would seeke.

So up he rose, and forth streightway he went Backe to the place where Turpine late he lore; There he him found in great astonishment, To see him so bedight with bloodie gore, And griesly wounds that him appalled sore; Yet thus at length he said: "How now, Sir knight, What meaneth this which here I see before? How fortuneth this foule uncomely plight, So different from that which earst ye seem'd in sight?"

"Perdie," (said he) "in evill houre it fell, That ever I for meed did undertake So hard a taske as life for hyre to sell; The which I earst adventur'd for your sake: Witnesse the wounds, and this wyde bloudie lake, Which ye may see yet all about me steeme. Therefore now yeeld, as ye did promise make, My due reward, the which right well I deeme I yearned have, that life so dearely did redeeme."

"But where then is" (quoth he halfe wrothfully) "Where is the bootie, which therefore I bought, That cursed caytive, my strong enemy, That recreant knight, whose hated life I sought? And where is eke your friend which halfe it ought?" "He lyes" (said he) "upon the cold bare ground, Slayne of that errant knight with whom he fought; Whom afterwards my selfe with many a wound Did slay againe, as ye may see there in the stound."

Thereof false Turpin was full glad and faine, And needs with him streight to the place would ryde, Where he himselfe might see his foeman slaine; For else his feare could not be satisfyde. So as they rode he saw the way all dyde With streames of bloud; which tracting by the traile, Ere long they came, whereas in evill tyde That other swayne, like ashes deadly pale, Lay in the lap of death, rewing his wretched bale.

Much did the Craven seeme to mone his case, That for his sake his deare life had forgone; And, him bewayling with affection base, Did counterfeit kind pittie where was none: For wheres no courage, theres no ruth nor mone. Thence passing forth, not farre away he found Whereas the Prince himselfe lay all alone, Loosely displayd upon the grassie ground, Possessed of sweete sleepe that luld him soft in swound.

Wearie of travell in his former fight, He there in shade himselfe had layd to rest, Having his armes and warlike things undight, Fearelesse of foes that mote his peace molest; The whyles his salvage page, that wont be prest, Was wandred in the wood another way, To doe some thing that seemed to him best; The whyles his Lord in silver slomber lay, Like to the Evening starre adorn'd with deawy ray.

Whom when as Turpin saw so loosely layd, He weened well that he in deed was dead, Like as that other knight to him had sayd; But, when he nigh approcht, he mote aread Plaine signes in him of life and livelihead: Whereat, much griev'd against that straunger knight, That him too light of credence did mislead, He would have backe retyred from that sight, That was to him on earth the deadliest despight.

But that same knight would not once let him start, But plainely gan to him declare the case Of all his mischiefe and late lucklesse smart; How both he and his fellow there in place Were vanquished, and put to foule disgrace; And how that he, in lieu of life him lent, Had vow'd unto the victor him to trace And follow through the world where so he went, Till that he him delivered to his punishment.

He, therewith much abashed and affrayd, Began to tremble every limbe and vaine; And, softly whispering him, entyrely prayd T'advize him better then by such a traine Him to betray unto a straunger swaine: Yet rather counseld him contrarywize, Sith he likewise did wrong by him sustaine, To joyne with him and vengeance to devize, Whylest time did offer meanes him sleeping to surprize.

Nathelesse, for all his speach the gentle knight Would not be tempted to such villenie, Regarding more his faith which he did plight, All were it to his mortall

enemie, Then to entrap him by false treacherie: Great shame in lieges blood to be embrew'd! Thus whylest they were debating diverslie, The Salvage forth out of the wood issew'd Backe to the place, whereas his Lord he sleeping vew'd.

There when he saw those two so neare him stand, He doubted much what mote their meaning bee; And throwing downe his load out of his hand, (To weet, great store of forrest frute which hee Had for his food late gathered from the tree,) Himselfe unto his weapon he betooke, That was an oaken plant, which lately hee Rent by the root; which he so sternely shooke, That like an hazell wand it quivered and quooke.

Whereat the Prince awaking, when he spyde The traytour Turpin with that other knight, He started up; and snatching neare his syde His trustie sword, the servant of his might, Like a fell Lyon leaped to him light, And his left hand upon his collar layd. Therewith the cowheard, deaded with affright, Fell flat to ground, ne word unto him sayd, But, holding up his hands, with silence mercie prayd.

But he so full of indignation was, That to his prayer nought he would incline, But, as he lay upon the humbled gras, His foot he set on his vile necke, in signe Of servile yoke, that nobler harts repine: Then, letting him arise like abject thrall, He gan to him objecl his haynous crime, And to revile, and rate, and recreant call, And lastly to despoyle of knightly bannerall.

And after all, for greater infamie, He by the heeles him hung upon a tree, And baffuld so, that all which passed by The picture of his punishment might see, And by the like ensample warned bee, How ever they through treason doe trespasse. But turne we now backe to that Ladie free, Whom late we left ryding upon an Asse, Led by a Carle and foole which by her side did passe.

She was a Ladie of great dignitie, And lifted up to honorable place, Famous through all the land of Faerie: Though of meane parentage and kindred base, Yet deckt with wondrous giftes of natures grace, That all men did her person much admire, And praise the feature of her goodly face; The beames whereof did kindle lovely fire In

th’ harts of many a knight, and many a gentle squire.

But she thereof grew proud and insolent, That none she worthie thought to be her fere, But scornd them all that love unto her ment: Yet was she lov’d of many a worthy pere: Unworthy she to be belov’d so dere, That could not weigh of worthinesse aright; For beautie is more glorious bright and clere, The more it is admir’d of many a wight, And noblest she that served is of noblest knight.

But this coy Damzell thought contrariwize, That such proud looks would make her praysed more; And that, the more she did all love despize, The more would wretched lovers her adore. What cared she who sighed for her sore, Or who did wayle or watch the wearie night? Let them that list their lucklesse lot deplore, She was borne free, not bound to any wight, And so would ever live, and love her owne delight.

Through such her stubborne stifnesse and hard hart, Many a wretch for want of remedie Did languish long in life-consuming smart, And at the last through dreary dolour die: Whylest she, the Ladie of her libertie, Did boast her beautie had such soveraine might, That with the onely twinckle of her eye She could or save or spill whom she would hight: What could the Gods doe more, but doe it more aright?

But loe! the Gods, that mortall follies vew, Did worthily revenge this maydens pride; And, nought regarding her so goodly hew, Did laugh at her that many did deride, Whilest she did weepe, of no man mercifide: For on a day, when Cupid kept his court, As he is wont at each Saint Valentide, Unto the which all lovers doe resort, That of their loves successe they there may make report;

It fortun’d then, that when the roules were red In which the names of all loves folke were fyled, That many there were missing; which were ded, Or kept in bands, or from their loves exyled, Or by some other violence despoyled: Which when as Cupid heard, he wexed wroth; And doubting to be wronged or beguyled, He bad his eyes to be unblindfold both, That he might see his men, and muster them by oth.

Then found he many missing of his crew, Which wont doe suit and service to his might, Of whom what was becomen no man knew. Therefore a Jurie was impaneld streight T'enquire of them, whether by force, or sleight, Or their owne guilt, they were away convayd? To whom foule Infamie and fell Despight Gave evidence, that they were all betrayd And murdrcd cruelly by a rebellious Mayd.

Fayre Mirabella was her name, whereby Of all those crymes she there indited was: All which when Cupid heard, he by and by In great displeasure wild a Capias Should issue forth t'attach that scornefull lasse. The warrant straight was made, and therewithall A Baylieffe-errant forth in post did passe, Whom they by name there Portamore did call; He which doth summon lovers to loves judgement hall.

The damzell was attacht, and shortly brought Unto the barre whereas she was arrayned; But she thereto nould plead, nor answere ought, Even for stubborne pride which her restrayned. So judgement past, as is by law ordayned In cases like; which when at last she saw, Her stubborne hart, which love before disdayned, Gan stoupe; and, falling downe with humble awe, Cryde mercie, to abate the extremitie of law.

The sonne of Venus, who is myld by kynd But where he is provokt with peevishnesse, Unto her prayers piteously enclynd, And did the rigour of his doome represse; Yet not so freely, but that nathelesse He unto her a penance did impose, Which was, that through this worlds wyde wildernes She wander should in companie of those, Till she had sav'd so many loves as she did lose.

So now she had bene wandring two whole yeares Throughout the world in this uncomely case, Wasting her goodly hew in heavie teares, And her good dayes in dolorous disgrace: Yet had she not in all these two yeares space Saved but two; yet in two yeares before, Through her dispiteous pride, whilest love lackt place, She had destroyed two and twenty more. Aie me! how could her love make half amends therefore?

And now she was uppon the weary way, When as the gentle Squire, with faire

Serene, Met her in such misseeming foule array; The whiles that mighty man did her demeane With all the evill termes and cruell meane That he could make: And eeke that angry foole Which follow'd her, with cursed hands uncleane Whipping her horse, did with his smarting toole Oft whip her dainty selfe, and much augment her doole.

Ne ought it mote availe her to entreat The one or th'other better her to use; For both so wilfull were and obstinate That all her piteous plaint they did refuse, And rather did the more her beate and bruse: But most the former villaine, which did lead Her tyreling jade, was bent her to abuse; Who, though she were with wearinesse nigh dead, Yet would not let her lite, nor rest a little stead:

For he was sterne and terrible by nature, And eeke of person huge and hideous, Exceeding much the measure of mans stature, And rather like a Gyant monstruous: For sooth he was descended of the hous Of those old Gyants, which did warres darraine Against the heaven in order battailous; And sib to great Orgolio, which was slaine By Arthure, when as Unas Knight he did maintaine.

His lookes were dreadfull, and his fiery eies, Like two great Beacons, glared bright and wyde, Glauncing askew, as if his enemies He scorned in his overweening pryde; And stalking stately, like a Crane, did stryde At every step uppon the tiptoes hie: And, all the way he went, on every syde He gaz'd about and stared horriblie, As if he with his lookes would all men terrifie.

He wore no armour, ne for none did care, As no whit dreading any living wight; But in a Jacket, quilted richly rare Upon checklaton, he was straungely dight; And on his head a roll of linnen plight, Like to the Mores of Malaber, he wore, With which his locks, as blacke as pitchy night, Were bound about and voyded from before; And in his hand a mighty yron club he bore.

This was Disdaine, who led that Ladies horse Through thick and thin, through mountains and through plains, Compelling her, where she would not, by force,

Haling her palfrey by the hempen raines: But that same foole, which most increast her paines, Was Scorne; who having in his hand a whip, Her therewith yirks; and still, when she complaines, The more he laughes, and does her closely quip, To see her sore lament and bite her tender lip.

Whose cruell handling when that Squire beheld, And saw those villaines her so vildely use, His gentle heart with indignation sweld, And could no lenger beare so great abuse As such a Lady so to beate and bruse; But, to him stepping, such a stroke him lent, That forst him th'halter from his hand to loose, And maugre all his might backe to relent: Else had he surely there bene slaine, or fowly shent.

The villaine, wroth for greeting him so sore, Gathered him selfe together soone againe, And with his yron batton which he bore Let drive at him so dreadfully amaine, That for his safety he did him constraine To give him ground, and shift to every side, Rather then once his burden to sustaine: For bootelesse thing him seemed to abide So mighty blowes, or prove the puissaunce of his pride.

Like as a Mastiffe having at a bay A salvage Bull, whose cruell hornes doe threat Desperate daunger, if he them assay, Traceth his ground, and round about doth beat, To spy where he may some advauntage get, The whiles the beast doth rage and loudly rore; So did the Squire, the whiles the Carle did fret And fume in his disdainefull mynd the more, And oftentimes by Turmagant and Mahound swore.

Nathelesse so sharpely still he him pursewd, That at advantage him at last he tooke, When his foote slipt, (that slip he dearely rewd) And with his yron club to ground him strooke; Where still he lay, ne out of swoune awooke, Till heavy hand the Carle upon him layd, And bound him fast: Tho, when he up did looke And saw him selfe captiv'd, he was dismayd, Ne powre had to withstand, ne hope of any ayd.

Then up he made him rise, and forward fare, Led in a rope which both his hands did bynd; Ne ought that foole for pitty did him spare, But with his whip, him following behynd, Him often scourg'd, and forst his feete to fynd: And otherwhiles with bitter

mockes and mowes He would him scorne, that to his gentle mynd Was much more grievous then the others blowes: Words sharpely wound, but greatest griefe of scorning growes.

The faire Serena, when she saw him fall Under that villaines club, then surely thought That slaine he was, or made a wretched thrall, And fled away with all the speede she mought, To seeke for safety; which long time she sought, And past through many perils by the way, Ere she againe to Calepine was brought: The which discourse as now I must delay, Till Mirabellaes fortunes I doe further say.

Canto VIII

Prince Arthure overcomes Disdaine; Quites Mirabell from dreed: Serena, found of Salvages, By Calepine is freed.

Ye gentle Ladies, in whose soveraine powre Love hath the glory of his kingdome left, And th'hearts of men, as your eternall dowre, In yron chaines of liberty bereft, Delivered hath into your hands by gift, Be well aware how ye the same doe use, not to tyranny you lift; Least, if men you of cruelty accuse, He from you take that chiefedome which ye doe abuse.

And as ye soft and tender are by kynde, Adornd with goodly gifts of beauties grace, So be ye soft and tender eeke in mynde; But cruelty and hardnesse from you chace, That all your other praises will deface, And from you turne the love of men to hate: Ensample take of Mirabellaes case, Who from the high degree of happy state Fell into wretched woes, which she repented late.

Who after thraldome of the gentle Squire, Which she beheld with lamentable eye, Was touched with compassion entire, And much lamented his calamity, That for her sake fell into misery; Which booted nought for prayers nor for threat To hope for to release or mollify, For aye the more that she did them entreat, The more they him misust, and cruelly did beat.

So as they forward on their way did pas, Him still reviling and afflicting sore, They met Prince Arthure with Sir Enias, (That was that courteous Knight, whom he before Having subdew'd yet did to life restore;) To whom as they approcht, they gan augment Their cruelty, and him to punish more, Scourging and haling him more vehement; As if it them should grieve to see his punishment.

The Squire him selfe, when as he saw his Lord The witnesse of his wretchednesse in place, Was much asham'd that with an hempen cord He like a dog was led in captive case, And did his head for bashfulnesse abase, As loth to see or to be seene at all: Shame would be hid. But whenas Enias Beheld two such, of two such villaines thrall, His manly mynde was much emmoved therewithall;

And to the Prince thus sayd: "See you, Sir Knight, The greatest shame that ever eye yet saw, Yond Lady and her Squire with foule despight Abusde, against all reason and all law, Without regard of pitty or of awe? See, how they doe that Squire beat and revile! See, how they doe the Lady hale and draw! But, if ye please to lend me leave awhile, I will them soone acquite, and both of blame assoile."

The Prince assented; and then he, streightway Dismounting light, his shield about him threw, With which approching thus he gan to say: "Abide, ye caytive treachetours untrew, That have with treason thralled unto you These two, unworthy of your wretched bands, And now your crime with cruelty pursew! Abide, and from them lay your loathly hands, Or else abide the death that hard before you stands."

The villaine stayd not aunswer to invent, But with his yron club preparing way, His mindes sad message backe unto him sent; The which descended with such dreadfull sway, That seemed nought the course thereof could stay, No more then lightening from the lofty sky: Ne list the Knight the powre thereof assay, Whose doome was death; but, lightly slipping by, Unwares defrauded his intended destiny:

And, to requite him with the like againe, With his sharpe sword he fiercely at him flew, And strooke so strongly, that the Carle with paine Saved him selfc but that he

there him slew; Yet sav'd not so, but that the bloud it drew, And gave his foe good hope of victory: Who therewith flesht upon him set anew, And with the second stroke thought certainely To have supplyde the first, and paide the usury.

But Fortune aunswerd not unto his call; For, as his hand was heaved up on hight, The villaine met him in the middle fall, And with his club bet backe his brondyron bright So forcibly, that with his owne hands might, Rebeaten backe upon himselfe againe, He driven was to ground in selfe despight; From whence ere he recovery could gaine, He in his necke had set his foote with fell disdaine.

With that the foole, which did that end awayte, Came running in; and, whilest on ground he lay, Laide heavy hands on him and held so strayte, That downe he kept him with his scornefull sway, So as he could not weld him any way: The whiles that other villaine went about Him to have bound and thrald without delay; The whiles the foole did him revile and flout, Threatning to yoke them two and tame their corage stout.

As when a sturdy ploughman with his hynde By strength have overthrowne a stubborne steare, They downe him hold, and fast with cords do bynde, Till they him force the buxome yoke to beare: So did these two this Knight oft tug and teare. Which when the Prince beheld, there standing by, He left his lofty steede to aide him neare; And, buckling soone him selfe, gan fiercely fly Upon that Carle to save his friend from jeopardy.

The villaine, leaving him unto his mate To be captiv'd and handled as he list, Himselfe addrest unto this new debate, And with his club him all about so blist, That he which way to turne him scarcely wist: Sometimes aloft he layd, sometimes alow, Now here, now there, and oft him neare he mist; So doubtfully, that hardly one could know Whether more wary were to give or ward the blow.

But yet the Prince so well enured was With such huge strokes, approved oft in fight, That way to them he gave forth right to pas; Ne would endure the daunger of their

might, But wayt advantage when they downe did light. At last the caytive, after long discourse, When all his strokes he saw avoyded quite, Resolved in one t'assemble all his force, And make one end of him without ruth or remorse.

His dreadfull hand he heaved up aloft, And with his dreadfull instrument of yre Thought sure have pownded him to powder soft, Or deepe emboweld in the earth entyre: But Fortune did not with his will conspire; For, ere his stroke attayned his intent, The noble childe, preventing his desire, Under his club with wary boldnesse went, And smote him on the knee that never yet was bent.

It never yet was bent, ne bent it now, Albe the stroke so strong and puissant were, That seem'd a marble pillour it could bow; But all that leg, which did his body beare, It crackt throughout, (yet did no bloud appeare,) So as it was unable to support So huge a burden on such broken geare, But fell to ground, like to a lumpe of durt; Whence he assayd to rise, but could not for his hurt.

Eftsoones the Prince to him full nimbly stept, And least he should recover foote againe, His head meant from his shoulders to have swept. Which when the Lady saw, she cryde amaine; "Stay, stay, Sir Knight! for love of God abstaine From that unwares ye weetlesse doe intend; Slay not that Carle, though worthy to be slaine, For more on him doth then him selfe depend: My life will by his death have lamentable end."

He staide his hand according her desire, Yet nathemore him suffred to arize; But, still suppressing, gan of her inquire, What meaning mote those uncouth words comprize, That in that villaines health her safety lies; That, were no might in man, nor heart in Knights, Which durst her dreaded reskue enterprize, Yet heavens them selves, that favour feeble rights, Would for it selfe redresse, and punish such despights.

Then bursting forth in teares, which gushed fast Like many water streames, awhile she stayd; Till the sharpe passion being overpast, Her tongue to her restord, then

thus she sayd: “Nor heavens, nor men, can me, most wretched mayd, Deliver from the doome of my desart, The which the God of love hath on me layd, And damned to endure this direfull smart, For penaunce of my proud and hard rebellious hart.

“In prime of youthly yeares, when first the flowre Of beauty gan to bud, and bloosme delight, And Nature me endu’d with plenteous dowre Of all her gifts, that pleasde each living sight, I was belov’d of many a gentle Knight, And sude and sought with all the service dew: Full many a one for me deepe groand and sight, And to the dore of death for sorrow drew, Complayning out on me that would not on them rew.

“But let them love that list, or live or die, Me list not die for any lovers doole; Ne list me leave my loved libertie To pitty him that list to play the foole; To love my selfe I learned had in schoole. Thus I triumphed long in lovers paine, And, sitting carelesse on the scorners stoole, Did laugh at those that did lament and plaine; But all is now repayd with interest againe.

“For loe! the winged God that woundeth harts Causde me be called to accompt therefore; And for revengement of those wrongfull smarts, Which I to others did inflict afore, Addeem’d me to endure this penaunce sore; That in this wize, and this unmeete array, With these two lewd companions, and no more, Disdaine and Scorne, I through the world should stray, Till I have sav’d so many as I earst did slay.”

“Certes,” (sayd then the Prince) “the God is just, That taketh vengeaunce of his peoples spoile; For were no law in love, but all that lust Might them oppresse, and painefully turmoile, His kingdome would continue but a while. But tell me, Lady, wherefore doe you beare This bottle thus before you with such toile, And eeke this wallet at your backe arreare, That for these Carles to carry much more comely were?”

“Here in this bottle” (sayd the sory Mayd) “I put the tears of my contrition, Till to

the brim I have it full defrayd: And in this bag, which I behinde me don, I put repentaunce for things past and gon. Yet is the bottle leake, and bag so torne, That all which I put in fals out anon, And is behinde me trodden downe of Scorne, Who mocketh all my paine, and laughs the more I mourn."

The Infant hearkned wisely to her tale, And wondred much at Cupids judg'ment wise, That could so meekly make proud hearts avale, And wreake him selfe on them that him despise. Then suffred he Disdaine up to arise, Who was not able up him selfe to reare, By meanes his leg, through his late luckelesse prise, Was crackt in twaine, but by his foolish feare Was holpen up, who him supported standing neare.

But being up he lookt againe aloft, As if he never had received fall; And with sterne eye-browes stared at him oft, As if he would have daunted him withall: And standing on his tiptoes, to seeme tall, Downe on his golden feete he often gazed, As if such pride the other could apall; Who was so far from being ought amazed, That he his lookes despised, and his boast dispraized.

Then turning backe unto that captive thrall, Who all this while stood there beside them bound, Unwilling to be knowne or seene at all, He from those bands weend him to have unwound; But when approaching neare he plainely found It was his owne true groome, the gentle Squire, He thereat wext exceedingly astound, And him did oft embrace, and oft admire, Ne could with seeing satisfie his great desire.

Meane-while the Salvage man, when he beheld That huge great foole oppressing th'other Knight, Whom with his weight unweldy downe he held, He flew upon him like a greedy kight Unto some carrion offered to his sight; And, downc him plucking, with his nayles and teeth Gan him to hale, and teare, and scratch, and bite; And, from him taking his owne whip, therewith So sore him scourgeth that the bloud downe followeth.

And sure I weene, had not the Ladies cry Procured the Prince his cruell hand to stay, He would with whipping him have done to dye; But being checkt he did abstaine

streightway, And let him rise. Then thus the Prince gan say: “Now, Lady, sith your fortunes thus dispose, That if ye list have liberty ye may; Unto your selfe I freely leave to chose, Whether I shall you leave, or from these villaines lose.”

“Ah! nay, Sir Knight,” (said she) “it may not be, But that I needes must by all meanes fulfill This penaunce, which enjoyned is to me, Least unto me betide a greater ill; Yet no lesse thankes to you for your good will.” So humbly taking leave she turnd aside; But Arthure with the rest went onward still On his first quest, in which did him betide A great adventure, which did him from them devide.

But first it falleth me by course to tell Of faire Serena; who, as earst you heard, When first the gentle Squire at variaunce fell With those two Carles, fled fast away, afeard Of villany to be to her inferd: So fresh the image of her former dread, Yet dwelling in her eye, to her appeard, That every foote did tremble which did tread, And every body two, and two she foure did read.

Through hils and dales, through bushes and through breres, Long thus she fled, till that at last she thought Her selfe now past the perill of her feares: Then looking round about, and seeing nought Which doubt of daunger to her offer mought, She from her palfrey lighted on the plaine; And, sitting downe, her selfe awhile bethought Of her long travell and turmoyling paine; And often did of love, and oft of lucke complaine.

And evermore she blamed Calepine, The good Sir Calepine, her owne true Knight, As th’onely author of her wofull tine; For being of his love to her so light, As her to leave in such a piteous plight: Yet never Turtle truer to his make, Then he was tride unto his Lady bright; Who all this while endured for her sake Great perill of his life, and restlesse paines did take.

Tho when as all her plaints she had displayd, And well disburdened her engrieved brest, Upon the grasse her selfe adowne she layd; Where, being tyrde with travell, and opprest With sorrow, she betooke her selfe to rest: There whilest in Morpheus

bosome safe she lay, Fearelesse of ought that mote her peace molest, False Fortune did her safety betray Unto a strange mischaunce that menac'd her decay.

In these wylde deserts where she now abode, There dwelt a salvage nation, which did live Of stealth and spoile, and making nightly rode Into their neighbours borders; ne did give Them selves to any trade, (as for to drive The painefull plough, or cattell for to breed, Or by adventrous marchandize to thrive,) But on the labours of poore men to feed, And serve their owne necessities with others need.

Thereto they usde one most accursed order, To eate the flesh of men whom they mote fynde, And straungers to devoure, which on their border Were brought by errour or by wreckfull wynde; A monstrous cruelty gainst course of kynde! They, towards evening wandering every way To seeke for booty, came by fortune blynde Whereas this Lady, like a sheepe astray, Now drowned in the depth of sleepe all fearelesse lay.

Soone as they spide her, Lord! what gladfull glee They made amongst them selves; but when her face Like the faire yvory shining they did see, Each gan his fellow solace and embrace For joy of such good hap by heavenly grace. Then gan they to devize what course to take; Whether to slay her there upon the place, Or suffer her out of her sleepe to wake, And then her eate attonce, or many meales to make.

The best advizement was, of bad, to let her Sleepe out her fill without encomberment; For sleepe, they sayd, would make her battill better: Then when she wakt they all gave one consent That, since by grace of God she there was sent, Unto their God they would her sacrifize, Whose share, her guiltlesse bloud, they would present; But of her dainty flesh they did devize To make a common feast, and feed with gurmandize.

So round about her they them selves did place Upon the grasse, and diversely dispose As each thought best to spend the lingring space: Some with their eyes the daintest morsels chose; Some praise her paps; some praise her lips and nose; Some

whet their knives, and strip their elboes bare: The Priest him selfe a garland doth compose Of finest flowers, and with full busie care His bloudy vessels wash, and holy fire prepare.

The Damzell wakes; then all attonce upstart, And round about her flocke, like many flies, Whooping and hallowing on every part, As if they would have rent the brasen skies. Which when she sees with ghastly griefful eies, Her heart does quake, and deadly pallied hew Benumbes her cheekes: Then out aloud she cries, Where none is nigh to heare that will her rew, And rends her golden locks, and snowy brests embrew.

But all bootes not; they hands upon her lay: And first they spoile her of her jewels deare, And afterwards of all her rich array; The which amongst them they in peeces teare, And of the pray each one a part doth beare. Now being naked, to their sordid eyes The goodly threasures of nature appeare: Which as they view with lustfull fantasyes, Each wisheth to him selfe, and to the rest envyes:—

Her yvorie neck; her alablaster Brest; Her paps, which like white silken pillowes were For love in soft delight thereon to rest; Her tender sides; her bellie white and clere, Which like an Altar did itselfe uprere To offer sacrifice divine thereon; Her goodly thighes, whose glorie did appeare Like a triumphal Arch, and thereupon The spoiles of Princes hang'd which were in battel won.

Those daintie parts, the dearlings of delight, Which mote not be prophan'd of common eyes, Those villeins view'd with loose lascivious sight, And closely tempted with their craftie spyes; And some of them gan mongst themselves devize Thereof by force to take their beastly pleasure: But them the Priest rebuking did advize To dare not to pollute so sacred threasure Vow'd to the gods: religion held even theeves in measure.

So, being stayd, they her from thence directed Unto a litle grove not farre asyde, In which an altar shortly they erected To slay her on. And now the Eventyde His brode

black wings had through the heavens wyde By this dispred, that was the tyme ordayned For such a dismall deed, their guilt to hyde: Of few greene turfes an altar soone they fayned, And deckt it all with flowres which they nigh hand obtayned.

Tho, when as all things readie were aright, Te Damzell was before the altar set, Being alreadie dead with fearefull fright: To whom the Priest with naked armes full net Approching nigh, and murdrous knife well whet, Gan mutter close a certaine secret charme, With other divelish ceremonies met: Which doen, he gan aloft t'advance his arme, Whereat they shouted all, and made a loud alarme.

Then gan the bagpypes and the hornes to shrill And shrieke aloud, that, with the peoples voyce Confused, did the ayre with terror fill, And made the wood to tremble at the noyce: The whyles she wayld, the more they did rejoyce. Now mote ye understand that to this grove Sir Calepine, by chaunce more then by choyce, The selfe same evening fortune hether drove, As he to seeke Serena through the woods did rove.

Long had he sought her, and through many a soyle Had traveld still on foot in heavie armes, Ne ought was tyred with his endlesse toyle, Ne ought was feared of his certaine harmes: And now, all weetlesse of the wretched stormes, In which his love was lost, he slept full fast; Till, being waked with these loud alarmes, He lightly started up like one aghast, And, catching up his arms, streight to the noise forth past.

There by th'uncertaine glims of starry night, And by the twinkling of their sacred fire, He mote perceive a litle dawning sight Of all which there was doing in that quire: Mongst whom a woman spoyld of all attire He spyde lamenting her unluckie strife, And groning sore from grieved hart entire: Eftsoones he saw one with a naked knife Readie to launch her brest, and let out loved life.

With that he thrusts into the thickest throng And, even as his right hand adowne descends, He him preventing layes on earth along, And sacrifizeth to th'infernall feends: Then to the rest his wrathfull hand he bends; Of whom he makes such

havocke and such hew, That swarmes of damned soules to hell he sends: The rest, that scape his sword and death eschew, Fly like a flocke of doves before a Faulcons vew.

From them returning to that Ladie backe, Whom by the Altar he doth sitting find Yet fearing death, and next to death the lacke Of clothes to cover what they ought by kind, He first her hands beginneth to unbind, And then to question of her present woe, And afterwards to cheare with speaches kind; But she, for nought that he could say or doe, One word durst speake, or answere him awhit thereto.

So inward shame of her uncomely case She did conceive, through care of womanhood, That though the night did cover her disgrace, Yet she in so unwomanly a mood Would not bewray the state in which she stood. So all that night to him unknowen she past; But day, that doth discover bad and good, Ensewing, made her knowen to him at last: The end whereof Ile keepe untill another cast.

Canto IX

Calidore hostes with Melibee, And loves fayre Pastorell: Coridon envies him, yet he, For ill, rewards him well.

Now turne againe my teme, thou jolly swayne, Backe to the furrow which I lately left. I lately left a furrow, one or twayne, Unplough'd, the which my coulter hath not cleft; Yet seem'd the soyle both fayre and frutefull eft, As I it past: that were too great a shame, That so rich frute should be from us bereft; Besides the great dishonour and defame, Which should befall to Calidores immortall name.

Great travell hath the gentle Calidore And toyle endured, sith I left him last Sewing the Blatant Beast; which I forebore To finish then, for other present hast. Full many pathes and perils he hath past, Through hils, through dales, through forests, and through plaines, In that same quest which fortune on him cast, Which he atchieved to his owne great gaines, Reaping eternall glorie of his restlesse paines.

So sharply he the Monster did pursew, That day nor night he suffred him to rest, Ne rested he himselfe, but natures dew, For dread of daunger not to be redrest, If he for slouth forslackt so famous quest. Him first from court he to the citties coursed, And from the citties to the townes him prest, And from the townes into the countrie forsed, And from the country back to private farmes he scorsed.

From thence into the open fields he fled, Whereas the Heardes were keeping of their neat, And shepherds singing to their flockes (that fed) Layes of sweete love and youthes delightfull heat: Him thether eke, for all his fearefull threat, He followed fast, and chaced him so nie, That to the folds, where sheepe at night doe seat, And to the litle cots, where shepherds lie In winters wrathfull time, he forced him to flie.

There on a day, as he pursew'd the chace, He chaunst to spy a sort of shepheard groomes, Playing on pipes and caroling apace, The whyles their beasts there in the budded broomes Beside them fed, and nipt the tender bloomes; For other worldly wealth they cared nought. To whom Sir Calidore yet sweating comes, And them to tell him courteously besought, If such a beast they saw, which he had thether brought.

They answer'd him that no such beast they saw, Nor any wicked feend that mote offend Their happie flockes, nor daunger to them draw; But if that such there were (as none they kend) They prayd high God them farre from them to send. Then one of them, him seeing so to sweat, After his rusticke wise, that well he weend, Offred him drinke to quench his thirstie heat, And, if he hungry were, him offred eke to eat.

The knight was nothing nice, where was no need, And tooke their gentle offer: so adowne They prayd him sit, and gave him for to feed Such homely what as serves the simple clowne, That doth despise the dainties of the towne. Tho, having fed his fill, he there besyde Saw a faire damzell, which did wearc a crowne Of sundry flowres with silken ribbands tyde, Yclad in home-made greene that her owne hands had dyde.

Upon a litle hillocke she was placed Higher then all the rest, and round about Environed with a girland, goodly graced, Of lovely lasses; and them all without The lustie shepheard swaynes sate in a rout, The which did pype and sing her prayses dew, And oft rejoyce, and oft for wonder shout, As if some miracle of heavenly hew Were downe to them descended in that earthly vew.

And soothly sure she was full fayre of face, And perfectly well shapt in every lim, Which she did more augment with modest grace And comely carriage of her count'nance trim, That all the rest like lesser lamps did dim: Who, her admiring as some heavenly wight, Did for their soveraine goddesse her esteeme, And, caroling her name both day and night, The fayrest Pastorella her by name did hight.

Ne was there heard, ne was there shepheards swayne, But her did honour; and eke many a one Burnt in her love, and with sweet pleasing payne Full many a night for her did sigh and grone: But most of all the shepheard Coridon For her did languish, and his deare life spend; Yet neither she for him nor other none Did care a whit, ne any liking lend: Though meane her lot, yet higher did her mind ascend.

Her whyles Sir Calidore there vewed well, And markt her rare demeanure, which him seemed So farre the meane of shepheards to excell, As that he in his mind her worthy deemed To be a Princes Paragone esteemed, He was unwares surprisd in subtile bands Of the blynd boy; ne thence could be redeemed By any skill out of his cruell hands; Caught like the bird which gazing still on others stands.

So stood he still long gazing thereupon, Ne any will had thence to move away, Although his quest were farre afore him gon: But after he had fed, yet did he stay And sate there still, untill the flying day Was farre forth spent, discoursing diversly Of sundry things as fell, to worke delay; And evermore his speach he did apply To th'heards, but meant them to the damzels fantazy.

By this the moystie night approching fast Her deawy humour gan on th'earth to shed, That warn'd the shepheards to their hornes to hast Their tender flocks, now

being fully fed, For feare of wetting them before their bed. Then came to them a good old aged syre, Whose silver lockes bedeckt his beard and hed, With shepheards hooke in hand, and fit attyre, That wild the damzell rise; the day did now expyre.

He was, to weet, by common voice esteemed The father of the fayrest Pastorell, And of her selfe in very deede so deemed; Yet was not so; but, as old stories tell, Found her by fortune, which to him befell, In th'open fields an Infant left alone; And, taking up, brought home and noursed well As his owne chyld; for other he had none; That she in tract of time accompted was his owne.

She at his bidding meekely did arise, And streight unto her litle flocke did fare: Then all the rest about her rose likewise, And each his sundrie sheepe with severall care Gathered together, and them homeward bare: Whylest everie one with helping hands did strive, Amongst themselves, and did their labours share, To helpc faire Pastorella home to drive Her fleecie flocke; but Coridon most helpe did give.

But Melibœe (so hight that good old man) Now seeing Calidore left all alone, And night arrived hard at hand, began Him to invite unto his simple home; Which though it were a cottage clad with lome, And all things therein meane, yet better so To lodge then in the salvage fields to rome. The knight full gladly soone agreed thereto, (Being his harts owne wish,) and home with him did go.

There he was welcom'd of that honest syre And of his aged Beldame homely well; Who him besought himselfe to disattyre, And rest himselfe till supper time befell; By which home came the fayrest Pastorell, After her flocke she in their fold had tyde: And supper readie dight they to it fell With small adoe, and nature satisfyde, The which doth litle crave contented to abyde.

Tho when they had their hunger slaked well, And the fayre mayd the table ta'ne away, The gentle knight, as he that did excell In courtesie and well could doe and say, For so great kindnesse as he found that day Gan greatly thanke his host and his good wife; And drawing thence his speach another way, Gan highly to commend the

happie life Which Shepheards lead, without debate or bitter strife.

“How much” (sayd he) “more happie is the state In which ye, father, here doe dwell at ease, Leading a life so free and fortunate From all the tempests of these worldly seas, Which tosse the rest in daungerous disease; Where warres, and wreckes, and wicked enmitie Doe them afflict, which no man can appease; That certes I your happinesse envie, And wish my lot were plast in such felicitie.”

“Surely, my sonne,” (then answer’d he againe) “If happie, then it is in this intent, That having small yet doe I not complaine Of want, ne wish for more it to augment, But doe my selfe with that I have content; So taught of nature, which doth litle need Of forreine helpes to lifes due nourishment: The fields my food, my flocke my rayment breed; No better doe I weare, no better doe I feed.

“Therefore I doe not any one envy, Nor am envyde of any one therefore: They, that have much, feare much to loose thereby, And store of cares doth follow riches store. The litle that I have growes dayly more Without my care, but onely to attend it; My lambes doe every yeare increase their score, And my flockes father daily doth amend it. What have I, but to praise th’Almighty that doth send it!

“To them that list the worlds gay showes I leave, And to great ones such follies doe forgive; Which oft through pride do their owne perill weave, And through ambition downe themselves doe drive To sad decay, that might contented live. Me no such cares nor combrous thoughts offend, Ne once my minds unmoved quiet grieve; But all the night in silver sleepe I spend, And all the day to what I list I doe attend.

“Sometimes I hunt the Fox, the vowed foe Unto my Lambes, and him dislodge away; Sometime the fawne I practise from the Doe, Or from the Goat her kidde, how to convay: Another while I baytes and nets display The birds to catch, or fishes to beguyle; And when I wearie am, I downe doe lay My limbes in every shade to rest from toyle, And drinke of every brooke when thirst my throte doth boyle.

“The time was once, in my first prime of yeares, When pride of youth forth pricked

my desire, That I disdain'd amongst mine equall peares To follow sheepe and shepheards base attire: For further fortune then I would inquire; And, leaving home, to roiall court I sought, Where I did sell my selfe for yearely hire, And in the Princes gardin daily wrought: There I beheld such vainenesse as I never thought.

"With sight whereof soone cloyd, and long deluded With idle hopes which them doe entertaine, After I had ten yeares my selfe excluded From native home, and spent my youth in vaine, I gan my follies to my selfe to plaine, And this sweet peace, whose lacke did then appeare: Tho, backe returning to my sheepe againe, I from thenceforth have learn'd to love more deare This lowly quiet life which I inherite here."

Whylest thus he talkt, the knight with greedy eare Hong still upon his melting mouth attent; Whose sensefull words empierst his hart so neare, That he was rapt with double ravishment, Both of his speach, that wrought him great content, And also of the object of his vew, On which his hungry eye was alwayes bent; That twixt his pleasing tongue, and her faire hew, He lost himselfe, and like one halfe entraunced grew.

Yet to occasion meanes to worke his mind, And to insinuate his harts desire, He thus replyde: "Now surely, syre, I find, That all this worlds gay showes, which we admire, Be but vaine shadowes to this safe retyre Of life, which here in lowlinesse ye lead, Fearelesse of foes, or fortunes wrackfull yre Which tosseth states, and under foot doth tread The mightie ones, affrayd of every chaunges dread.

"That even I, which daily doe behold The glorie of the great mongst whom I won, And now have prov'd what happinesse ye hold In this small plot of your dominion, Now loath great Lordship and ambition; And wish th'heavens so much had graced mee, As graunt me live in like condition; Or that my fortunes might transposed bee From pitch of higher place unto this low degree."

"In vaine" (said then old Melibœ) "doe men The heavens of their fortunes fault

accuse, Sith they know best what is the best for them; For they to each such fortune doe diffuse, As they doe know each can most aptly use: For not that which men covet most is best, Nor that thing worst which men do most refuse; But fittest is, that all contented rest With that they hold: each hath his fortune in his brest.

"It is the mynd that maketh good or ill, That maketh wretch or happie, rich or poore; For some, that hath abundance at his will, Hath not enough, but wants in greatest store, And other, that hath litle, askes no more, But in that litle is both rich and wise; For wisedome is most riches: fooles therefore They are which fortunes doe by vowes devize, Sith each unto himselfe his life may fortunize."

"Since then in each mans self" (said Calidore) "It is to fashion his owne lyfes estate, Give leave awhyle, good father, in this shore To rest my barcke, which hath bene beaten late With stormes of fortune and tempestuous fate In seas of troubles and of toylesome paine; That, whether quite from them for to retrate I shall resolve, or backe to turne againe, I may here with your selfe some small repose obtaine.

"Not that the burden of so bold a guest Shall chargefull be, or chaunge to you at all; For your meane food shall be my daily feast, And this your cabin both my bowre and hall: Besides, for recompence hereof I shall You well reward, and golden guerdon give, That may perhaps you better much withall, And in this quiet make you safer live." So forth he drew much gold, and toward him it drive.

But the good man, nought tempted with the offer Of his rich mould, did thrust it farre away, And thus bespake: "Sir knight, your bounteous proffer Be farre fro me, to whom ye ill display That mucky masse, the cause of mens decay, That mote empaire my peace with daungers dread; But, if ye algates covet to assay This simple sort of life that shepheards lead, Be it your owne: our rudenesse to your selfe aread."

So there that night Sir Calidore did dwell, And long while after, whilest him list remaine, Dayly beholding the faire Pastorell, And feeding on the bayt of his owne bane: During which time he did her entertaine With all kind courtesies he could

invent; And every day, her companie to gaine, When to the field she went he with her went: So for to quench his fire he did it more augment.

But she that never had acquainted beene With such queint usage, fit for Queenes and Kings, Ne ever had such knightly service seene, But, being bred under base shepheards wings, Had ever learn'd to love the lowly things, Did litle whit regard his courteous guize, But cared more for Colins carolings Then all that he could doe, or ever devize: His layes, his loves, his lookes, she did them all despize.

Which Calidore perceiving, thought it best To chaunge the manner of his loftie looke; And doffing his bright armes himselfe addrest In shepheards weed; and in his hand he tooke, Instead of steelehead speare, a shepheards hooke; That who had seene him then, would have bethought On Phrygian Paris by Plexippus brooke, When he the love of fayre Oenone sought, What time the golden apple was unto him brought.

So being clad unto the fields he went With the faire Pastorella every day, And kept her sheepe with diligent attent, Watching to drive the ravenous Wolfe away, The whylest at pleasure she mote sport and play; And every evening helping them to fold: And otherwhiles, for need, he did assay In his strong hand their rugged teats to hold, And out of them to presse the milke: love so much could.

Which seeing Coridon, who her likewise Long time had lov'd, and hop'd her love to gaine, He much was troubled at that straungers guize, And many gealous thoughts conceiv'd in vaine, That this of all his labour and long paine Should reap the harvest ere it ripened were: That made him scoule, and pout, and oft complaine Of Pastorell to all the shepheards there, That she did love a stranger swayne then him more dere.

And ever, when he came in companie Where Calidore was present, he would loure And byte his lip, and even for gealousie Was readie oft his owne heart to devoure, Impatient of any paramoure: Who, on the other side, did seeme so farre From malicing, or grudging his good houre, That all he could he graced him with her, Ne

ever shewed signe of rancour or of jarre.

And oft, when Coridon unto her brought Or litle sparrowes stolen from their nest, Or wanton squirrels in the woods farre sought, Or other daintie thing for her addrest, He would commend his guift, and make the best; Yet she no whit his presents did regard, Ne him could find to fancie in her brest: This newcome shepheard had his market mard. Old love is litle worth when new is more prefard.

One day, when as the shepheard swaynes together Were met to make their sports and merrie glee, As they are wont in faire sunshynie weather, The whiles their flockes in shadowes shrouded bee, They fell to daunce: then did they all agree That Colin Clout should pipe, as one most fit; And Calidore should lead the ring, as hee That most in Pastorellaes grace did sit: Thereat frown'd Coridon, and his lip closely bit.

But Calidore, of courteous inclination, Tooke Coridon and set him in his place, That he should lead the daunce, as was his fashion; For Coridon could daunce, and trimly trace: And when as Pastorella, him to grace, Her flowry garlond tooke from her owne head, And plast on his, he did it soone displace, And did it put on Coridons instead: Then Coridon woxe frollicke, that earst seemed dead.

Another time, when as they did dispose To practise games and maisteries to try, They for their Judge did Pastorella chose; A garland was the meed of victory: There Coridon forth stepping openly Did chalenge Calidore to wrestling game; For he, through long and perfect industry, Therein well practisd was, and in the same Thought sure t'avenge his grudge, and worke his foe great shame.

But Calidore he greatly did mistake, For he was strong and mightily stiffe pight, That with one fall his necke he almost brake; And had he not upon him fallen light, His dearest joynt he sure had broken quight. Then was the oaken crowne by Pastorell Given to Calidore as his due right; But he, that did in courtesie excell, Gave it to Coridon, and said he wonne it well.

Thus did the gentle knight himselfe abeare Amongst that rusticke rout in all his deeds, That even they, the which his rivals were, Could not maligne him, but commend him needs; For courtesie amongst the rudest breeds Good will and favour. So it surely wrought With this faire Mayd, and in her mynde the seeds Of perfect love did sow, that last forth brought The fruite of joy and blisse, though long time dearely bought.

Thus Calidore continu'd there long time To winne the love of the faire Pastorell, Which having got, he used without crime Or blamefull blot; but menaged so well, That he, of all the rest which there did dwell, Was favoured and to her grace commended. But what straunge fortunes unto him befell, Ere he attain'd the point by him intended, Shall more conveniently in other place be ended.

Canto X

Calidore sees the Graces dance To Colins melody: The whiles his Pastorell is led Into captivity.

Who now does follow the foule Blatant Beast, Whilest Calidore does follow that faire Mayd, Unmyndfull of his vow, and high beheast Which by the Faery Queene was on him layd, That he should never leave, nor be delayd From chacing him, till he had it attchieved? And now, entrapt of love, which him betrayd, He mindeth more how he may be relieved With grace from her, whose love his heart hath sore engrieved.

That from henceforth he meanes no more to sew His former quest, so full of toile and paine: Another quest, another game in vew He hath, the guerdon of his love to gaine; With whom he myndes for ever to remaine, And set his rest amongst the rusticke sort, Rather then hunt still after shadowes vaine Of courtly favour, fed with light report Of every blaste, and sayling alwaies in the port.

Ne certes mote he greatly blamed be From so high step to stoupe unto so low; For

who had tasted once (as oft did he) The happy peace which there doth overflow, And prov'd the perfect pleasures which doe grow Amongst poore hyndes, in hils, in woods, in dales, Would never more delight in painted show Of such false blisse, as there is set for stales T'entrap unwary fooles in their eternall bales.

For what hath all that goodly glorious gaze Like to one sight which Calidore did vew? The glaunce whereof their dimmed eies would daze, That never more they should endure the shew Of that sunne-shine that makes them looke askew: Ne ought, in all that world of beauties rare, (Save onely Glorianaes heavenly hew, To which what can compare?) can it compare; The which, as commeth now by course, I will declare.

One day, as he did raunge the fields abroad, Whilest his faire Pastorella was elsewhere, He chaunst to come, far from all peoples troad, Unto a place whose pleasaunce did appere To passe all others on the earth which were: For all that ever was by natures skill Devized to worke delight was gathered there, And there by her were poured forth at fill, As if, this to adorne, she all the rest did pill.

It was an hill plaste in an open plaine, That round about was bordered with a wood Of matchlesse night, that seem'd th'earth to disdaine; In which all trees of honour stately stood, And did all winter as in sommer bud, Spredding pavilions for the birds to bowre, Which in their lower braunches sung aloud; And in their tops the soring hauke did towre, Sitting like King of fowles in majesty and powre:

And at the foote thereof a gentle flud His silver waves did softly tumble downe, Unmard with ragged mosse or filthy mud; Ne mote wylde beastes, ne mote the ruder clowne, Thereto approch; ne filth mote therein drowne: But Nymphes and Faeries by the bancks did sit In the woods shade which did the waters crowne, Keeping all noysome things away from it, And to the waters fall tuning their accents fit.

And on the top thereof a spacious plaine Did spred it selfe, to serve to all delight, Either to daunce, when they to daunce would faine, Or else to course about their

bases light; Ne ought there wanted which for pleasure might Desired be, or thence to banish bale, So pleasauntly the hill with equall hight Did seeme to overlooke the lowly vale; Therefore it rightly cleeped was mount Acidale.

They say that Venus, when she did dispose Her selfe to pleasaunce, used to resort Unto this place, and therein to repose And rest her selfe as in a gladsome port, Or with the Graces there to play and sport; That even her owne Cytheron, though in it She used most to keepe her royall court, And in her soveraine Majesty to sit, She in regard hereof refusde and thought unfit.

Unto this place when as the Elfin Knight Approcht, him seemed that the merry sound Of a shrill pipe he playing heard on hight, And many feete fast thumping th'hollow ground, That through the woods their Eccho did rebound. He nigher drew to weete what mote it be: There he a troupe of Ladies dauncing found Full merrily, and making gladfull glee, And in the midst a Shepheard piping he did see.

He durst not enter into th'open greene, For dread of them unwares to be descryde, For breaking of their daunce, if he were seene; But in the covert of the wood did byde, Beholding all, yet of them unespyde. There he did see that pleased much his sight, That even he him selfe his eyes envyde, An hundred naked maidens lilly white All raunged in a ring and dauncing in delight.

All they without were raunged in a ring, And daunced round; but in the midst of them Three other Ladies did both daunce and sing, The whilest the rest them round about did hemme, And like a girlond did in compasse stemme: And in the middest of those same three was placed Another Damzell, as a precious gemme Amidst a ring most richly well enchaced, That with her goodly presence all the rest much graced.

Looke! how the crowne, which Ariadne wore Upon her yvory forehead, that same day That Theseus her unto his bridale bore, When the bold Centaures made that bloudy fray With the fierce Lapithes which did them dismay, Being now placed in

the firmament, Through the bright heaven doth her beams display, And is unto the starres an ornament, Which round about her move in order excellent.

Such was the beauty of this goodly band, Whose sundry parts were here too long to tell; But she that in the midst of them did stand Seem'd all the rest in beauty to excell, Crownd with a rosie girlond that right well Did her beseeme: And ever, as the crew About her daunst, sweet flowres that far did smell And fragrant odours they uppon her threw; But most of all those three did her with gifts endew.

Those were the Graces, daughters of delight, Handmaides of Venus, which are wont to haunt Uppon this hill, and daunce there day and night: Those three to men all gifts of grace do graunt; And all that Venus in her selfe doth vaunt Is borrowed of them. But that faire one, That in the midst was placed paravaunt, Was she to whom that shepheard pypt alone; That made him pipe so merrily, as never none.

She was, to weete, that jolly Shepheards lasse, Which piped there unto that merry rout; That jolly shepheard, which there piped, was Poore Colin Clout, (who knowes not Colin Clout?) He pypt apace, whilest they him daunst about. Pype, jolly shepheard, pype thou now apace Unto thy love that made thee low to lout: Thy love is present there with thee in place; Thy love is there advaunst to be another Grace.

Much wondred Calidore at this straunge sight, Whose like before his eye had never seene; And standing long astonished in spright, And rapt with pleasaunce, wist not what to weene; Whether it were the traine of beauties Queene, Or Nymphes, or Faeries, or enchaunted show, With which his eyes mote have deluded beene. Therefore, resolving what it was to know, Out of the wood he rose, and toward them did go.

But, soone as he appeared to their vew, They vanisht all away out of his sight, And cleane were gone, which way he never knew; All save the shepheard, who, for fell despight Of that displeasure, broke his bag-pipe quight, And made great mone for that unhappy turne: But Calidore, though no lesse sory wight For that mishap, yet

seeing him to mourne, Drew neare, that he the truth of all by him mote learne.

And, first him greeting, thus unto him spake: “Haile, jolly shepheard, which thy joyous dayes Here leadest in this goodly merry-make, Frequented of these gentle Nymphes alwayes, Which to thee flocke to heare thy lovely layes! Tell me, what mote these dainty Damzells be, Which here with thee doe make their pleasant playes? Right happy thou that mayst them freely see! But why, when I them saw, fled they away from me?”

“Not I so happy,” answerd then that swaine, “As thou unhappy, which them thence didst chace, Whom by no meanes thou canst recall againe; For, being gone, none can them bring in place, But whom they of them selves list so to grace.” “Right sory I,” (saide then Sir Calidore) “That my ill fortune did them hence displace; But since things passed none may now restore, Tell me what were they all, whose lacke thee grieves so sore?”

Tho gan that shepheard thus for to dilate: “Then wote, thou shepheard, whatsoever thou bee, That all those Ladies, which thou sawest late, Are Venus Damzels, all within her fee, But differing in honour and degree: They all are Graces which on her depend, Besides a thousand more which ready bee Her to adorne, when so she forth doth wend; But those three in the midst doe chiefe on her attend.

“They are the daughters of sky-ruling Jove, By him begot of faire Eurynome, The Oceans daughter, in this pleasant grove, As he, this way comming from feastfull glee Of Thetis wedding with Æacidee, In sommers shade him selfe here rested weary: The first of them hight mylde Euphrosyne, Next faire Aglaia, last Thalia merry; Sweete Goddesses all three, which me in mirth do cherry!

“These three on men all gracious gifts bestow, Which decke the body or adorne the mynde, To make them lovely or well-favoured show; As comely carriage, entertainement kynde, Sweete semblaunt, friendly offices that bynde, And all the complements of curtesie: They teach us how to each degree and kynde We should

our selves demeane, to low, to hie, To friends, to foes; which skill men call Civility.

“Therefore they alwaies smoothly seeme to smile, That we likewise should mylde and gentle be; And also naked are, that without guile Or false dissemblaunce all them plaine may see, Simple and true, from covert malice free; And eeke them selves so in their daunce they bore, That two of them still froward seem’d to bee, But one still towards shew’d her selfe afore; That good should from us goe, then come, in greater store.

“Such were those Goddesses which ye did see; But that fourth Mayd, which there amidst them traced, Who can aread what creature mote she bee, Whether a creature, or a goddesse graced With heavenly gifts from heven first enraced? But what so sure she was, she worthy was To be the fourth with those three other placed: Yet was she certes but a countrey lasse; Yet she all other countrey lasses farre did passe:

“So farre, as doth the daughter of the day All other lesser lights in light excell; So farre doth she in beautyfull array Above all other lasses beare the bell; Ne lesse in vertue that beseemes her well Doth she exceede the rest of all her race, For which the Graces, that here wont to dwell, Have for more honor brought her to this place, And graced her so much to be another Grace.

“Another Grace she well deserves to be, In whom so many Graces gathered are, Excelling much the meane of her degree; Divine resemblaunce, beauty soveraine rare, Firme Chastity, that spight ne blemish dare: All which she with such courtesie doth grace, That all her peres cannot with her compare, But quite are dimmed when she is in place: She made me often pipe, and now to pipe apace.

“Sunne of the world, great glory of the sky, That all the earth doest lighten with thy rayes, Great Gloriana, greatest Majesty! Pardon thy shepheard, mongst so many layes As he hath sung of thee in all his dayes, To make one minime of thy poore handmayd, And underneath thy feete to place her prayse; That when thy glory shall be farre displayd To future age, of her this mention may be made!”

When thus that shepheard ended had his speach, Sayd Calidore: “Now sure it yrketh mee, That to thy blisse I made this luckelesse breach, As now the author of thy bale to be, Thus to bereave thy loves deare sight from thee: But, gentle Shepheard, pardon thou my shame, Who rashly sought that which I mote not see.” Thus did the courteous Knight excuse his blame, And to recomfort him all comely meanes did frame.

In such discourses they together spent Long time, as fit occasion forth them led; With which the Knight him selfe did much content, And with delight his greedy fancy fed Both of his words, which he with reason red, And also of the place, whose pleasures rare With such regard his sences ravished, That thence he had no will away to fare, But wisht that with that shepheard he mote dwelling share.

But that envenimd sting, the which of yore His poysnous point deepe fixed in his hart Had left, now gan afresh to rancle sore, And to renue the rigour of his smart; Which to recure no skill of Leaches art Mote him availe, but to returne againe To his wounds worker, that with lovely dart Dinting his brest had bred his restlesse paine; Like as the wounded Whale to shore flies from the maine.

So, taking leave of that same gentle Swaine, He backe returned to his rusticke wonne, Where his faire Pastorella did remaine: To whome, in sort as he at first begonne, He daily did apply him selfe to donne All dewfull service, voide of thoughts impure; Ne any paines ne perill did he shonne, By which he might her to his love allure, And liking in her yet untamed heart procure.

And evermore the shepheard Coridon, What ever thing he did her to aggrate, Did strive to match with strong contention, And all his paines did closely emulate; Whether it were to caroll, as they sate Keeping their sheepe, or games to exercize, Or to present her with their labours late; Through which if any grace chaunst to arize To him, the Shepheard streight with jealousie did frize.

One day, as they all three together went To the greene wood to gather strawberies,

There chaunst to them a dangerous accident: A Tigre forth out of the wood did rise, That with fell clawes full of fierce gourmandize, And greedy mouth wide gaping like hell-gate, Did runne at Pastorell her to surprize; Whom she beholding, now all desolate, Gan cry to them aloud to helpe her all too late.

Which Coridon first hearing ran in hast To reskue her; but, when he saw the feend, Through cowherd feare he fled away as fast, Ne durst abide the daunger of the end; His life he steemed dearer then his frend: But Calidore soone comming to her ayde, When he the beast saw ready now to rend His loves deare spoile, in which his heart was prayde, He ran at him enraged, instead of being frayde.

He had no weapon but his shepheards hooke To serve the vengeaunce of his wrathfull will; With which so sternely he the monster strooke, That to the ground astonished he fell; Whence, ere he could recou'r, he did him quell, And, hewing off his head, he it presented Before the feete of the faire Pastorell; Who, scarcely yet from former feare exempted, A thousand times him thankt that had her death prevented.

From that day forth she gan him to affect, And daily more her favour to augment; But Coridon for cowherdize reject, Fit to keepe sheepe, unfit for loves content: The gentle heart scornes base disparagement. Yet Calidore did not despise him quight, But usde him friendly for further intent, That by his fellowship he colour might Both his estate and love from skill of any wight.

So well he wood her, and so well he wrought her, With humble service, and with daily sute, That at the last unto his will he brought her; Which he so wisely well did prosecute, That of his love he reapt the timely frute, And joyed long in close felicity, Till fortune, fraught with malice, blinde and brute, That envies lovers long prosperity, Blew up a bitter storme of foule adversity.

It fortuned one day, when Calidore Was hunting in the woods, (as was his trade) A lawlesse people, Brigants hight of yore, That never usde to live by plough nor spade,

But fed on spoile and booty, which they made Upon their neighbours which did nigh them border, The dwelling of these shepheards did invade, And spoyld their houses, and them selves did murder, And drove away their flocks; with other much disorder.

Amongst the rest, the which they then did pray, They spoyld old Melibee of all he had, And all his people captive led away; Mongst which this lucklesse mayd away was lad, Faire Pastorella, sorrowfull and sad, Most sorrowfull, most sad, that ever sight, Now made the spoile of theeves and Brigants bad, Which was the conquest of the gentlest Knight That ever liv'd, and th'onely glory of his might.

With them also was taken Coridon, And carried captive by those theeves away; Who in the covert of the night, that none Mote them descry, nor reskue from their pray, Unto their dwelling did them close convay. Their dwelling in a little Island was, Covered with shrubby woods, in which no way Appeard for people in nor out to pas, Nor any footing fynde for overgrowen gras:

For underneath the ground their way was made Through hollow caves, that no man mote discover For the thicke shrubs, which did them alwaies shade From view of living wight and covered over; But darkenesse dred and daily night did hover Through all the inner parts, wherein they dwelt; Ne lightned was with window, nor with lover, But with continuall candle-light, which delt A doubtfull sense of things, not so well seene as felt.

Hither those Brigants brought their present pray, And kept them with continuall watch and ward; Meaning, so soone as they convenient may, For slaves to sell them for no small reward To Merchants, which them kept in bondage hard, Or sold againe. Now when faire Pastorell Into this place was brought, and kept with gard Of griesly theeves, she thought her self in hell, Where with such damned fiends she should in darknesse dwell.

But for to tell the dolefull dreriment And pittifull complaints which there she made, Where day and night she nought did but lament Her wretched life shut up in deadly

shade, And waste her goodly beauty, which did fade Like to a flowre that feeles no heate of sunne, Which may her feeble leaves with comfort glade— And what befell her in that theevish wonne, Will in another Canto better be begonne.

Canto XI

The Theeves fall out for Pastorell, Whilest Melibee is slaine; Her Calidore from them redeemes, And bringeth backe again.

The joyes of love, if they should ever last Without affliction or disquietnesse That worldly chaunces doe amongst them cast, Would be on earth too great a blessednesse, Liker to heaven then mortall wretchednesse: Therefore the winged God, to let men weet That here on earth is no sure happinesse, A thousand sowres hath tempred with one sweet, To make it seeme more deare and dainty, as is meet.

Like as is now befalne to this faire Mayd, Faire Pastorell, of whom is now my song: Who being now in dreadfull darknesse layd Amongst those theeves, which her in bondage strong Detaynd, yet Fortune, not with all this wrong Contented, greater mischiefe on her threw, And sorrowes heapt on her in greater throng; That who so heares her heavinesse, would rew And pitty her sad plight, so chang'd from pleasaunt hew.

Whylest thus she in these hellish dens remayned, Wrapped in wretched cares and hearts unrest, It so befell, (as Fortune had ordayned) That he which was their Capitaine profest, And had the chiefe commaund of all the rest, One day, as he did all his prisoners vew, With lustfull eyes beheld that lovely guest, Faire Pastorella, whose sad mournefull hew Like the faire Morning clad in misty fog did shew.

At sight whereof his barbarous heart was fired, And inly burnt with flames most raging whot, That her alone he for his part desired Of all the other pray which they had got, And her in mynde did to him selfe allot. From that day forth he kyndnesse to her showed, And sought her love by all the meanes he mote; With looks, with

words, with gifts he oft her wowed, And mixed threats among, and much unto her vowed.

But all that ever he could doe or say Her constant mynd could not a whit remove, Nor draw unto the lure of his lewd lay, To graunt him favour or afford him love: Yet ceast he not to sew, and all waies prove, By which he mote accomplish his request, Saying and doing all that mote behove; Ne day nor night he suffred her to rest, But her all night did watch, and all the day molest.

At last, when him she so importune saw, Fearing least he at length the raines would lend Unto his lust, and make his will his law, Sith in his powre she was to foe or frend, She thought it best, for shadow to pretend Some shew of favour, by him gracing small, That she thereby mote either freely wend, Or at more ease continue there his thrall: A little well is lent that gaineth more withall.

So from thenceforth, when love he to her made, With better tearmes she did him entertaine, Which gave him hope, and did him halfe perswade, That he in time her joyance should obtaine: But when she saw through that small favours gaine, That further then she willing was he prest, She found no meanes to barre him, but to faine A sodaine sickenesse which her sore opprest, And made unfit to serve his lawlesse mindes behest.

By meanes whereof she would not him permit Once to approch to her in privity, But onely mongst the rest by her to sit, Mourning the rigour of her malady, And seeking all things meete for remedy; But she resolv’d no remedy to fynde, Nor better cheare to shew in misery, Till Fortune would her captive bonds unbynde: Her sickenesse was not of the body, but the mynde.

During which space that she thus sicke did lie, It chaunst a sort of merchants, which were wount To skim those coastes for bondmen there to buy, And by such trafficke after gaines to hunt, Arrived in this Isle, though bare and blunt, T’inquire for slaves; where being readie met By some of these same theeves at the instant brunt, Were

brought unto their Captaine, who was set By his faire patients side with sorrowfull regret.

To whom they shewed, how those marchants were Arriv'd in place their bondslaves for to buy; And therefore prayd that those same captives there Mote to them for their most commodity Be sold, and mongst them shared equally. This their request the Captaine much appalled, Yet could he not their just demaund deny, And willed streight the slaves should forth be called, And sold for most advantage, not to be forstalled.

Then forth the good old Melibœ was brought, And Coridon with many other moe, Whom they before in diverse spoyles had caught; All which he to the marchants sale did showe: Till some, which did the sundry prisoners knowe, Gan to inquire for that faire shepherdesse, Which with the rest they tooke not long agoe; And gan her forme and feature to expresse, The more t'augment her price through praise of comlinesse.

To whom the Captaine in full angry wize Made answere, that the mayd of whom they spake Was his owne purchase and his onely prize; With which none had to doe, ne ought partake, But he himselfe which did that conquest make: Litle for him to have one silly lasse; Besides, through sicknesse now so wan and weake, That nothing meet in merchandise to passe: So shew'd them her, to prove how pale and weake she was.

The sight of whom, though now decayd and mard, And eke but hardly seene by candle-light, Yet, like a Diamond of rich regard, In doubtfull shadow of the darkesome night With starrie beames about her shining bright, These marchants fixed eyes did so amaze, That what through wonder, and what through delight, A while on her they greedily did gaze, And did her greatly like, and did her greatly praize.

At last when all the rest them offred were, And prises to them placed at their pleasure, They all refused in regard of her, Ne ought would buy, how ever prisd with

measure, Withouten her, whose worth above all threasure They did esteeme, and offred store of gold: But then the Captaine, fraught with more displeasure, Bad them be still; his love should not be sold; The rest take if they would; he her to him would hold.

Therewith some other of the chiefest theeves Boldly him bad such injurie forbeare; For that same mayd, how ever it him greeves, Should with the rest be sold before him theare, To make the prises of the rest more deare. That with great rage he stoutly doth denay; And, fiercely drawing forth his blade, doth sweare That who so hardie hand on her doth lay, It dearely shall aby, and death for handsell pay.

Thus, as they words amongst them multiply, They fall to strokes, the frute of too much talke, And the mad steele about doth fiercely fly, Not sparing wight, ne leaving any balke, But making way for death at large to walke; Who, in the horror of the griesly night, In thousand dreadful shapes doth mongst them stalke, And makes huge havocke; whiles the candle-light Out quenched leaves no skill nor difference of wight.

Like a sort of hungry dogs, ymet About some carcase by the common way, Doe fall together, stryving each to get The greatest portion of the greedie pray, All on confused heapes themselves assay, And snatch, and byte, and rend, and tug, and teare; That who them sees would wonder at their fray, And who sees not would be affrayd to heare: Such was the conflict of those cruell Brigants there.

But first of all their captives they doe kill, Least they should joyne against the weaker side, Or rise against the remnant at their will: Old Meliboe is slaine; and him beside His aged wife, with many others wide; But Coridon, escaping craftily, Creepes forth of dores, whilst darknes him doth hide, And flyes away as fast as he can hye, Ne stayeth leave to take before his friends doe dye.

But Pastorella, wofull wretched Elfe, Was by the Captaine all this while defended, Who, minding more her safety then himselfe, His target alwayes over her pretended;

By means whereof, that mote not be amended, He at the length was slaine and layd on ground, Yet holding fast twixt both his armes extended Fayre Pastorell, who, with the selfe same wound Launcht through the arme, fell down with him in drerie swound.

There lay she covered with confused preasse Of carcases, which dying on her fell. Tho, when as he was dead, the fray gan ceasse; And each to other calling did compell To stay their cruell hands from slaughter fell, Sith they that were the cause of all were gone: Thereto they all attonce agreed well; And, lighting candles new, gan search anone, How many of their friends were slaine, how many fone.

Their Captaine there they cruelly found kild, And in his armes the dreary dying mayd, Like a sweet Angell twixt two clouds uphild; Her lovely light was dimmed and decayd With cloud of death upon her eyes displayd; Yet did the cloud make even that dimmed light Seeme much more lovely in that darknesse layd, And twixt the twinckling of her eyelids bright To sparke out litle beames, like starres in foggie night.

But when they mov'd the carcases aside, They found that life did yet in her remaine: Then all their helpes they busily applyde To call the soule backe to her home againe; And wrought so well, with labour and long paine, That they to life recovered her at last: Who, sighing sore, as if her hart in twaine Had riven bene and all her hartstrings brast, With drearie drouping eyne lookt up like one aghast.

There she beheld, that sore her griev'd to see, Her father and her friends about her lying, Her selfe sole left a second spoyle to bee Of those, that, having saved her from dying, Renew'd her death by timely death denying. What now is left her but to wayle and weepe, Wringing her hands, and ruefully loud crying? Ne cared she her wound in teares to steepe, Albe with all their might those Brigants her did keepe.

But when they saw her now reliv'd againe, They left her so, in charge of one, the best Of many worst, who with unkind disdaine And cruell rigour her did much

molest; Scarse yeelding her due food or timely rest, And scarsely suffring her infestred wound, That sore her payn'd, by any to be drest. So leave we her in wretched thraldome bound, And turne we backe to Calidore where we him found.

Who when he backe returned from the wood, And saw his shepheards cottage spoyled quight, And his love reft away, he wexed wood And halfe enraged at that ruefull sight; That even his hart, for very fell despight, And his owne flesh he readie was to teare: He chauft, he griev'd, he fretted, and he sight, And fared like a furious wyld Beare, Whose whelpes are stolne away, she being otherwhere.

Ne wight he found to whom he might complaine, Ne wight he found of whom he might inquire, That more increast the anguish of his paine: He sought the woods, but no man could see there; He sought the plaines, but could no tydings heare: The woods did nought but ecchoes vaine rebound; The playnes all waste and emptie did appeare; Where wont the shepheards oft their pypes resound, And feed an hundred flocks, there now not one he found.

At last, as there he romed up and downe, He chaunst one comming towards him to spy, That seem'd to be some sorie simple clowne, With ragged weedes, and lockes upstaring hye, As if he did from some late daunger fly, And yet his feare did follow him behynd: Who as he unto him approched nye, He mote perceive by signes which he did fynd, That Coridon it was, the silly shepherds hynd.

Tho, to him running fast, he did not stay To greet him first, but askt where were the rest? Where Pastorell?—Who full of fresh dismay, And gushing forth in teares, was so opprest, That he no word could speake, but smit his brest, And up to heaven his eyes fast-streming threw: Whereat the knight amaz'd yet did not rest, But askt againe, what ment that rufull hew: Where was his Pastorell? where all the other crew?

"Ah, wellaway!" (sayd he, then sighing sore) "That ever I did live this day to see, This dismall day, and was not dead before, Before I saw faire Pastorella dye." "Die?

out alas!" then Calidore did cry, "How could the death dare ever her to quell? But read thou, shepheard, read what destiny Or other dyrefull hap from heaven or hell Hath wrought this wicked deed: doe feare away, and tell."

Tho, when the Shepheard breathed had awhile, He thus began: "Where shall I then commence This wofull tale? or how those Brigants vyle, With cruell rage and dreadfull violence, Spoyld all our cots, and caried us from hence; Or how faire Pastorell should have bene sold To marchants, but was sav'd with strong defence; Or how those theeves, whilest one sought her to hold, Fell all at ods, and fought through fury fierce and bold.

"In that same conflict (woe is me!) befell This fatall chaunce, this dolefull accident, Whose heavy tydings now I have to tell. First all the captives, which they here had hent, Were by them slaine by generall consent: Old Melibœ and his good wife withall These eyes saw die, and dearely did lament; But, when the lot to Pastorell did fall, Their Captaine long withstood, and did her death forstall.

"But what could he gainst all them doe alone? It could not boot: needs mote she die at last. I onely scapt through great confusione Of cryes and clamors which amongst them past, In dreadfull darknesse dreadfully aghast; That better were with them to have bene dead, Then here to see all desolate and wast, Despoyled of those joyes and jolly-head, Which with those gentle shepherds here I wont to lead."

When Calidore these ruefull newes had raught, His hart quite deaded was with anguish great, And all his wits with doole were nigh distraught, That he his face, his head, his brest did beat, And death it selfe unto himselfe did threat; Oft cursing th'heavens, that so cruell were To her, whose name he often did repeat; And wishing oft that he were present there When she was slaine, or had bene to her succour nere.

But after griefe awhile had had his course, And spent it selfe in mourning, he at last Began to mitigate his swelling sourse, And in his mind with better reason cast How he might save her life, if life did last; Or, if that dead, how he her death might

wreake, Sith otherwise he could not mend thing past; Or if it to revenge he were too weake, Then for to die with her, and his lives threed to breake.

Tho Coridon he prayd, sith he well knew The readie way unto that theevish wonne, To wend with him, and be his conduct trew Unto the place, to see what should be donne; But he, whose hart through feare was late fordonne, Would not for ought be drawne to former drede, But by all meanes the daunger knowne did shonne: Yet Calidore so well him wrought with meed, And faire bespoke with words, that he at last agreed.

So forth they goe together (God before) Both clad in shepheards weeds agreeably, And both with shepheards hookes: But Calidore Had, underneath, him armed privily. Tho, to the place when they approched nye, They chaunst, upon an hill not farre away, Some flockes of sheepe and shepheards to espy; To whom they both agreed to take their way, In hope there newes to learne, how they mote best assay.

There did they find, that which they did not feare, The selfe same flocks the which those theeves had reft From Melibce and from themselves whyleare; And certaine of the theeves there by them left, The which, for want of beards, themselves then kept. Right well knew Coridon his owne late sheepe, And seeing them for tender pittie wept; But when he saw the theeves which did them keepe, His hart gan fayle, albe he saw them all asleepe.

But Calidore recomforting his griefe, Though not his feare, for nought may feare disswade, Him hardly forward drew, whereas the thiefe Lay sleeping soundly in the bushes shade, Whom Coridon him counseld to invade Now all unwares, and take the spoyle away; But he, that in his mind had closely made A further purpose, would not so them slay, But gently waking them gave them the time of day.

Tho, sitting downe by them upon the greene, Of sundrie things he purpose gan to faine, That he by them might certaine tydings weene Of Pastorell, were she alive or slaine: Mongst which the theeves them questioned againe, What mister men, and eke

from whence they were: To whom they aunswer'd, as did appertaine, That they were poore heardgroomes, the which whylere Had from their maisters fled, and now sought hyre elswhere.

Whereof right glad they seem'd, and offer made To hyre them well if they their flockes would keepe; For they themselves were evill groomes, they sayd, Unwont with heards to watch, or pasture sheepe, But to forray the land, or secure the deepe. Thereto they soone agreed, and earnest tooke To keepe their flockes for litle hyre and chepe, For they for better hyre did shortly looke: So there all day they bode, till light the sky forsooke.

Tho, when as towards darksome night it drew, Unto their hellish dens those theeves them brought; Where shortly they in great acquaintance grew, And all the secrets of their entrayles sought. There did they find, contrarie to their thought, That Pastorell yet liv'd; but all the rest Were dead, right so as Coridon had taught: Whereof they both full glad and blyth did rest, But chiefly Calidore, whom griefe had most possest.

At length, when they occasion fittest found, In dead of night, when all the theeves did rest, After a late forray, and slept full sound, Sir Calidore him arm'd as he thought best, Having of late by diligent inquest Provided him a sword of meanest sort; With which he streight went to the Captaines nest: But Coridon durst not with him consort, Ne durst abide behind, for dread of worse effort.

When to the Cave they came, they found it fast; But Calidore with huge resistlesse might The dores assayled, and the locks upbrast: With noyse whereof the theefe awaking light Unto the entrance ran; where the bold knight Encountring him with small resistence slew, The whiles faire Pastorell through great affright Was almost dead, misdoubting least of-new Some uprore were like that which lately she did vew.

But when as Calidore was comen in, And gan aloud for Pastorell to call, Knowing

his voice, although not heard long sin, She sudden was revived therewithall, And wondrous joy felt in her spirits thrall: Like him that being long in tempest tost, Looking each houre into deathes mouth to fall, At length espyes at hand the happie cost, On which he safety hopes that earst feard to be lost.

Her gentle hart, that now long season past Had never joyance felt nor chearefull thought, Began some smacke of comfort new to tast, Like lyfull heat to nummed senses brought, And life to feele that long for death had sought. Ne lesse in hart rejoyced Calidore, When he her found; but, like to one distraught And robd of reason, towards her him bore; A thousand times embrast, and kist a thousand more.

But now by this, with noyse of late uprore, The hue and cry was raysed all about; And all the Brigants flocking in great store Unto the cave gan preasse, nought having dout Of that was doen, and entred in a rout: But Calidore in th'entry close did stand, And entertayning them with courage stout, Still slew the formost that came first to hand; So long till all the entry was with bodies mand.

Tho, when no more could nigh to him approch, He breath'd his sword, and rested him till day; Which when he spyde upon the earth t'encroch, Through the dead carcases he made his way, Mongst which he found a sword of better say, With which he forth went into th'open light, Where all the rest for him did readie stay, And, fierce assayling him, with all their might Gan all upon him lay: there gan a dreadfull fight.

How many flyes, in whottest sommers day, Do seize upon some beast whose flesh is bare, That all the place with swarmes do overlay, And with their litle stings right felly fare; So many theeves about him swarming are, All which do him assayle on every side, And sore oppresse, ne any him doth spare; But he doth with his raging brond divide Their thickest troups, and round about him scattreth wide.

Like as a Lion mongst an heard of dere, Disperseth them to catch his choysest pray; So did he fly amongst them here and there, And all that nere him came did hew and

slay, Till he had strowd with bodies all the way; That none his daunger daring to abide Fled from his wrath, and did themselves convay Into their caves, their heads from death to hide, Ne any left that victorie to him envide.

Then, backe returning to his dearest deare, He her gah to recomfort all he might With gladfull speaches and with lovely cheare; And forth her bringing to the joyous light, Whereof she long had lackt the wishfull sight, Deviz'd all goodly meanes from her to drive The sad remembrance of her wretched plight: So her uneath at last he did revive That long had lyen dead, and made again alive.

This doen, into those theevish dens he went, And thence did all the spoyles and threasures take, Which they from many long had robd and rent, But fortune now the victors meed did make: Of which the best he did his love betake; And also all those flockes, which they before Had reft from Melibce and from his make, He did them all to Coridon restore: So drove them all away, and his love with him bore.

Canto XII

Fayre Pastorella by great hap Her parents understands. Calidore doth the Blatant Beast Subdew, and bind in bands.

Like as a ship, that through the Ocean wyde Directs her course unto one certaine cost, Is met of many a counter winde and tyde, With which her winged speed is let and crost, And she her selfe in stormie surges tost; Yet, making many a horde and many a bay, Still winneth way, ne hath her compasse lost: Right so it fares with me in this long way, Whose course is often stayd, yet never is astray.

For all that hetherto hath long delayd This gentle knight from sewing his first quest, Though out of course, yet hath not bene missayd, To shew the courtesie by him profest Even unto the lowest and the least. But now I come into my course againe, To his atchievement of the Blatant Beast: Who all this while at will did range and raine, Whilst none was him to stop, nor none him to restraine.

Sir Calidore, when thus he now had raught Faire Pastorella from those Brigants powre, Unto the Castle of Belgard her brought, Whereof was Lord the good Sir Bellamoure; Who whylome was, in his youthes freshest flowre, A lustie knight as ever wielded speare, And had endured many a dreadfull stoure In bloudy battell for a Ladie deare, The fayrest Ladie then of all that living were:

Her name was Claribell; whose father hight The Lord of Many Ilands, farre renound For his great riches and his greater might: He, through the wealth wherein he did abound, This daughter thought in wedlocke to have bound Unto the Prince of Picteland, bordering nere; But she, whose sides before with secret wound Of love to Bellamoure empierced were, By all meanes shund to match with any forrein fere.

And Bellamour againe so well her pleased With dayly service and attendance dew, That of her love he was entyrely seized, And closely did her wed, but knowne to few: Which when her father understood, he grew In so great rage that them in dongeon deepe Without compassion cruelly he threw; Yet did so streightly them asunder keepe, That neither could to company of th'other creepe.

Nathlesse Sir Bellamour, whether through grace Or secret guifts, so with his keepers wrought, That to his love sometimes he came in place; Whereof her wombe, unwist to wight, was fraught, And in dew time a mayden child forth brought: Which she streightway, (for dread least if her syre Should know thereof to slay he would have sought,) Delivered to her handmayd, that for hyre She should it cause be fostred under straunge attyre.

The trustie damzell bearing it abrode Into the emptie fields, where living wight Mote not bewray the secret of her lode, She forth gan lay unto the open light The litle babe, to take thereof a sight: Whom whylest she did with watrie eyne behold, Upon the litle brest, like christall bright, She mote perceive a litle purple mold, That like a rose her silken leaves did faire unfold.

Well she it markt, and pittied the more, Yet could not remedie her wretched case;

But, closing it againe like as before, Bedeaw'd with teares there left it in the place: Yet left not quite, but drew a litle space Behind the bushes, where she did her hyde, To weet what mortall hand, or heavens grace, Would for the wretched infants helpe provyde; For which it loudly cald, and pittifully cryde.

At length a Shepheard, which there by did keepe His fleecie flock upon the playnes around, Led with the infants cry that loud did weepe, Came to the place; where, when he wrapped found Th'abandond spoyle, he softly it unbound; And, seeing there that did him pittie sore, He tooke it up and in his mantle wound; So home unto his honest wife it bore, Who as her owne it nurst (and named) evermore.

Thus long continu'd Claribell a thrall, And Bellamour in bands; till that her syre Departed life, and left unto them all: Then all the stormes of fortunes former yre Were turnd, and they to freedome did retyre. Thenceforth they joy'd in happinesse together, And lived long in peace and love entyre, Without disquiet or dislike of ether, Till time that Calidore brought Pastorella thether.

Both whom they goodly well did entertaine; For Bellamour knew Calidore right well, And loved for his prowesse, sith they twaine Long since had fought in field: Als Claribell Ne lesse did tender the faire Pastorell, Seeing her weake and wan through durance long. There they a while together thus did dwell In much delight, and many joyes among, Untill the Damzell gan to wex more sound and strong.

Tho gan Sir Calidore him to advize Of his first quest, which he had long forlore, Asham'd to thinke how he that enterprize, The which the Faery Queene had long afore Bequeath'd to him, forslacked had so sore; That much he feared least reprochfull blame With foule dishonour him mote blot therefore; Besides the losse of so much loos and fame, As through the world thereby should glorifie his name.

Therefore, resolving to returne in hast Unto so great atchievement, he bethought To leave his love, now perill being past, With Claribell; whylest he that monster sought Throughout the world, and to destruction brought. So taking leave of his faire

Pastorell, Whom to recomfort all the meanes he wrought, With thanks to Bellamour and Claribell, He went forth on his quest, and did that him befell.

But first, ere I doe his adventures tell In this exploite, me needeth to declare What did betide to the faire Pastorell During his absence, left in heavy care Through daily mourning and nightly misfare: Yet did that auncient matrone all she might, To cherish her with all things choice and rare; And her owne handmayd, that Melissa hight, Appointed to attend her dewly day and night.

Who in a morning, when this Maiden faire Was dighting her, having her snowy Brest As yet not laced, nor her golden haire Into their comely tresses dewly drest, Chaunst to espy upon her yvory chest The rosie marke, which she remembred well That litle Infant had, which forth she kest, The daughter of her Lady Claribell, The which she bore the whiles in prison she did dwell.

Which well avizing, streight she gan to cast In her conceiptfull mynd that this faire Mayd Was that same infant, which so long sith past She in the open fields had loosely layd To fortunes spoile, unable it to ayd: So, full of joy, streight forth she ran in hast Unto her mistresse, being halfe dismayd, To tell her how the heavens had her graste To save her chylde, which in misfortunes mouth was plaste.

The sober mother seeing such her mood, Yet knowing not what meant that sodaine thro, Askt her, how mote her words be understood, And what the matter was that mov'd her so? "My liefe," (sayd she) "ye know that long ygo, Whilest ye in durance dwelt, ye to me gave A little mayde, the which ye chylded tho; The same againe if now ye list to have, The same is yonder Lady, whom high God did save."

Much was the Lady troubled at that speach, And gan to question streight, how she it knew? "Most certaine markes" (sayd she) "do me it teach; For on her brest I with these eyes did view The litle purple rose which thereon grew, Whereof her name ye then to her did give. Besides, her countenaunce and her likely hew, Matched with equall years, do surely prieve That yond same is your daughter sure, which yet doth

live.”

The matrone stayd no lenger to enquire, But forth in hast ran to the straunger Mayd; Whom catching greedily, for great desire Rent up her brest, and bosome open layd, In which that rose she plainely saw displayd: Then, her embracing twixt her armes twaine, She long so held, and softly weeping sayd; “And livest thou, my daughter, now againe? And art thou yet alive, whom dead I long did faine?”

Tho further asking her of sundry things, And times comparing with their accidents, She found at last, by very certaine signes And speaking markes of passed monuments, That this young Mayd, whom chance to her presents, Is her owne daughter, her owne infant deare. Tho, wondring long at those so straunge events, A thousand times she her embraced nere, With many a joyfull kisse and many a melting teare.

Who ever is the mother of one chylde, Which having thought long dead she fyndes alive, Let her by proofe of that which she hath fylde In her owne breast, this mothers joy descrive; For other none such passion can contrive In perfect forme, as this good Lady felt, When she so faire a daughter saw survive, As Pastorella was, that nigh she swelt For passing joy, which did all into pitty melt.

Thence running forth unto her loved Lord, She unto him recounted all that fell; Who, joyning joy with her in one accord, Acknowledg’d for his owne faire Pastorell. There leave we them in joy, and let us tell Of Calidore; who, seeking all this while That monstrous Beast by finall force to quell, Through every place with restlesse paine and toile Him follow’d by the tract of his outragious spoile.

Through all estates he found that he had past, In which he many massacres had left, And to the Clergy now was come at last; In which such spoile, such havocke, and such theft He wrought, that thence all goodnesse he bereft, That endlesse were to tell. The Elfin Knight, Who now no place besides unsought had left, At length into a Monastere did light, Where he him found despoyling all with maine and might.

Into their cloysters now he broken had, Through which the Monckes he chaced here and there, And them pursu'd into their dortours sad, And searched all their cels and secrets neare: In which what filth and ordure did appeare, Were yrkesome to report; yet that foule Beast, Nought sparing them, the more did tosse and teare, And ransacke all their dennes from most to least, Regarding nought religion, nor their holy heast.

From thence into the sacred Church he broke, And robd the Chancell, and the deskes downe threw, And Altars fouled, and blasphemy spoke, And th'Images, for all their goodly hew, Did cast to ground, whilest none was them to rew; So all confounded and disordered there: But, seeing Calidore, away he flew, Knowing his fatall hand by former feare; But he him fast pursuing soone approched neare.

Him in a narrow place he overtooke, And fierce assailing forst him turne againe: Sternely he turnd againe, when he him strooke With his sharpe steele, and ran at him amaine With open mouth, that seemed to containe A full good pecke within the utmost brim, All set with yron teeth in raunges twaine, That terrifide his foes, and armed him, Appearing like the mouth of Orcus griesly grim:

And therein were a thousand tongs empight Of sundry kindes and sundry quality; Some were of dogs, that barked day and night; And some of cats, that wrawling still did cry; And some of Beares, that groynd continually; And some of Tygres, that did seeme to gren And snar at all that ever passed by: But most of them were tongues of mortall men, Which spake reprochfully, not caring where nor when.

And them amongst were mingled here and there The tongues of Serpents, with three forked stings, That spat out poyson, and gore-bloudy gere, At all that came within his ravenings; And spake licentious words and hatefull things Of good and bad alike, of low and hie, Ne Kesars spared he a whit, nor Kings; But either blotted them with infamie, Or bit them with his banefull teeth of injury.

But Calidore, thereof no whit afrayd, Rencountred him with so impetuous might,

That th’outrage of his violence he stayd, And bet abacke, threatning in vaine to bite, And spitting forth the poyson of his spight That fomed all about his bloody jawes: Tho, rearing up his former feete on hight, He rampt upon him with his ravenous pawes, As if he would have rent him with his cruell clawes:

But he, right well aware, his rage to ward Did cast his shield atweene; and, therewithall Putting his puissaunce forth, pursu’d so hard, That backeward he enforced him to fall; And, being downe, ere he new helpe could call, His shield he on him threw, and fast downe held: Like as a bullocke, that in bloudy stall Of butchers balefull hand to ground is feld, Is forcibly kept downe, till he be throughly queld.

Full cruelly the Beast did rage and rore To be downe held, and maystred so with might, That he gan fret and fome out bloudy gore, Striving in vaine to rere him selfe upright: For still, the more he strove, the more the Knight Did him suppresse, and forcibly subdew, That made him almost mad for fell despight: He grind, he bit, he scratcht, he venim threw, And fared like a feend right horrible in hew:

Or like the hell-borne Hydra, which they faine That great Alcides whilome overthrew, After that he had labourd long in vaine To crop his thousand heads, the which still new Forth budded, and in greater number grew. Such was the fury of this hellish Beast, Whilest Calidore him under him downe threw; Who nathemore his heavy load releast, But aye, the more he rag’d, the more his powre increast.

Tho, when the Beast saw he mote nought availe By force, he gan his hundred tongues apply, And sharpely at him to revile and raile With bitter termes of shamefull infamy; Oft interlacing many a forged lie, Whose like he never once did speake, nor heare, Nor ever thought thing so unworthily: Yet did he nought, for all that, him forbeare, But strained him so streightly that he chokt him neare.

At last, when as he found his force to shrincke And rage to quaile, he tooke a muzzel strong Of surest yron, made with many a lincke: Therewith he mured up his mouth

along, And therein shut up his blasphemous tong, For never more defaming gentle Knight, Or unto lovely Lady doing wrong; And thereunto a great long chaine he tight, With which he drew him forth, even in his own despight.

Like as whylome that strong Tirynthian swaine Brought forth with him the dreadfull dog of hell, Against his will fast bound in yron chaine, And, roring horribly, did him compell To see the hatefull sunne, that he might tell To griesly Pluto what on earth was donne, And to the other damned ghosts which dwell For aye in darkenesse, which day-light doth shonne: So led this Knight his captyve with like conquest wonne.

Yet greatly did the Beast repine at those Straunge bands, whose like till then he never bore, Ne ever any durst till then impose; And chauffed inly, seeing now no more Him liberty was left aloud to rore: Yet durst he not draw backe, nor once withstand The proved powre of noble Calidore, But trembled underneath his mighty hand, And like a fearefull dog him followed through the land.

Him through all Faery land he follow'd so, As if he learned had obedience long, That all the people, where so he did go, Out of their townes did round about him throng, To see him leade that Beast in bondage strong; And seeing it much wondred at the sight: And all such persons as he earst did wrong Rejoyced much to see his captive plight, And much admyr'd the Beast, but more admyr'd the Knight.

Thus was this Monster, by the maystring might Of doughty Calidore, suppresst and tamed, That never more he mote endammadge wight With his vile tongue, which many had defamed, And many causelesse caused to be blamed. So did he eeke long after this remaine, Untill that, (whether wicked fate so framed Or fault of men,) he broke his yron chaine, And got into the world at liberty againe.

Thenceforth more mischiefe and more scath he wrought To mortall men then he had done before; Ne ever could, by any, more be brought Into like bands, ne maystred any more: Albe that, long time after Calidore, The good Sir Pelleas him tooke in

hand, And after him Sir Lamoracke of yore, And all his brethren borne in Britaine land; Yet none of them could ever bring him into band.

So now he raungeth through the world againe, And rageth sore in each degree and state; Ne any is that may him now restraine, He growen is so great and strong of late, Barking and biting all that him doe bate, Albe they worthy blame, or cleare of crime: Ne spareth he most learned wits to rate, Ne spareth he the gentle Poets rime; But rends without regard of person or of time.

Ne may this homely verse, of many meanest, Hope to escape his venemous despite, More then my former writs, all were they cleanest From blamefull blot, and free from all that wite With which some wicked tongues did it backebite, And bring into a mighty Peres displeasure, That never so deserved to endite. Therefore do you, my rimes, keep better measure, And seeke to please; that now is counted wise mens threasure.

Colophon

The Faerie Queene was published in 1596 by Edmund Spenser.

This ebook was transcribed and produced for Standard Ebooks by Emma Sweeney, and is based on digital scans from the Internet Archive.

The cover page is adapted from The Ermine Portrait of Elizabeth I of England, a painting completed in 1585 by Sir William Segar. The cover and title pages feature the League Spartan and Sorts Mill Goudy typefaces created in 2014 and 2009 by The League of Moveable Type.

This edition was released on November 15, 2026, 2:58 a.m. and is based on revision f33e687. The first edition of this ebook was released on December 22, 2022, 7:23 a.m. You can check for updates to this ebook, view its revision history, or download it for different ereading systems at standardebooks.org/ebooks/edmund-spenser/the-faerie-queene.

The volunteer-driven Standard Ebooks project relies on readers like you to submit typos, corrections, and other improvements. Anyone can contribute at standardebooks.org.

Dedication to the Edition of 1590

To the most mightie and magnificent Empresse Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queene of England, France and Ireland Defender of the Faith &c.

Her most humble

Servant:

Ed. Spenser.

Dedication to the Edition of 1596

To the most high, mightie And magnificent Empresse renovv- med for pietie, ver- tve, and all gratiovs government Elizabeth by the grace of God Qveene of England Fravnce and Ireland and of Virgi- nia, defendovr of the faith, &c. Her most hvmble servavnt Edmvnd spenser doth in all hv- militie dedi- cate, pre- sent and consecrate these his labovrs to live with the eterni- tie of her fame.

Dedicatory Sonnets

Sonnet I

To the Right honourable Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord high Chauncelor of England, etc.

Those prudent heads, that with their counsels wise Whylom the pillours of th’earth did sustaine, And taught ambitious Rome to tyrannise And in the neck of all the world to rayne; Oft from those grave affaires were wont abstaine, With the sweet

Lady Muses for to play: So Ennius the elder Africane, So Maro oft did Caesars cares allay. So you, great Lord, that with your counsell sway The burdeine of this kingdom mightily, With like delightes sometimes may eke delay The rugged brow of carefull Policy; And to these ydle rymes lend litle space, Which for their titles sake may find more grace.

Sonnet II

To the right honourable the Lo. Burleigh, Lo. high Threasurer of England.

To you, right noble Lord, whose carefull brest To menage of most grave affaires is bent; And on whose mightie shoulders most doth rest The burdein of this kingdomes governement, As the wide compasse of the firmament On Atlas mighty shoulders is upstayd, Unfitly I these ydle rimes present, The labor of lost time, and wit unstayd: Yet if their deeper sence be inly wayd, And the dim vele, with which from commune vew Their fairer parts are hid, aside be layd, Perhaps not vaine they may appeare to you. Such as they be, vouchsafe them to receave, And wipe their faults out of your censure grave.

Sonnet III

To the right Honourable the Earle of Oxenford, Lord high Chamberlayne of England etc.

Receive, most Noble Lord, in gentle gree, The unripe fruit of an unready wit; Which by thy countenaunce doth crave to bee Defended from foule Envies poisnous bit. Which so to doe may thee right well besit, Sith th’antique glory of thine auncestry Under a shady vele is therein writ, And eke thine owne long living memory, Succeeding them in true nobility: And also for the love which thou doest beare To th’ Heliconian ymps, and they to thee; They unto thee, and thou to them, most deare. Deare as thou art unto thy selfe, so love That loves and honours thee, as doth behove.

Sonnet IV

To the right honourable the Earle of Northumberland.

The sacred Muses have made alwaies clame To be the Nourses of nobility, And Registres of everlasting fame, To all that armes professe and chevalry. Then, by like right the noble Progeny, Which them succeed in fame and worth, are tyde T'embrace the service of sweete Poetry, By whose endevours they are glorifide; And eke from all, of whom it is envide, To patronize the authour of their praise, Which gives them life, that els would soone have dide, And crownes their ashes with immortall baies. To thee, therefore, right noble Lord, I send This present of my paines, it to defend.

Sonnet V

To the right honourable the Earle of Cumberland.

Redoubted Lord, in whose corageous mind The flowre of chevalry, now bloosming faire, Doth promise fruite worthy the noble kind Which of their praises have left you the haire; To you this humble present I prepare, For love of vertue and of Martial praise; To which though nobly ye inclined are, As goodlie well ye shew'd in late assaies, Yet brave ensample of long passed daies, In which trew honor yee may fashiond see, To like desire of honor may ye raise, And fill your mind with magnanimitee. Receive it, Lord, therefore, as it was ment, For honor of your name and high descent.

Sonnet VI

To the most honourable and excellent Lo. the Earle of Essex, Great Maister of the Horse to her Highnesse, and knight of the Noble order of the Garter, etc.

Magnificke Lord, whose vertues excellent, Doe merit a most famous Poets witt To be thy living praises instrument, Yet doe not sdeigne to let thy name be writt In this base Poeme, for thee far unfitt: Nought is thy worth disparaged thereby; But when

my Muse, whose fethers, nothing flitt, Doe yet but flagg, and lowly learne to fly, With bolder wing shall dare alofte to sty To the last praises of this Faery Queene; Then shall it make more famous memory Of thine Heroicke parts, such as they beene: Till then, vouchsafe thy noble countenaunce To these first labours needed furtheraunce.

Sonnet VII

To the right Honourable the Earle of Ormond and Ossory.

Receive, most noble Lord, a simple taste Of the wilde fruit which salvage soyl hath bred; Which, being through long wars left almost waste, With brutish barbarisme is overspredd: And, in so faire a land as may be redd, Not one Parnassus, nor one Helicone, Left for sweete Muses to be harboured, But where thy selfe hast thy brave mansione: There, in deede, dwel faire Graces many one, And gentle Nymphes, delights of learned wits; And in thy person, without paragone, All goodly bountie and true honour sits. Such, therefore, as that wasted soyl doth yield, Receive, dear Lord, in worth, the fruit of barren field.

Sonnet VIII

To the right honourable the Lord Ch. Howard, Lo. high Admiral of England, knight of the noble order of the Garter, and one of her Majesties privie Counsel, etc.

And ye, brave Lord, whose goodly personage And noble deeds, each other garnishing, Make you ensample to the present age Of th'old Heroes, whose famous ofspring The antique Poets wont so much to sing; In this same Pageaunt have a worthy place, Sith those huge castles of Castilian King, That vainly threatned kingdomes to displace, Like flying doves ye did before you chace; And that proud people, woxen insolent Through many victories, didst first deface: Thy praises everlasting monument Is in this verse engraven semblably, That it may live to all posterity.

Sonnet IX

To the right honourable the Lord of Hunsdon, high Chamberlaine to her Majesty.

Renowmed Lord, that, for your worthinesse And noble deeds, have your deserved place High in the favour of that Emperesse, The worlds sole glory and her sexes grace; Here eke of right have you a worthie place, Both for your nearnes to that Faerie Queene, And for your owne high merit in like cace: Of which, apparaunt proofe was to be scene, When that tumultuous rage and fearfull deene Of Northerne rebels ye did pacify, And their disloiall powre defaced clene, The record of enduring memory. Live, Lord, for ever in this lasting verse, That all posteritie thy honor may reherse.

Sonnet X

To the most renowned and valiant Lord, the Lord Grey of Wilton, knight of the Noble order of the Garter, etc.

Most Noble Lord, the pillor of my life, And Patrone of my Muses pupillage; Through whose large bountie, poured on me rife In the first season of my feeble age, I now doe live, bound yours by vassalage; Sith nothing ever may redeeme, nor reave Out of your endlesse debt, so sure a gage, Vouchsafe in worth this small guift to receave, Which in your noble hands for pledge I leave Of all the rest that I am tyde t’account: Rude rymes, the which a rustick Muse did weave In savadge soyle, far from Parnasso Mount, And roughly wrought in an unlearned Loome: The which vouchsafe, dear Lord, your favorable doome.

Sonnet XI

To the right honourable the Lord of Buckhurst, one of her Majesties privie Counsell.

In vain I thinke, right honourable Lord, By this rude ryme to memorize thy name, Whose learned Muse hath writ her owne record In golden verse, worthy immortal fame: Thou much more fit (were leasure to the same) Thy gracious Soverains

praises to compile, And her imperiall Majestic to frame In loftie numbers and heroicke stile. But, sith thou maist not so, give leave a while To baser wit his power therein to spend, Whose grosse defaults thy daintie pen may file, And unadvised oversights amend. But evermore vouchsafe it to maintaine Against vile Zoilus backbitings vaine.

Sonnet XII

To the right honourable Sir Fr. Walsingham, knight, principal Secretary to her Majesty, and one of her honourable privy Counsell.

That Mantuane Poets incompared spirit, Whose girland now is set in highest place, Had not Mecaenas, for his worthy merit, It first advaunst to great Augustus grace, Might long perhaps have lien in silence bace, Ne bene so much admir'd of later age. This lowly Muse, that learns like steps to trace, Flies for like aide unto your Patronage, That are the great Mecaenas of this age, As wel to al that civil artes professe, As those that are inspir'd with Martial rage, And craves protection of her feeblenesse: Which if ye yield, perhaps ye may her rayse In bigger tunes to sound your living prayse.

Sonnet XIII

To the right noble Lord and most valiaunt Captaine, Sir John Norris, knight, Lord president of Mounster.

Who ever gave more honourable prize To the sweet Muse then did the Martiall crew, That their brave deeds she might immortalise In her shril tromp, and sound their praises dew? Who then ought more to favour her then you, Moste noble Lord, the honor of this age, And Precedent of all that armes ensue? Whose warlike prowesse and manly courage, Tempred with reason and advizement sage, Hath fild sad Belgicke with victorious spoile; In Fraunce and Ireland left a famous gage; And lately shakt the Lusitanian soile. Sith, then, each where thou hast dispredd thy fame,

Love him that hath eternized your name.

Sonnet XIV

To the right noble and valorous knight, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lo. Wardein of the Stanneryes, and lieftenaunt of Cornewaile.

To thee, that art the sommers Nightingale, Thy soveraine Qoddesses most deare delight, Why doe I send this rusticke Madrigale, That may thy tunefull eare unseason quite? Thou onely fit this Argument to write, In whose high thoughts Pleasure hath built her bowre, And dainty love learnd sweetly to endite. My rimes I know unsavory and sowre, To tast the streames that, like a golden showre, Flow from thy fruitfull head, of thy love's praise; Fitter, perhaps, to thonder Martiall stowre, When so thee list thy lofty Muse to raise: Yet, till that thou thy Poeme wilt make knowne, Let thy faire Cinthias praises be thus rudely showne.

Sonnet XV

To the right honourable and most vertuous Lady the Countesse of Penbroke.

Remembraunce of that most Heroicke spirit, The hevens pride, the glory of our daies, Which now triumpheth, through immortall merit Of his brave vertues, crown'd with lasting baies Of hevenlie blis and everlasting praies; Who first my Muse did lift out of the flore, To sing his sweet delights in lowlie laies; Bids me, most noble Lady, to adore His goodly image, living evermore In the divine resemblaunce of your face; Which with your vertues ye embellish more, And native beauty deck with heavenlie grace: For his, and for your owne especial sake, Vouchsafe from him this toke in good worth to take.

Sonnet XVI

To the most vertuous and beautifull Lady, the Lady Carew.

Ne may I, without blot of endlesse blame, You, fairest Lady, leave out of this place;

But with remembraunce of your gracious name, Wherewith that courtly garlond most ye grace And deck the world, adorne these verses base. Not that these few lines can in them comprise Those glorious ornaments of hevenly grace, Wherewith ye triumph over feeble eyes, And in subdued harts do tyranyse; For thereunto doth need a golden quill, And silver leaves, them rightly to devise; But to make humble present of good will: Which, whenas timely meanes it purchase may, In ampler wise it selfe will forth display.

Sonnet XVII

To all the gratious and beautifull Ladies in the Court.

The Chian Peinter, when he was requirde To pourtraift Venus in her perfect hew, To make his worke more absolute, desird Of all the fairest Maides to have the vew. Much more me needs, to draw the semblant trew Of beauties Queene, the worlds sole wonderment, To sharpe my sence with sundry beauties vew, And steale from each some part of ornament. If all the world to seeke I overwent, A fairer crew yet no where could I see Then that brave court doth to mine eie present; That the worlds pride seemes gathered there to bee. Of each a part I stole by cunning thefte: Forgive it me, faire Dames, sith lesse ye have not lefte.

The Faerie Queene

Imprint

This ebook is the product of many hours of hard work by volunteers for Standard Ebooks, and builds on the hard work of other literature lovers made possible by the public domain.

This particular ebook is based on digital scans from the Internet Archive.

The source text and artwork in this ebook are believed to be in the United States

public domain; that is, they are believed to be free of copyright restrictions in the United States. They may still be copyrighted in other countries, so users located outside of the United States must check their local laws before using this ebook. The creators of, and contributors to, this ebook dedicate their contributions to the worldwide public domain via the terms in the CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication. For full license information, see the Uncopyright at the end of this ebook.

Standard Ebooks is a volunteer-driven project that produces ebook editions of public domain literature using modern typography, technology, and editorial standards, and distributes them free of cost. You can download this and other ebooks carefully produced for true book lovers at standardebooks.org.

Mutability

The Legend of Constancy

Canto VI

Proud Change (not pleased in mortall things Beneath the Moone to raigne) Pretends, as well of Gods, as Men, To be the Soveraine.

What man that sees the ever-whirling wheele, Of Change, the which all mortall things doth sway, But that therby doth find, and plainly feele, How Mutability in them doth play Her cruell sports to many mens decay? Which that to all may better yet appeare, I will rehearse that whylome I heard say, How she at first her selfe began to reare Gainst all the Gods, and th’empire sought from them to beare.

But first, here falleth fittest to unfold Her antique race and linage ancient, As I have found it registred of old In Faery Land mongst records permanent. She was, to weet, a daughter by descent Of those old Titans that did whylome strive With Saturnes sonne for heavens regiment; Whom though high Jove of kingdome did deprive, Yet

many of their stemme long after did survive:

And many of them afterwards obtained Great power of Jove, and high authority: As Hecaté, in whose almighty hand He plac't all rule and principalitie, To be by her disposed diversly To Gods and men, as she them list divide; And drad Bellona, that doth sound on hie Warres and allarums unto Nations wide, That makes both heaven and earth to tremble at her pride.

So likewise did this Titanesse aspire Rule and dominion to her selfe to gaine; That as a Goddesse men might her admire, And heavenly honors yield, as to them twaine: And first, on earth she sought it to obtaine; Where shee such proofe and sad examples shewed Of her great power, to many ones great paine, That not men onely (whom she soone subdewed) But eke all other creatures her bad dooings rewed.

For she the face of earthly things so changed, That all which Nature had establisht first In good estate, and in meet order ranged, She did pervert, and all their statutes burst: And all the worlds faire frame (which none yet durst Of Gods or men to alter or misguide) She alter'd quite; and made them all accurst That God had blest, and did at first provide In that still happy state for ever to abide.

Ne shee the lawes of Nature onely brake, But eke of Justice, and of Policie; And wrong of right, and bad of good did make, And death for life exchanged foolishlie: Since which all living wights have learn'd to die, And all this world is woxen daily worse. O pittious worke of Mutability, By which we all are subject to that curse, And death, instead of life, have sucked from our Nurse!

And now, when all the earth she thus had brought To her behest, and thralled to her might, She gan to cast in her ambitious thought T'attempt the empire of the heavens hight, And Jove himselfe to shoulder from his right. And first, she past the region of the ayre And of the fire, whose substance thin and slight Made no resistance, ne could her contraire, But ready passage to her pleasure did prepaire.

Thence to the Circle of the Moone she clambe, Where Cynthia raignes in everlasting

glory, To whose bright shining palace straight she came, All fairely deckt with heavens goodly storie; Whose silver gates (by which there sate an hory Old aged Sire, with hower-glasse in hand, Hight Time,) she entred, were he liefe or sory; Ne staide till she the highest stage had scand, Where Cynthia did sit, that never still did stand.

Her sitting on an Ivory throne shee found, Drawne of two steeds, th'one black, the other white, Environd with tenne thousand starres around, That duly her attended day and night; And by her side there ran her Page, that hight Vesper, whom we the Evening-starre intend; That with his Torche, still twinkling like twylight, Her lightened all the way where she should wend, And joy to weary wandring travailers did lend:

That when the hardy Titanesse beheld The goodly building of her Palace bright, Made of the heavens substance, and upheld With thousand Crystall pillors of huge hight, She gan to burne in her ambitious spright, And t'envie her that in such glory raigned. Eftsoones she cast by force and tortious might Her to displace, and to her selfe to have gained The kingdome of the Night, and waters by her wained.

Boldly she bid the Goddesse downe descend, And let her selfe into that Ivory throne; For she her selfe more worthy thereof wend, And better able it to guide alone; Whether to men, whose fall she did bemone, Or unto Gods, whose state she did maligne, Or to th'infernall Powers her need give lone Of her faire light and bounty most benigne, Her selfe of all that rule she deemed most condigne.

But she, that had to her that soveraigne seat By highest Jove assign'd, therein to beare Nights burning lamp, regarded not her threat, Ne yielded ought for favour or for feare; But with sterne count'naunce and disdainfull cheare, Bending her horned browes, did put her back; And, boldly blaming her for comming there, Bade her attonce from heavens coast to pack, Or at her perill bide the wrathfull Thunders wrack.

Yet nathemore the Giantesse forbare, But boldly preacing-on raught forth her hand To pluck her downe perforce from off her chaire; And, therewith lifting up her golden wand, Threatned to strike her if she did withstand: Whereat the starres, which round about her blazed, And eke the Moones bright wagon still did stand, All beeing with so bold attempt amazed, And on her uncouth habit and sterne looke still gazed.

Mean-while the lower World, which nothing knew Of all that chaunced heere, was darkned quite; And eke the heavens, and all the heavenly crew Of happy wights, now unpurvaid of light, Were much afraid, and wondred at that sight; Fearing least Chaos broken had his chaine, And brought againe on them eternall night; But chiefely Mercury, that next doth raigne, Ran forth in haste unto the king of Gods to plaine.

All ran together with a great outcry To Joves faire palace fixt in heavens hight; And, beating at his gates full earnestly, Gan call to him aloud with all their might To know what meant that suddaine lacke of light. The father of the Gods, when this he heard, Was troubled much at their so strange affright, Doubting least Typhon were againe uprear'd, Or other his old foes that once him sorely fear'd.

Eftsoones the sonne of Maia forth he sent Downe to the Circle of the Moone, to knowe The cause of this so strange astonishment, And why she did her wonted course forslowe; And if that any were on earth belowe That did with charmes or Magick her molest, Him to attache, and downe to hell to throwe; But if from heaven it were, then to arrest The Author, and him bring before his presence prest.

The wingd-foot God so fast his plumes did beat, That soone he came whereas the Titanesse Was striving with faire Cynthia for her seat; At whose strange sight and haughty hardinesse He wondred much, and feared her no lesse: Yet laying feare aside to doe his charge, At last he bade her (with bold stedfastnesse) Ceasse to molest the Moone to walke at large, Or come before high Jove her dooings to

discharge.

And there-with-all he on her shoulder laid His snaky-wreathed Mace, whose awfull power Doth make both Gods and hellish fiends affraid: Whereat the Titanesse did sternly lower, And stoutly answer'd, that in evill hower He from his Jove such message to her brought, To bid her leave faire Cynthia's silver bower; Sith shee his Jove and him esteemed nought, No more then Cynthia's selfe; but all their kingdoms sought.

The Heavens Herald staid not to reply, But past away, his doings to relate Unto his Lord; who now, in th'highest sky, Was placed in his principall Estate, With all the Gods about him congregate: To whom when Hermes had his message told, It did them all exceedingly amate, Save Jove; who, changing nought his count'nance bold, Did unto them at length these speeches wise unfold;

"Harken to mee awhile, yee heavenly Powers! Ye may remember since th'Earths cursed seed Sought to assaile the heavens eternall towers, And to us all exceeding feare did breed, But, how we then defeated all their deed, Yee all do knowe, and them destroyed quite; Yet not so quite, but that there did succeed An off-spring of their bloud, which did alite Upon the fruitfull earth, which doth us yet despite.

"Of that bad seed is this bold woman bred, That now with bold presumption doth aspire To thrust faire Phoebe from her silver bed, And eke our selves from heavens high Empire, If that her might were match to her desire. Wherefore it now behoves us to advise What way is best to drive her to retire, Whether by open force, or counsell wise: Areed, ye sonnes of God, as best as ye can devise."

So having said, he ceast; and with his brow (His black eye-brow, whose doomefull dreaded beck Is wont to wield the world unto his vow, And even the highest Powers of heaven to check) Made signe to them in their degrees to speake, Who straight gan cast their counsell grave and wise. Mean-while th'Earths daughter, thogh she nought did reck Of Hermes message, yet gan now advise What course were best to take in

this hot bold emprize.

Eftsoones she thus resolv'd; that whil'st the Gods (After returne of Hermes Embassie) Were troubled, and amongst themselves at ods, Before they could new counsels re-allie, To set upon them in that extasie, And take what fortune, time, and place would lend. So forth she rose, and through the purest sky To Joves high Palace straight cast to ascend, To prosecute her plot. Good onset boads good end.

Shee there arriving boldly in did pass; Where all the Gods she found in counsell close. All quite unarm'd, as then their manner was. At sight of her they suddaine all arose In great amaze, ne wist what way to chose: But Jove, all fearlesse, forc't them to aby; And in his soveraine throne gan straight dispose Himselfe, more full of grace and Majestie, That mote encheare his friends, and foes mote terrifie.

That when the haughty Titanesse beheld, All were she fraught with pride and impudence, Yet with the sight thereof was almost queld; And, inly quaking, seem'd as reft of sense And voyd of speech in that drad audience, Until that Jove himselfe her selfe bespake: "Speake, thou fraile woman, speake with confidence; Whence art thou, and what doost thou here now make? What idle errand hast thou earths mansion to forsake?"

She, halfe confused with his great commaund, Yet gathering spirit of her natures pride, Him boldly answer'd thus to his demaund: "I am a daughter, by the mothers side, Of her that is Grandmother magnifide Of all the Gods, great Earth, great Chaos child; But by the fathers, (be it not envide) I greater am in bloud (whereon I build) Then all the Gods, though wrongfully from heaven exil'd.

"For Titan (as ye all acknowledge must) Was Saturnes elder brother by birth-right, Both sonnes of Uranus; but by unjust And guilefull meanes, through Corybantes slight, The younger thrust the elder from his right: Since which thou, Jove, injuriously hast held The Heavens rule from Titans sonnes by might, And them to hellish dungeons downe hast feld. Witnesse, ye Heavens, the truth of all that I have

teld!”

Whil’st she thus spake, the Gods, that gave good eare To her bold words, and marked well her grace, (Beeing of stature tall as any there Of all the Gods, and beautifull of face As any of the Goddesses in place,) Stood all astonied; like a sort of steeres, Mongst whom some beast of strange and forraine race Unwares is chaunc’t, far straying from his peeres: So did their ghastly gaze bewray their hidden feares.

Till, having pauz’d awhile, Jove thus bespake: “Will never mortall thoughts ceasse to aspire In this bold sort to Heaven claime to make, And touch celestiall seats with earthly mire? I would have thought that bold Procrustes hire, Or Typhons fall, or proud Ixions paine, Or great Prometheus tasting of our ire, Would have suffiz’d the rest for to restraine, And warn’d all men by their example to refraine.

“But now this off-scum of that cursed fry Dare to renew the like bold enterprize, And chalenge th’ heritage of this our skie; Whom what should hinder, but that we likewise Should handle as the rest of her allies, And thunder-drive to hell?” With that, he shooke His Nectar-deawed locks, with which the skyes And all the world beneath for terror quooke, And eft his burning levin-brond in hand he tooke.

But when he looked on her lovely face, In which faire beames of beauty did appeare That could the greatest wrath soone turne to grace, (Such sway doth beauty even in Heaven beare) He staid his hand; and, having chang’d his cheare, He thus againe in milder wise began: “But ah! if Gods should strive with flesh yfere, Then shortly should the progeny of man Be rooted out, if Jove should do still what he can.

“But thee, faire Titans child, I rather weene, Through some vaine errour, or inducement light, To see that mortall eyes have never seene; Or through ensample of thy sisters might, Bellona, whose great glory thou doost spight, Since thou hast seene her dreadfull power belowe, Mongst wretched men (dismaide with her affright) To bandie Crownes, and Kingdoms to bestowe: And sure thy worth no lesse then hers doth seem to showe.

“But wote thou this, thou hardy Titanesse, That not the worth of any living wight May challenge ought in Heavens interesse; Much lesse the Title of old Titans Right: For we by conquest, of our soveraine might, And by eternal doome of Fates decree, Have wonne the Empire of the Heavens bright; Which to our selves we hold, and to whom wee Shall worthy deeme partakers of our blisse to bee.

“Then ceasse thy idle claime, thou foolish gerle; And seeke by grace and goodnesse to obtaine That place, from which by folly Titan fell: There to thou maist perhaps, if so thou faine Have Jove thy gracious Lord and Soveraine.” So having said, she thus to him replide: “Ceasse, Saturnes sonne, to seeke by proffers vaine Of idle hopes t’allure me to thy side, For to betray my Right before I have it tride.

“But thee, O Jove! no equall Judge I deeme Of my desert, or of my dewfull Right; That in thine owne behalfe maist partiall seeme: But to the highest him, that is behight Father of Gods and men by equall might, To weet, the God of Nature, I appeale.” Thereat Jove wexed wroth, and in his spright Did inly grudge, yet did it well conceale; And bade Dan Phœbus scribe her Appellation seale.

Eftsoones the time and place appointed were, Where all, both heavenly Powers and earthly wights, Before great Natures presence should appeare, For triall of their Titles and best Rights: That was, to weet, upon the highest hights Of Arlo-hill (Who knowes not Arlo-hill?) That is the highest head (in all mens sights) Of my old father Mole, whom Shepheards quill Renowmed hath with hymnes fit for a rurall skill.

And, were it not ill fitting for this file To sing of hilles and woods mongst warres and Knights, I would abate the sternenesse of my stile, Mongst these sterne stounds to mingle soft delights; And tell how Arlo, through Dianaes spights, (Beeing of old the best and fairest Hill That was in all this holy Islands hights) Was made the most unpleasant and most ill: Meane-while, O Clio! lend Calliope thy quill.

Whylome when Ireland florished in fame Of wealths and goodnesse, far above the rest Of all that beare the British Islands name, The gods then us’d (for pleasure and

for rest) Oft to resort thereto, when seem'd them best; But none of all therein more pleasure found Then Cynthia, that is soveraine Queene profest Of woods and forrests which therein abound, Sprinkled with wholsom waters more then most on ground:

But mongst them all, as fittest for her game, Eyther for chace of beasts with hound or boawe, Or for to shrowde in shade from Phœbus flame, Or bathe in fountaines that do freshly flowe Or from high hilles or from the dales belowe, She chose this Arlo; where she did resort With all her Nymphes enranged on a rowe, With whom the woody Gods did oft consort, For with the Nymphes the Satyres love to play and sport.

Amongst the which there was a Nymph that hight Molanna; daughter of old Father Mole, And sister unto Mulla faire and bright, Unto whose bed false Bregog whylome stole, That Shepheard Colin dearely did condole, And made her lucklesse loves well knowne to be: But this Molanna, were she not so shole, Were no lesse faire and beautifull then shee; Yet, as she is, a fayrer flood may no man see.

For, first, she springs out of two marble Rocks, On which a grove of Oakes high-mounted growes, That as a girlond seemes to deck the locks Of som faire Bride, brought forth with pompous showes Out of her bowre, that many flowers strowes: So through the flowry Dales she tumbling downe Through many woods and shady coverts flowes, (That on each side her silver channell crowne) Till to the Plaine she come, whose Valleyes she doth drowne.

In her sweet streames Diana used oft (After her sweaty chace and toylesome play) To bathe her selfe; and, after, on the soft And downy grasse her dainty limbes to lay In covert shade, where none behold her may; For much she hated sight of living eye. Foolish god Faunus, though full many a day He saw her clad, yet longed foolishly To see her naked mongst her Nymphes in privity.

No way he found to compasse his desire, But to corrupt Molanna, this her maid, Her

to discover for some secret hire: So her with flattering words he first assaid; And after, pleasing gifts for her purvaid, Queene-apples, and red Cherries from the tree, With which he her allured, and betrayd To tell what time he might her Lady see When she her selfe did bathe, that he might secret bee.

Thereto he promist, if shee would him pleasure With this small boone, to quit her with a better; To weet, that whereas shee had out of measure Long lov'd the Fanchin, who by nought did set her, That he would undertake for this to get her To be his Love, and of him liked well: Besides all which, he vow'd to be her debter For many moe good turnes then he would tell, The least of which this little pleasure should excell.

The simple mayd did yield to him anone; And eft him placed where he close might view That never any saw, save onely one, Who, for his hire to so foolehardy dew, Was of his hounds devour'd in Hunters hew. Tho, as her manner was on sunny day, Diana, with her Nymphes about her, drew To this sweet spring; where, doffing her array, She bath'd her lovely limbes, for Jove a likely pray.

There Faunus saw that pleased much his eye, And made his hart to tickle in his brest, That, for great joy of somewhat he did spy, He could him not containe in silent rest; But, breaking forth in laughter, loud profest His foolish thought: A foolish Faune indeed, That couldst not hold thy selfe so hidden blest, But wouldest needs thine owne conceit areed! Babblers unworthy been of so divine a meed.

The Goddesse, all abashed with that noise, In haste forth started from the guilty brooke; And, running straight whereas she heard his voice, Enclos'd the bush about, and there him tooke, Like darred Larke, not daring up to looke On her whose sight before so much he sought. Thence forth they drew him by the hornes, and shooke Nigh all to peeces, that they left him nought; And then into the open light they forth him brought.

Like as an huswife, that with busie care Thinks of her Dairy to make wondrous

gaine, Finding whereas some wicked beast unware That breakes into her Dayr' house, there doth draine Her creaming pannes, and frustrate all her paine, Hath, in some snare or gin set close behind, Entrapped him, and caught into her traine; Then thinkes what punishment were best assign'd, And thousand deathes deviseth in her vengefull mind.

So did Diana and her maydens all Use silly Faunus, now within their baile: They mocke and scorne him, and him foule miscall; Some by the nose him pluckt, some by the taile, And by his goatish beard some did him haile: Yet he (poore soule!) with patience all did beare; For nought against their wils might countervaile: Ne ought he said, what ever he did heare, But, hanging downe his head, did like a Mome appeare.

At length, when they had flouted him their fill, They gan to cast what penaunce him to give. Some would have gelt him; but that same would spill The Wood-gods breed, which must for ever live: Others would through the river him have drive And ducked deepe; but that seem'd penaunce light: But most agreed, and did this sentence give, Him in Deares skin to clad; and in that plight To hunt him with their hounds, him selfe save how hee might.

But Cynthia's selfe, more angry then the rest, Thought not enough to punish him in sport, And of her shame to make a gamesome jest; But gan examine him in straighter sort, Which of her Nymphes, or other close consort, Him thither brought, and her to him betraid? He, much affeard, to her confessed short That 'twas Molanna which her so bewraid. Then all attonce their hands upon Molanna laid.

But him (according as they had decreed) With a Deeres-skin they covered, and then chast With all their hounds that after him did speed; But he, more speedy, from them fled more fast Then any Deere, so sore him dread aghast. They after followed all with shrill outcry, Shouting as they the heavens would have brast; That all the woods and dales, where he did flie, Did ring againe, and loud re-eccho to the skie.

So they him follow'd till they weary were; When, back returning to Molann' againe,

They, by commaund'ment of Diana, there Her whelm'd with stones. Yet Faunus (for her paine) Of her beloved Fanchin did obtaine, That her he would receive unto his bed: So now her waves passe through a pleasant Plaine, Till with the Fanchin she her selfe do wed, And (both combin'd) themselves in one faire river spred.

Nath'lesse Diana, full of indignation, Thenceforth abandond her delicious brooke, In whose sweet streame, before that bad occasion, So much delight to bathe her limbes she tooke: Ne onely her, but also quite forsooke All those faire forrests about Arlo hid; And all that Mountaine, which doth overlooke The richest champain that may else be rid; And the faire Shure, in which are thousand Salmons bred.

Them all, and all that she so deare did way, Thenceforth she left; and, parting from the place, Thereon an heavy haplesse curse did lay; To weet, that Wolves, where she was wont to space, Should harbour'd be and all those Woods deface, And Thieves should rob and spoile that Coast around: Since which, those Woods, and all that goodly Chase Doth to this day with Wolves and Thieves abound: Which too-too true that lands in-dwellers since have found.

Canto VII

Pealing, from Iove, to Natures Bar, Bold Alteration pleades Large Evidence: but Nature soone Her righteous Doom areads.

Ah! whither doost thou now, thou greater Muse, Me from these woods and pleasing forrests bring, And my fraile spirit, (that dooth oft refuse This too high flight, unfit for her weake wing) Lift up aloft, to tell of heavens King (Thy soveraine Sire) his fortunate successe; And victory in bigger notes to sing Which he obtain'd against that Titanesse, That him of heavens Empire sought to dispossesse?

Yet, sith I needs must follow thy behest, Do thou my weaker wit with skill inspire, Fit for this turne; and in my feeble brest Kindle fresh sparks of that immortall fire Which learned minds inflameth with desire Of heavenly things: for who, but thou

alone That art yborne of heaven and heavenly Sire, Can tell things doen in heaven so long ygone, So farre past memory of man that may be knowne?

Now, at the time that was before agreed, The gods assembled all on Arlo Hill; As well those that are sprung of heavenly seed, As those that all the other world do fill, And rule both sea and land unto their will: Onely th'infernall Powers might not appeare; As well for horror of their count'naunce ill, As for th'unruly fiends which they did feare; Yet Pluto and Proserpina were present there.

And thither also came all other creatures, Whatever life or motion do retaine, According to their sundry kinds of features, That Arlo scarsly could them all containe, So full they filled every hill and Plaine; And had not Natures Sergeant (that is Order) Them well disposed by his busie paine, And raunged farre abroad in every border, They would have caused much confusion and disorder.

Then forth issewed (great goddesse) great dame Nature With goodly port and gracious Majesty, Being far greater and more tall of stature Then any of the gods or Powers on hie: Yet certes by her face and physnomy, Whether she man or woman inly were, That could not any creature well descry; For with a veile, that wimpled every where, Her head and face was hid that mote to none appeare.

That, some do say, was so by skill devized, To hide the terror of her uncouth hew From mortall eyes that should be sore agrized; For that her face did like a Lion shew, That eye of wight could not indure to view: But others tell that it so beautious was, And round about such beames of splendor threw, That it the Sunne a thousand times did pass, Ne could be seene but like an image in a glass.

That well may seemen true; for well I weene, That this same day when she on Arlo sat, Her garment was so bright and wondrous sheene, That my fraile wit cannot devize to what It to compare, nor finde like stuffe to that: As those three sacred Saints, though else most wise, Yet on mount Thabor quite their wits forgat, When they their glorious Lord in strange disguise Transfigur'd sawe; his garments so did

daze their eyes.

In a fayre Plaine upon an equall Hill She placed was in a pavilion; Not such as Craftes-men by their idle skill Are wont for Princes states to fashion; But th'Earth herselfe, of her owne motion, Out of her fruitfull bosome made to growe Most dainty trees, that, shooting up anon, Did seeme to bow their bloosming heads full lowe For homage unto her, and like a throne did showe.

So hard it is for any living wight All her array and vestiments to tell, That old Dan Geffrey (in whose gentle spright, The pure well head of Poesie did dwell) In his Foules parley durst not with it mel, But it transferd to Alane, who he thought Had in his Plaint of kinde describ'd it well: Which who will read set forth so as it ought, Go seek he out that Alane where he may be sought.

And all the earth far underneath her feete Was dight with flowers that voluntary grew Out of the ground, and sent forth odours sweet; Tenne thousand mores of sundry sent and hew, That might delight the smell, or please the view, The which the Nymphes from all the brooks thereby Had gathered, they at her foot-stoole threw; That richer seem'd then any tapestry, That Princes bowres adorne with painted imagery.

And Mole himselfe, to honour her the more, Did deck himselfe in freshest faire attire; And his high head, that seemeth alwayes hore With hardned frosts of former winters ire, He with an Oaken girlond now did tire, As if the love of some new Nymph, late seene, Had in him kindled youthfull fresh desire, And made him change his gray attire to greene: Ah, gentle Mole! such joyance hath thee well beseene.

Was never so great joyance since the day That all the gods whylome assembled were On Haemus hill in their divine array, To celebrate the solemne bridall cheare Twixt Peleus and Dame Thetis pointed there; Where Phœbus selfe, that god of Poets hight, They say, did sing the spousall hymne full cleere, That all the gods were ravisht with delight Of his celestiall song, and Musicks wondrous might.

This great Grandmother of all creatures bred, Great Nature, ever young, yet full of eld; Still mooving, yet unmoved from her sted; Unseene of any, yet of all beheld; Thus sitting in her throne, as I have teld, Before her came dame Mutability; And, being lowe before her presence feld With meek obaysance and humilitie, Thus gan her plaintif Plea with words to amplifie:

“To thee, O greatest Goddesse, onely great! An humble suppliant loe! I lowely fly, Seeking for Right, which I of thee entreat, Who Right to all dost deale indifferently, Damning all Wrong and tortious Injurie, Which any of thy creatures do to other (Oppressing them with power unequally,) Sith of them all thou art the equall mother, And knittest each to each, as brother unto brother.

“To thee therefore of this same Jove I plaine, And of his fellow gods that faine to be, That challenge to themselves the whole worlds raign, Of which the greatest part is due to me, And heaven it selfe by heritage in Fee: For heaven and earth I both alike do deeme, Sith heaven and earth are both alike to thee, And gods no more then men thou doest esteeme; For even the gods to thee, as men to gods, do seeme.

“Then weigh, O soveraigne goddesse! by what right These gods do claime the worlds whole soverainty, And that is onely dew unto thy might Arrogate to themselves ambitiously: As for the gods owne principality, Which Jove usurpes unjustly, that to be My heritage Jove’s selfe cannot denie, From my great Grandsire Titan unto mee Deriv’d by dew descent; as is well knowen to thee.

“Yet mauger Jove, and all his gods beside, I do possesse the worlds most regiment; As if ye please it into parts divide, And every parts inholders to convent, Shall to your eyes appeare incontinent. And, first, the Earth (great mother of us all) That only seemes unmov’d and permanent, And unto Mutabilitie not thrall, Yet is she chang’d in part, and eeke in generall:

For all that from her springs, and is ybredde, However faire it flourish for a time, Yet see we soone decay; and, being dead, To turne againe unto their earthly slime:

Yet, out of their decay and mortall crime, We daily see new creatures to arize, And of their Winter spring another Prime, Unlike in forme, and chang'd by strange disguise: So turne they still about, and change in restlesse wise.

"As for her tenants, that is, man and beasts, The beasts we daily see massacred dy As thralls and vassals unto mens beheasts; And men themselves do change continually, From youth to eld, from wealth to poverty, From good to bad, from bad to worst of all: Ne doe their bodies only flit and fly, But eeke their minds (which they immortall call) Still change and vary thoughts, as new occasions fall.

"Ne is the water in more constant case, Whether those same on high, or these belowe; For th'Ocean moveth still from place to place, And every River still doth ebbe and flowe; Ne any Lake, that seems most still and slowe, Ne Poole so small, that can his smoothnesse holde When any winde doth under heaven blowe; With which the clouds are also tost and roll'd, Now like great Hills, and streight like sluces them unfold.

"So likewise are all watry living wights Still tost and turned with continuall change, Never abiding in their stedfast plights: The fish, still floting, doe at random range, And never rest, but evermore exchange Their dwelling places, as the streames them carrie: Ne have the watry foules a certaine grange Wherein to rest, ne in one stead do tarry; But flitting still doe flie, and still their places vary.

"Next is the Ayre; which who feeles not by sense (For of all sense it is the middle meane) To flit still, and with subtill influence Of his thin spirit all creatures to maintaine In state of life? O weake life! that does leane On thing so tickle as th'unsteady ayre, Which every howre is chang'd and altred cleane With every blast that bloweth, fowle or faire: The faire doth it prolong; the fowle doth it impaire.

"Therein the changes infinite beholde, Which to her creatures every minute chaunce; Now boyling hot, streight friezing deadly cold; Now faire sunshine, that makes all skip and daunce; Streight bitter stormes, and balefull countenance That makes them

all to shiver and to shake: Rayne, haile, and snowe do pay them sad penance, And dreadfull thunder-claps (that make them quake) With flames and flashing lights that thousand changes make.

“Last is the fire; which, though it live for ever, Ne can be quenched quite, yet every day We see his parts, so soone as they do sever, To lose their heat and shortly to decay; So makes himself his owne consuming pray: Ne any living creatures doth he breed, But all that are of others bredd doth slay; And with their death his cruell life dooth feed; Nought leaving but their barren ashes without seede.

“Thus all these fower (the which the groundwork bee Of all the world and of all living wights) To thousand sorts of Change we subject see: Yet are they chang’d (by other wondrous slights) Into themselves, and lose their native mights; The Fire to Ayre, and th’Ayre to Water sheere, And Water into Earth; yet Water fights With Fire, and Ayre with Earth, approaching neere: Yet all are in one body, and as one appeare.

“So in them all raignes Mutabilitie; However these, that Gods themselves do call, Of them do claime the rule and soverainty; As Vesta, of the fire asthereall; Vulcan, of this with us so usuall; Ops, of the earth; and Juno, of the ayre; Neptune, of seas; and Nymphes, of Rivers all: For all those Rivers to me subject are, And all the rest, which they usurp, be all my share.

“Which to approven true, as I have told, Vouchsafe, O Goddesse! to thy presence call The rest which doe the world in being hold; As times and seasons of the yeare that fall: Of all the which demand in generall, Or judge thyselfe, by verdit of thine eye, Whether to me they are not subject all.” Nature did yeeld thereto; and by-and-by Bade Order call them all before her Majesty.

So forth issew’d the Seasons of the yeare. First, lusty Spring, all dight in leaves of flowres That freshly budded and new bloosmes did beare, (In which a thousand birds had built their bowres That sweetly sung to call forth Paramours) And in his

hand a javelin he did beare, And on his head (as fit for warlike stoures) A guilt engraven morion he did weare; That as some did him love, so others did him feare.

Then came the jolly Sommer, being dight In a thin silken cassock coloured greene, That was unlyned all, to be more light; And on his head a girlond well beseene He wore, from which, as he had chauffed been, The sweat did drop; and in his hand he bore A boawe and shaftes, as he in forrest greene Had hunted late the Libbard or the Bore, And now would bathe his limbes with labor heated sore.

Then came the Autumne all in yellow clad, As though he joyed in his plentious store, Laden with fruits that made him laugh, full glad That he had banisht hunger, which tofore Had by the belly oft him pinched sore: Upon his head a wreath, that was enrold With ears of corne of every sort, he bore; And in his hand a sickle he did holde, To reape the ripened fruits the which the earth had yold.

Lastly, came Winter cloathed all in frize, Chattering his teeth for cold that did him chill; Whil'st on his hoary beard his breath did freese, And the dull drops, that from his purpled bill As from a limbeck did adown distill. In his right hand a tipped staffe he held, With which his feeble steps he stayed still; For he was faint with cold, and weak with eld, That scarse his loosed limbes he hable was to weld.

These, marching softly, thus in order went; And after them the Monthes all riding came. First, sturdy March, with brows full sternly bent And armed strongly, rode upon a Ram, The same which over Hellespontus swam; Yet in his hand a spade he also hent, And in a bag all sorts of seeds ysame, Which on the earth he strowed as he went, And fild her wombe with fruitfull hope of nourishment.

Next came fresh Aprill, full of lustyhed, And wanton as a Kid whose home new buds: Upon a Bull he rode, the same which led Europa floting through th'Argolick fluds: His hornes were gilden all with golden studs, And garnished with garlonds goodly dight Of all the fairest flowres and freshest buds Which th'earth brings forth; and wet he seem'd in sight With waves, through which he waded for his loves

delight.

Then came faire May, the fayrest mayd on ground, Deckt all with dainties of her seasons pryde, And throwing flowres out of her lap around: Upon two brethrens shoulders she did ride, The twinnes of Leda; which on eyther side Supported her like to their soveraigne Queene: Lord! how all creatures laught when her they spide And leapt and daunc't as they had ravisht beene! And Cupid selfe about her fluttred all in greene.

And after her came jolly June, arrayd All in greene leaves, as he a Player were; Yet in his time he wrought as well as playd, That by his plough-yrons mote right well appeare. Upon a Crab he rode, that him did beare With crooked crawling steps an uncouth pase, And backward yode, as Bargemen wont to fare Bending their force contrary to their face; Like that ungracious crew which faines demurest grace.

Then came hot July boyling like to fire, That all his garments he had cast away. Upon a Lyon raging yet with ire He boldly rode, and made him to obay: It was the beast that whylome did forray The Nemæan forrest, till th'Amphytrionide Him slew, and with his hide did him array. Behinde his back a sithe, and by his side Under his belt he bore a sickle circling wide.

The sixt was August, being rich arrayd In garment all of gold downe to the ground; Yet rode he not, but led a lovely Mayd Forth by the lilly hand, the which was cround With cares of corne, and full her hand was found: That was the righteous Virgin, which of old Liv'd here on earth, and plenty made abound; But after Wrong was lov'd, and Justice solde, She left th'unrighteous world, and was to heaven extold.

Next him September marched, eeke on foote, Yet was he heavy laden with the spoyle Of harvests riches, which he made his boot, And him enricht with bounty of the soyle: In his one hand, as fit for harvests toyle, He held a knife-hook; and in th'other hand A paire of waights, with which he did assoyle Both more and lesse, where it in doubt did stand, And equall gave to each as Justice duly scann'd.

Then came October full of merry glee; For yet his noule was totty of the must, Which he was treading in the wine-fats see, And of the joyous oyle, whose gentle gust Made him so frollick and so full of lust: Upon a dreadfull Scorpion he did ride, The same which by Dianaes doom unjust Slew great Orion; and eeke by his side He had his ploughing-share and coulter ready tyde.

Next was November; he full grosse and fat As fed with lard, and that right well might seeme; For he had been a fatting hogs of late, That yet his browes with sweat did reek and steem, And yet the season was full sharp and breem: In planting eeke he took no small delight. Whereon he rode not easie was to deeme; For it a dreadfull Centaure was in sight, The seed of Saturne and faire Nais, Chiron hight.

And after him came next the chill December: Yet he, through merry feasting which he made And great bonfires, did not the cold remember; His Saviour's birth his mind so much did glad. Upon a shaggy-bearded Goat he rode, The same wherewith Dan Jove in tender yeares, They say, was nourisht by th'Idæan mayd; And in his hand a broad deepe boawle he beares, Of which he freely drinks an health to all his peeres.

Then came old January, wrapped well In many weeds to keep the cold away; Yet did he quake and quiver, like to quell, And blowe his nayles to warme them if he may; For they were numbd with holding all the day An hatchet keene, with which he felled wood And from the trees did lop the needlesse spray: Upon an huge great Earth-pot steane he stood, From whose wide mouth there flowed forth the Romane Flood.

And lastly came cold February, sitting In an old wagon, for he could not ride, Drawne of two fishes, for the season fitting, Which through the flood before did softly slyde And swim away: yet had he by his side His plough and harnesse fit to till the ground, And tooles to prune the trees, before the pride Of hasting Prime did make them burgein round. So past the twelve Months forth, and their dew places

found.

And after these there came the Day and Night, Riding together both with equall pase, Th’one on a Palfrey blacke, the other white; But Night had covered her uncomely face With a blacke veile, and held in hand a mace, On top whereof the moon and stars were pight; And sleep and darknesse round about did trace: But Day did beare upon his scepters hight The goodly Sun encompast all with beames bright.

Then came the Howres, faire daughters of high Jove Night; the which were all endewed With wondrous beauty fit to kindle love; But they were virgins all, and love eschewed That might forslack the charge to them foreshewed By mighty Jove; who did them porters make Of heavens gate (whence all the gods issued) Which they did daily watch, and nightly wake By even turnes, ne ever did their charge forsake.

And after all came Life, and lastly Death; Death with most grim and griesly visage seene, Yet is he nought but parting of the breath; Ne ought to see, but like a shade to weene, Unbodied, unsoul’d, unheard, unseene: But Life was like a faire young lusty boy, Such as they faine Dan Cupid to have beene, Full of delightfull health and lively joy, Deckt all with flowres, and wings of gold fit to employ.

When these were past, thus gan the Titanesse: “Lo! mighty mother, now be judge, and say Whether in all thy creatures more or lesse Change doth not raign and bear the greatest sway; For who sees not that Time on all doth pray? But Times do change and move continually: So nothing heere long standeth in one stay: Wherefore this lower world who can deny But to be subject still to Mutability?”

Then thus gan Jove: “Right true it is, that these And all things else that under heaven dwell Are chaung’d of Time, who doth them all disseise Of being: But who is it (to me tell) That Time himselfe doth move, and still compell To keepe his course? Is not that namely wee Which poure that vertue from our heavenly cell That moves them all, and makes them changed be? So them we gods do rule, and in them also

thee.

To whom thus Mutability: “The things, Which we see not how they are mov’d and swayd Ye may attribute to your selves as Kings, And say, they by your secret powre are made: But what we see not, who shall us perswade? But were they so, as ye them faine to be, Mov’d by your might and ordered by your ayde, Yet what if I can prove, that even yee Your selves are likewise chang’d, and subject unto mee?

“And first, concerning her that is the first, Even you, faire Cynthia; whom so much ye make Joves dearest darling, she was bred and nurst On Cynthus hill, whence she her name did take; Then is she mortall borne, how-so ye crake: Besides, her face and countenance every day We changed see and sundry formes partake, Now hornd, now round, now bright, now browne and gray; So that ‘as changefull as the Moone’ men use to say.

“Next Mercury; who though he lesse appeare To change his hew, and alwayes seeme as one, Yet he his course doth alter every yeare, And is of late far out of order gone. So Venus eeke, that goodly Paragone, Though faire all night, yet is she darke all day: And Phœbus selfe, who lightsome is alone, Yet is he oft eclipsed by the way, And fills the darkned world with terror and dismay.

“Now Mars, that valiant man, is changed most; For he sometimes so far runnes out of square, That he his way doth seem quite to have lost, And cleane without his usuall spheere to fare; That even these Star-gazers stonisht are At sight thereof, and damne their lying bookes: So likewise grim Sir Saturne oft doth spare His sterne aspect, and calme his crabbed lookes. So many turning cranks these have, so many crookes.

“But you, Dan Jove, that only constant are, And King of all the rest, as ye doe clame, Are you not subjedt eeke to this misfare? Then, let me aske you this withouten blame; Where were ye borne? Some say in Crete by name, Others in Thebes, and others otherwhere; But, wheresoever they comment the same, They all

consent that ye begotten were And borne here in this world; ne other can appeare.

“Then are ye mortall borne, and thrall to me Unlesse the kingdome of the sky yee make Immortall and unchangeable to be: Besides, that power and vertue which ye spake, That ye here worke, doth many changes take, And your owne natures change; for each of you, That vertue have or this or that to make, Is checkt and changed from his nature trew, By others opposition or obliquid view.

“Besides, the sundry motions of your Spheares, So sundry wayes and fashions as clerkes faine, Some in short space, and some in longer yeares, What is the same but alteration plaine? Onely the starry skie doth still remaine: Yet do the Starres and Signes therein still move, And even itselfe is mov’d, as wizards saine: But all that moveth doth mutation love; Therefore both you and them to me I subject prove.

“Then, since within this wide great Universe Nothing doth firme and permanent appeare, But all things tost and turned by transverse, What then should let, but I aloft should reare My Trophee, and from all the triumph beare? Now judge then, (O thou greatest goddesse trew) According as thy selfe doest see and heare, And unto me addoom that is my dew; That is, the rule of all, all being rul’d by you.”

So having ended, silence long ensewed; Nature to or fro spake for a space, But with firme eyes affixt the ground still viewed. Meane-while all creatures, looking in her face, Expecting th’end of this so doubtfull case, Did hang in long suspence what would ensew, To whether side should fall the soveraine place: At length she, looking up with chearefull view, The silence brake, and gave her doome in speeches few.

“I well consider all that ye have said, And find that all things stedfastnesse do hate And changed be; yet, being rightly wayd, They are not changed from their first estate; But by their change their being do dilate, And turning to themselves at length againe, Do worke their owne perfection so by fate: Then over them Change doth not rule and raigne, But they raigne over Change, and do their states maintaine.

“Cease therefore, daughter, further to aspire, And thee content thus to be rul’d by mee, For thy decay thou seekst by thy desire; But time shall come that all shall changed bee, And from thenceforth none no more change shal see.” So was the Titanesse put downe and whist, And Jove confirm’d in his imperiall see. Then was that whole assembly quite dismist, And Natur’s selfe did vanish, whither no man wist.

Canto VIII

Unperfite

When I bethink me, on that speech whyleare Of Mutabilitie, and well it way: Me seemes, that though she all unworthy were Of the heav’ns rule; yet, very sooth to say, In all things else she bears the greatest sway. Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle, And love of things so vaine to cast away; Whose flowring pride, so fading and so fickle, Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.

Then gin I thihke on that which Nature said, Of that same time when no more Chance shall be But stedfast rest of all things, firmly stayd Upon the Pillours of Eternity, That is contrayr, to Mutabilitie: For all that moveth doth in Change delight: But thenceforth all shall rest eternally With Him that is the God of Sabaoth hight: O that great Sabaoth God, grant me that sabaoths sight.

A Letter to Sir Walter Raleigh

A Letter of the Authors, Expounding his whole intention in the course of this work; which, for that it giveth great light to the reader, for the better understanding is hereunto annexed.

To the Right Noble and Valorous Sir Walter Raleigh, Knight, Lord Warden of the Stannaries, and her Majesty’s Lieutenant of the county of Cornwall.

Sir, knowing how doubtfully all allegories may be construed, and this book of mine,

which I have entitled the Faerie Queene, being a continued allegory, or dark conceit, I have thought good, as well for avoiding of jealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading thereof, (being so by you commanded,) to discover unto you the general intention and meaning, which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned, without expressing of any particular purposes, or by accidents, therein occasioned. The general end therefore of all the book is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline. Which for that I conceived should be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historical fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter than for profit of the ensample, I chose the history of King Arthur, as most fit for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many men's former works, and also furthest from the danger of envy, and suspicion of present time. In which I have followed all the antique poets historical; first Homer, who in the persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses hath ensampled a good governor and a virtuous man, the one in his Ilias, the other in his Odysseis: then Virgil, whose like intention was to do in the person of Aeneas: after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando: and lately Tasso dissevered them again, and formed both parts in two persons, namely, that part which they in philosophy call Ethice, or virtues of a private man, coloured in his Rinaldo: the other named Politice in his Godfredo. By ensample of which excellent poets, I labour to portrait in Arthur, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private moral virtues, as Aristotle hath devised; the which is the purpose of these first twelve books: which if I find to be well accepted, I may be perhaps encouraged to frame the other part of politicke virtues in his person, after that he came to be king.

To some, I know, this method will seem displeasant, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, then thus clowdily enwrapped in allegorical devises. But such, me seem, should be satisfied with the use of these days, seeing all things accounted by their shows, and

nothing esteemed of, that is not delightful and pleasing to common sense. For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one, in the exquisite depth of his judgement, formed a commonwealth, such as it should be; but the other, in the person of Cyrus, and the Persians, fashioned a governement, such as might best be: so much more profitable and gracious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule. So have I laboured to do in the person of Arthur: whom I conceive, after his long education by Timon, to whom he was by Merlin delivered to be brought up, so soon as he was borne of the Lady Igrayne, to have seen in a dream or vision the Fairy Queen, with whose excellent beauty ravished, he awaking, resolved to seek her out: and so, being by Merlin armed, and by Timon throughly instructed, he went to seek her forth in Fairy Land. In that Fairy Queen I mean glory in my general intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our sovereign the Queen, and her kingdom in Faery Land. And yet, in some places else, I do otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royal Queen or Empress, the other of a most virtuous and beautiful lady, this latter part in some places I do express in Belphoebe, fashioning her name according to your own excellent conceit of Cynthia, (Phoebe and Cynthia being both names of Diana). So in the person of Prince Arthur I set forth Magnificence in particular; which virtue, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and containeth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deeds of Arthur appliable to the virtue, which I write of in that book. But of the XII other virtues I make XII other knights the patrons, for the more variety of the history: of which these three books contain three.

The first of the Knight of the Redcross, in whom I express Holiness: the second of Sir Guyon, in whom I set forth Temperance: the third of Britomartis, a Lady Knight, in whom I picture Chastity. But, because the beginning of the whole work seemeth abrupt, and as depending upon other antecedents, it needs that ye know the occasion of these three knights several adventures. For the method of a poet historical is not

such, as of an historiographer. For an historiographer discourseth of affairs orderly as they were done, accounting as well the times as the actions; but a Poet thrusteth into the middest, even where it most concerneth him, and there recoursing to the things forepast, and divining of things to come, maketh a pleasing analysis of all.

The beginning therefore of my history, if it were to be told by an historiographer, should be the twelfth book, which is the last; where I devise that the Fairy Queen kept her annual feast XII days; upon which XII several days, the occasions of the XII several adventures happened, which being undertaken by XII several knights, are in these XII books severally handled and discoursed. The first was this. In the beginning of the feast, there presented himself a tall clownish young man, who falling before the Queen of Fairies desired a boon (as the manner then was) which during that feast she might not refuse; which was that he might have the achievement of any adventure, which during that feast should happen: that being granted, he rested him on the floor, unfit through his rusticity for a better place. Soon after entered a fair lady in mourning weeds, riding on a white ass, with a dwarf behind her leading a warlike steed, that bore the arms of a knight, and his spear in the dwarf's hand. She, falling before the Queen of Fairies, complained that her father and mother, an ancient King and Queen, had been by an huge dragon many years shut up in a brazen castle, who thence suffered them not to issue; and therefore besought the Fairy Queen to assign her some one of her knights to take on him that exploit. Presently that clownish person upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queen much wondering, and the lady much gainsaying, yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end the lady told him, that unless that armour which she brought, would serve him (that is, the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul, VI Ephes.) that he could not succeed in that enterprise; which being forthwith put upon him, with due furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in all that company, and was well liked of the lady. And eftsoons taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that strange courser, he went forth with her on that

adventure: where beginneth the first book, viz.

A gentle knight was pricking on the playne, etc.

The second day there came in a Palmer, bearing an infant with bloody hands, whose parents he complained to have been slain by an enchantress called Acrasia; and therefore craved of the Fairy Queen, to appoint him some knight to perform that adventure; which being assigned to Sir Guyon, he presently went forth with that same Palmer: which is the beginning of the second book, and the whole subject thereof. The third day there came in a groom, who complained before the Fairy Queen, that a vile enchanter, called Busirane, had in hand a most fair lady, called Amoretta, whom he kept in most grievous torment, because she would not yield him the pleasure of her body. Whereupon Sir Scudamour, the lover of that lady, presently took on him that adventure. But being unable to perform it by reason of the hard enchantments, after long sorrow, in the end met with Britomartis, who succoured him, and rescued his love.

But by occasion hereof many other adventures are intermeddled; but rather as accidents then intendments: as the love of Britomart, the overthrow of Marinell, the misery of Florimell, the virtuousness of Belphoebe, the lasciviousness of Hellenora, and many the like.

Thus much, sir, I have briefly overrun to direct your understanding to the wellhead of the history; that from thence gathering the whole intention of the conceit, ye may as in a handful gripe all the discourse, which otherwise may happily seem tedious and confused. So, humbly craving the continuance of your honourable favour towards me, and th’eternal establishment of your happiness, I humbly take leave.

23 January 1589,

Yours most humbly affectionate,

Ed. Spenser.

Uncopyright

May you do good and not evil. May you find forgiveness for yourself and forgive others. May you share freely, never taking more than you give.

Copyright pages exist to tell you that you can’t do something. Unlike them, this Uncopyright page exists to tell you that the writing and artwork in this ebook are believed to be in the United States public domain; that is, they are believed to be free of copyright restrictions in the United States. The United States public domain represents our collective cultural heritage, and items in it are free for anyone in the United States to do almost anything at all with, without having to get permission.

Copyright laws are different all over the world, and the source text or artwork in this ebook may still be copyrighted in other countries. If you’re not located in the United States, you must check your local laws before using this ebook. Standard Ebooks makes no representations regarding the copyright status of the source text or artwork in this ebook in any country other than the United States.

Non-authorship activities performed on items that are in the public domain—so-called “sweat of the brow” work—don’t create a new copyright. That means that nobody can claim a new copyright on an item that is in the public domain for, among other things, work like digitization, markup, or typography. Regardless, the contributors to this ebook release their contributions under the terms in the CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication, thus dedicating to the worldwide public domain all of the work they’ve done on this ebook, including but not limited to metadata, the titlepage, imprint, colophon, this Uncopyright, and any changes or enhancements to, or markup on, the original text and artwork. This dedication doesn’t change the copyright status of the source text or artwork. We make this dedication in the interest of enriching our global cultural heritage, to promote free and libre culture around the world, and to give back to the unrestricted culture that has given all of us so much.

Table of Contents

Titlepage Imprint Dedication to the Edition of 1590 Dedication to the Edition of 1596 Dedicatory Sonnets Sonnet I Sonnet II Sonnet III Sonnet IV Sonnet V Sonnet VI Sonnet VII Sonnet VIII Sonnet IX Sonnet X Sonnet XI Sonnet XII Sonnet XIII Sonnet XIV Sonnet XV Sonnet XVI Sonnet XVII A Letter to Sir Walter Raleigh The Faerie Queene Book I: The Legend of the Knight of the Red Cross, or of Holiness Canto I Canto II Canto III Canto IV Canto V Canto VI Canto VII Canto VIII Canto IX Canto X Canto XI Canto XII Book II: The Legend of Sir Guyon, or of Temperance Canto I Canto II Canto III Canto IV Canto V Canto VI Canto VII Canto VIII Canto IX Canto X Canto XI Canto XII Book III: The Legend of Britomartis, or of Chastity Canto I Canto II Canto III Canto IV Canto V Canto VI Canto VII Canto VIII Canto IX Canto X Canto XI Canto XII Book IV: The Legend of Cambel and Triamond, or of Friendship Canto I Canto II Canto III Canto IV Canto V Canto VI Canto VII Canto VIII Canto IX Canto X Canto XI Canto XII Book V: The Legend of Artegall, or of Justice Canto I Canto II Canto III Canto IV Canto V Canto VI Canto VII Canto VIII Canto IX Canto X Canto XI Canto XII Book VI: The Legend of Calidore, or of Courtesy Canto I Canto II Canto III Canto IV Canto V Canto VI Canto VII Canto VIII Canto IX Canto X Canto XI Canto XII Mutability: The Legend of Constancy Canto VI Canto VII Canto VIII: Unperfite Colophon Uncopyright

Landmarks