2.29: from The Faerie Queene (Book III)

Canto I

Guyon encountreth Britomart,

faire Florimell is chaced:

Duessaes traines and Malecastaes

champions are defaced.

The famous Briton Prince and Faerie knight,

After long wayes and perilous paines endured,

Hauing their wearie limbes to perfect plight

Restord, and sory wounds right well recured,

Of the faire Alma greatly were procured,

To make there lenger soiourne and abode;

But when thereto they might not be allured,

From seeking praise, and deeds of armes abrode,
They courteous conge tooke, and forth together yode.

II

But the captiu’d Acrasia he sent,
Because of trauell long, a nigher way,
With a strong gard, all reskew to preuent,
And her to Faerie court safe to conuay,
That her for winnesse of his hard assay,
Vnsto his Faerie Queene he might present:
But he himselfe betooke another way,
To make more triall of his hardiment,
And seeke aduentures, as he with Prince Arthur went.

III

Long so they trauelled through wastefull wayes,
Where daungers dwelt, and perils most did wonne,
To hunt for glorie and renowned praise;
Full many Countries they did ouerronne,
From the vprising to the setting Sunne,
And many hard aduentures did atchieue;
Of all the which they honour euer wonne,
Seeking the weake oppressed to relieue,
And to recouer right for such, as wrong did grieue.

IV

At last as through an open plaine they yode,
They spide a knight, that towards pricked faire,
And him beside an aged Squire there rode,
That seem’d to couch vnder his shield three-square,
As if that age bad him that burden spare,
And yield it those, that stouter could it wield:
He them espying, gan himselfe prepare,
And on his arme addresse his goodly shield
That bore a Lion passant in a golden field.

V

Which seeing good Sir Guyon, deare besought
The Prince of grace, to let him runne that turne.
He graunted: then the Faery quickly raught
His poinant speare, and sharpely gan to spurne
His fomy steed, whose fierie feete did burne
The verdant grasse, as he thereon did tread;
Ne did the other backe his foot returne,
But fiercely forward came withouten dread,
And bent his dreadfull speare against the others head.

VI

They bene ymet, and both their points arriued,
But Guyon droue so furious and fell,
That seem’d both shield and plate it would haue riued;
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 mischieuous mischance his life and limbes did spare.

VII

Great shame and sorrow of that fall he tooke;
For neuer yet, sith warlike armes he bore,
And shiuering speare in bloudie field first shooke,
He found himselfe dishonored so sore.
Ah gentlest knight, that euer armour bore,
Let not thee grieue dismounted to haue beene,
And brought to ground, that neuer wast before;
For not thy fault, but secret powre vnseene,
That speare enchaunted was, which layd thee on the greene.

VIII

But weenedst thou what wight thee ouerthrew,
Much greater griefe and shamefuller regret
For thy hard fortune then thou wouldst renew,
That of a single damzell thou wert met
On equall plaine, and there so hard beset;
Euen the famous Britomart it was,
Whom straunge aduenture did from Britaine fet,
To seeke her louer (loue farre sought alas,)
Whose image she had seene in Venus looking glas.

IX

Full of disdainefull wrath, he fierce vprose,
For to reuenge that foule reprochfull shame,
And snatching his bright sword began to close
With her on foot, and stoutly forward came;

Die rather would he, then endure that same.

Which when his Palmer saw, he gan to feare

His toward perill and vnward blame,

Which by that new rencounter he should reare:

For death sate on the point of that enchaunted speare.

X

And hasting towards him gan faire perswade,

Not to prouoke misfortune, nor to weene

His speares default to mend with cruell blade;

For by his mightie Science he had seene

The secret vertue of that weapon keene,

That mortall puissance mote not withstond:

Nothing on earth mote alwaies happie beene.

Great hazard were it, and aduenture fond,

To loose long gotten honour with one euill hond.

XI

By such good meanes he him discounselled,

From prosecuting his reuenging rage;

And eke the Prince like treaty handeled,

His wrathfull will with reason to asswage,

And laid the blame, not to his carriage,

But to his starting steed, that swaru'd asyde,

And to the ill purueyance of his page,

That had his furnitures not firmely tyde:
So is his angry courage fairely pacifyde.

XII

Thus reconcilement was betweene them knit,
Through goodly temperance, and affection chaste,
And either vowd with all their power and wit,
To let not others honour be defaste,
Of friend or foe, who euer 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.

XIII

O goodly vsage of those antique times,
In which the sword was servant vnto right;
When not for malice and contentious crimes,
But all for praise, and proofe of manly might,
The martiall brood accustomed to fight:
Then honour was the meed of victorie,
And yet the vanquished had no despight:
Let later age that noble use enuie,
Vile rancour to auoid, and cruell surquedrie.

XIV

Long they thus trauelled in friendly wise,
Through countries waste, and eke well edifyde,
Seeking aduentures hard, to exercise
Their puissance, whylome full dernely tryde:
At length they came into a forrest wyde,
Whose hideous horror and sad trembling sound
Full griesly seem’d: Therein they long did ryde,
Yet tract of liuing creatures none they found,
Saue Beares, Lions, and Buls, which romed them around.

XV

All suddenly out of the thickest brush,
Vpon a milke-white Palfrey all alone,
A goodly Ladie 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 fled so fast, that nothing mote him hold,
And scarce them leasure gaue, her passing to behold.

XVI

Still as she fled, her eye she backward threw,
As fearing euill, that pursewd her fast;
And her faire yellow locks behind her flew,
Loosely disperst with puffe of euery blast:
All as a blazing starre doth farre outcast
His hearie beames, and flaming lockes dispred,
At sight whereof the people stand aghast:
But the sage wisard telles, as he has red,
That it importunes death and dolefull dreighed.

XVII

So as they gazed after her a while,
Lo where a griesly Foster forth did rush,
Breathing out beastly lust her to defile:
His tyrelinge iade he fiercely forth did push,
Through thicke and thin, both ouer banke and bush
In hope her to attaine by hooke or crooke,
That from his gorie sides the bloud did gush:
Large were his limbes, and terrible his looke,
And in his clownish hand a sharp bore speare he shooke.

XVIII

Which outrage when those gentle knights did see,
Full of great enuie and fell gealosy,
They stayd not to auise, who first should bee,
But all spurd after fast, as they mote fly,
To reskew her from shamefull villany.
The Prince and Guyon equally byliue
Her selfe pursewd, in hope to win thereby
Most goodly meede, the fairest Dame aliue:
But after the foule foster Timias did strieue.

XIX

The whiles faire Britomart, whose constant mind,
Would not so lightly follow beauties chace,
Ne reckt of Ladies Loue, did stay behind,
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 iourney, through that perlous Pace,
With stedfast courage and stout hardiment;
Ne euill thing she fear’d, ne euill thing she ment.

XX

At last as nigh out of the wood she came,
A stately Castle farre 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 plaine,
Mantled with greene, it selfe did spredden wyde,
On which she saw sixe knights, that did darraine
Fierce battell against one, with cruell might and maine.

XXI

Mainly they all attonce vpon him laid,
And sore beset on every side around,
That nigh he breathlesse grew, yet nought dismaid,
Ne euer to them yielded foot of ground
All had he lost much bloud through many a wound,
But stoutly dealt his blowes, and every way
To which he turned in his wrathfull stound,
Made them recoile, and fly from dred decay,
That none of all the sise before, him durst assay.

XXII

Like dastard Curres, that hauing at a bay
The saluage beast embost in wearie chace,
Dare not aduenture 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 ieopardy,
When Britomart him saw, she ran a pace
Vnto his reskew, and with earnest cry,
Bad those same sise forbeare that single enimy.

XXIII

But to her cry they list not lenden eare,
Ne ought the more their mightie strokes surceasse,
But gathering him round about more neare,
Theire direfull rancour rather did encreasse;
Till that she rushing through the thickest preasse,
Perforce disparted their compacted gyre,
And soone compeld to hearken vnto peace:
Tho gan she myldly of them to inquyre
The cause of their dissention and outrageous yre.

XXIV

Whereto that single knight did answere frame;
These sise would me enforce by oddes of might,
To chaunge my liefe, and loue another Dame,
That death me liefer were, then such despight,
So vnto wrong to yield my wrested right:
For I loue one, the truest one on ground,
Ne list me chaunge; she th'Errant Damzell hight,
For whose deare sake full many a bitter stownd,
I haue endur’d, and tasted many a bloudy wound.

XXV

Certes (said she) then bene ye sixe to blame,
To weene your wrong by force to iustifie:
For knight to leaue his Ladie were great shame,
That faithfull is, and better were to die.
All losse is lesse, and lesse the infamie,
Then losse of loue to him, that loues but one;
Ne may loue be compeld by maisterie;
For soone as maisterie comes, sweete loue anone
Taketh his nimble wings, and soone away is gone.

XXVI

Then spake one of those sixe, There dwelleth here
Within this castle wall a Ladie faire,
Whose soueraine beautie hath no liuing pere,
Thereto so bounteous and so debonaire,
That neuer any mote with her compaire.
She hath ordaind this law, which we approue,
That euery knight, which doth this way repaire,
In case he haue no Ladie, nor no loue,
Shall doi unto her service never to remoue.

XXVII

But if he haue a Lady or a Loue,
Then must he her forgoe with foule defame,
Or else with vs by dint of sword approue,
That she is fairer, then our fairest Dame,
As did this knight, before ye hither came.

Perdie (said Britomart) the choise is hard:
But what reward had he, that ouercame?
He should aduaunced be to high regard,
(Said they) and haue our Ladies loue for his reward.

XXVIII

Therefore a read Sir, if thou haue a loue.
Loue haue I sure, (quoth she) but Lady none;
Yet will I not fro mine owne loue remoue,
Ne to your Lady will I servise done,
But wreake your wrongs wrought to this knight alone,
And proue his cause. With that her mortall speare
She mightily auentred towards one,
And downe him smot, ere well aware he weare,
Then to the next she rode, and downe the next did beare.

XXIX

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 loue most of might,
That for his trusty seruaunts doth so strongly fight.

Too well we see, (said they) and proue too well
Our faulty weaknesse, and your matchlesse might:
For thy faire Sir, yours be the Damozell,
Which by her owne law to your lot doth light,
And we your liege men faith vnto you plight.
So vnderneath 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 Ioyeous,
(For so that Castle hight by commune name)
Where they were entertaind with curteous
And comely glee of many gracious
Faire Ladies, and many a gentle knight,
Who through a Chamber long and spacious,
Eftsoones them brought vnto their Ladies sight,
That of them cleaped was the Lady of delight.

XXXII

But for to tell the sumptuous aray
Of that great chamber, should be labour lost:
For liuing wit, I weene, cannot display
The royall riches and exceeding cost,
Of euery pillour and of euery post;
Which all of purest bullion framed were,
And with great pearles and pretious stones embost,
That the bright glister of their beames cleare
Did sparckle forth great light, and glorious did appeare.

XXXIII

These straunger knights through passing, forth were led
Into an inner rowme, whose royaltee
And rich purueyance might vneath be red; Mote
Princes place beseeme so deckt to bee.
Which stately manner when as 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 deuize.

XXXIV

The wals were round about apparelled
With costly clothes of Arras and of Toure,
In which with cunning hand was pourtrahed
The loue of Venus and her Paramoure

The faire Adonis, turned to a flowre,
A work of rare deuice, and wondrous wit.
First did it shew the bitter balefull stowre,
Which her assayd with many a feruent fit,
When first her tender hart was with his beautie smit.

XXXV

Then with what sleights and sweet allurements she
Entyst the Boy, as well that art she knew,
And wooed him her Paramoure to be;
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 heauens vew,
Where him to sleepe she gently would perswade,
Or bathe him in a fountaine by some couert glade.

XXXVI

And whilst he slept, she ouer him would spred
Her mantle, colour’d like the starry skyes,
And her soft arme lay vnderneath 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 Pances trim,
And euer with sweet Nectar she did sprinkle him.

XXXVII

So did she steale his heedelesse hart away,
And ioyd his loue in secret vnespyde.
But for she saw him bent to cruell play,
To hunt the saluage beast in forrest wyde,
Dreadfull of daunger, that mote him betyde,
She oft and oft aduiz’d him to refraine
From chase of greater beasts, whose brutish pryde
Mote breede him scath vnwares: but all in vaine;
For who can shun the chaunce, that dest’ny doth ordaine?

XXXVIII

Lo, where beyond he lyeth languishing,
Deadly engored of a great wild Bore,
And by his side the Goddesse groueling
Makes for him endlesse mone, and euermore
With her soft garment wipes away the gore,
Which staines 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 liuely grew.

XXXIX

So was that chamber clad in goodly wize,
And round about it many beds were dight,
As whilome was the antique worldes guize,
Some for vntimely ease, some for delight,
As pleased them to vse, that vse it might:
And all was full of Damzels, and of Squires,
Dauncing and reueling both day and night,
And swimming deepe in sensuall desires,
And Cupid still amongst them kindled lustfull fires.

XL

And all the while sweet Musicke did diuide
Her looser notes with Lydian harmony;
And all the while sweet birdes thereto applide
Their daintie layes and dulcet melody,
Ay caroling of loue and iollity,
That wonder was to heare their trim consort.
Which when those knights beheld, with scornefull eye,
They sdeigned such lasciuous disport,
And loath’d the loose demeanure of that wanton sort.

XLI

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, sauing that askaunce
Her wanton eyes, ill signes of womanhed,
Did roll too lightly, and too often glaunce,
Without regard of grace, or comely amenaunce.

XLII

Long worke it were, and needless to devise

Their goodly entertainement and great glee:

She caused them be led in curteous wise

Into a bowre, disarmed for to bee,

And cheared well with wine and spiceree:

The Redcrosse Knight was soone disarmed there,

But the braue Mayd would not disarmed bee,

But onely vented vp her vmbriere,

And so did let her goodly visage to appere.

XLIII

As when faire Cynthia, in darkesome night,

Is in a noyous cloud enuolope,

Where she may find the substaunce thin and light,

Breakes forth her siluer beames, and her bright hed

Discouers to the world discomfited;

Of the poore traueller, that went astray,

With thousand blessings she is heried;

Such was the beautie and the shining ray,

With which faire Britomart gaue light vnto the day.

XLIV

And eke those six, which lately with her fought,

Now were disarmd, and did them selues present

Vnto her vew, and company vnsoght;
For they all seemed curteous and gent,
And all sixe brethren, borne of one parent,
Which had them traynd in all ciuilitee,
And goodly taught to tilt and turnament;
Now were they liegemen to this Lady free,
And her knights service ought, to hold of her in fee.

XLV

The first of them by name Gardante hight,
A iolly person, and of comely vew;
The second was Parlante, a bold knight,
And next to him locante did ensew;
Basciante did him selfe most curteous shew;
But fierce Bacchante seemd too fell and keene;
And yet in armes Noctante greater grew:
All were faire knights, and goodly well beseene,
But to faire Britomart they all but shadowes beene.

XLVI

For she was full of amiable grace,
And manly terrour mixed therewithall,
That as the one stird vp affections bace,
So th'other did mens rash desires apall,
And hold them backe, that would in errour fall;
As he, that hath espide a vermeill Rose,
To which sharpe thornes and breres the way forstall,
Dare not for dread his hardy hand expose,
But wishing it far off, his idle wish doth lose.

XLVII

Whom when the Lady saw so faire a wight,
All ignoraunt of her contrary sex,
(For she her weend a fresh and lusty knight)
She greatly gan enamoured to wex,
And with vaine thoughts her falsed fancy vex:
Her fickle hart conceiued hasty fire,
Like sparkes of fire, which fall in sclender flex,
That shortly brent into extreme desire,
And ransackt all her veines with passion entire.

XLVIII

Eftsoones she grew to great impatience
And into termes of open outrage brust,
That plaine discouered her incontinence,
Ne reckt she, who her meaning did mistrust;
For she was giuen all to fleshly lust,
And poured forth in sensuall delight,
That all regard of shame she had discust,
And meet respect of honour put to flight:
So shamelesse beauty soone becomes a loathly sight.

XLIX

Faire Ladies, that to loue captiued arre,
And chaste desires do nourish in your mind,
Let not her fault your sweet affections marre,
Ne blot 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 loue, but lust inclind;
For loue does always bring forth bounteous deeds,
And in each gentle hart desire of honour breeds.

L

Nought so of loue this loosrer Dame did skill,
But as a coale to kindle fleshly flame,
Giuing the bridle to her wanton will,
And treading vnder foote her honest name:
Such loue is hate, and such desire is shame.
Still did she roue at her with crafty glaunce
Of her false eyes, that at her hart did ayme,
And told her meaning in her countenaunce;
But Britomart dissembled it with ignoraunce.

LI

Supper was shortly dight and downe they sat,
Where they were serued with all sumptuous fare,
Whiles fruitfull Ceres, and Lyaeus fat
Pourd out their plenty, without spight or spare:
Nought wanted there, that dainty was and rare;
And aye the cups their bancks did ouerflow,
And aye betweene the cups, she did prepare
Way to her loue, and secret darts did throw;
But Britomart would not such guilfull message know.

LII

So when they slaked had the feruent heat
Of appetite with meates of euery sort,
The Lady did faire Britomart entreat,
Her to disarme, and with delightfull sport
To loose her warlike limbs and strong effort,
But when she mote not thereunto be wonne,
(For she her sexe vnder that straunge purport
Did vse to hide, and plaine apparaunce shonne:)
In plainer wise to tell her grieuaunce she begonne.

LIII

And all attonce discouered her desire
With sighes, and sobs, and plaints, and piteous griefe,
The outward sparkes of her in burning fire;
Which spent in vaine, at last she told her briefe,
That but if she did lend her short reliefe,
And do her comfort, she mote algates dye.
But the chaste damzell, that had neuer priefe
Of such malengine and fine forgerie,
Did easily beleue her strong extremitie.

LIV

Full easie was for her to haue beliefe,
Who by self-feeling of her feeble sexe,
And by long triall of the inward grieve,
Wherewith imperious loue her hart did vexe,
Could iudge what paines do louing harts perplexe.
Who meanes no guile, be guiled soonest shall,
And to faire semblance doth light faith annexe;
The bird, that knowes not the false fowlers call,
Into his hidden net full easily doth fall.

LV

For thy she would not in discourteise wise,
Scorne the faire offer of good will profest;
For great rebuke it is, loue to despise,
Or rudely sdeigne a gentle harts request;
But with faire countenaunce, as beseemed best,
Her entertaynd; nath’lesse she inly deemd
Her loue too light, to wooe a wandring guest:
Which she misconstruing, thereby esteemd
That from like inward fire that outward smoke had steemd.

LVI

Therewith a while she her flit fancy fed,
Till she mote winne fit time for her desire,
But yet her wound still inward freshly bled,
And through her bones the false instilled fire
Did spred it selfe, and venime close inspire.
Tho were the tables taken all away,
And euery knight, and euery gentle Squire
Gan choose his dame with Basciornan gay,
With whom he meant to make his sport and courtly play.

LVII

Some fell to daunce, some fell to hazardry,
Some to make loue, some to make meriment,
As diuerse wits to diuers things apply;
And all the while faire Malecasta bent
Her crafty engins to her close intent.

By this th'eternall lampes, wherewith high loue
Doth light the lower world, were half yspent,
And the moist daughters of huge Atlas stroue
Into the Ocean deepe to driue their weary droue.

LVIII

High time it seemed then for euery wight
Them to betake vnto their kindly rest;
Eftsoones long waxen torches weren light,
Vnto their bowres to guiden euery guest:
Tho when the Britonesse saw all the rest
Auoided quite, she gan her selfe despoile,
And safe commit to her soft fethered nest,
Where through long watch, and late dayes weary toile,
She soundly slept, and carefull thoughts did quite assoile.

LIX

Now whenas all the world in silence deepe
Yshrowded was, and euery mortall wight
Was drowned in the depth of deadly sleepe,
Faire Malecasta, whose engriued spright
Could find no rest in such perplexed plight,
Lightly arose out of her wearie bed,
And vnder the blacke vele of guilty Night,
Her with a scarlot mantle couered,
That was with gold and Ermines faire enueloped.

Then panting soft, and trembling euery ioynt,
Her fearfull feete towards the bowre she moued;
Where she for secret purpose did appoynt
To lodge the warlike mayd vnwisely loued,
And to her bed approching, first she prooued,
Whether she slept or wakt, with her soft hand
She softly felt, if any member mooued,
And lent her weary eare to vnderstand,
If any puffe of breath, or signe of sence she fond.

Which whenas none she fond, with easie shift,
For feare least her vnwares she should abrayd,
Th’embroderd quilt she lightly vp did lift,
And by her side her selfe she softly layd,
Of euery 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 chaungd her weary side, the better ease to take.

LXII

Where feeling one close couched by her side,
She lightly leapt out of her filed bed,
And to her weapon ran, in minde to gride
The loathed leachour. But the Dame halfe ded
Through suddein feare and ghastly drerihed,
Did shrike alowd, that through the house it rong,
And the whole family therewith adred,
Rashly out of their rouzed couches sprong,
And to the troubled chamber all in armes did throng.

LXIII

And those six Knights that Ladies Champions,
And eke the Redcrosse knight ran to the stownd,
Halfe armd and halfe vnarmd, with them attons:
Where when confusedly they came, they fownd
Their Lady lying on the sencelesse grownd;
On th’other side, they saw the warlike Mayd
All in her snow-white smocke, with locks vnbownd,
Threatning the point of her auenging blade,
That with so troublous terrour they were all dismayde.

LXIV

About their Lady first they flockt arownd,
Whom hauing laid in comfortable couch,
Shortly they reard out of her frozen swownd;
And afterwards they gan with fowle reproch
To stirre vp 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 themselues embosse;
Her succourd eke the Champion of the bloudy Crosse.

LXV

But one of those sixe knights,
Gardante hight,
Drew out a deadly bow and arrow keene,
Which forth he 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 bloud thereout did weepe,
Which did her lilly smock with staines of vermeil steepe.

LXVI

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 euery where about her swayd
Her wrathfull steele, that none mote it abide;
And eke the Redcrosse knight gaue her good aid,
Ay ioyning foot to foot, and side to side,
That in short space their foes they haue quite terrifide.

LXVII

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 vngentle trade
Was vsd of Knights and Ladies seeming gent:
So early ere the grosse Earthes gryesy shade,
Was all disperst out of the firmament,
They tooke their steeds, and forth vpon their iourney went.

Canto II

The Redcrosse knight to Britomart
describeth Artegaill:
The wondrous myrrhour, by which she
in loue with him did fall.

I

HEre haue I cause, in men iust blame to find,
That in their proper prayse too partiall bee,
And not indifferent to woman kind,
To whom no share in armes and cheualrie
They do impart, ne maken memorie
Of their braue gestes and prowesse martall;
Scarse do they spare to one or two or three,
Rowme in their writs; yet the same writing small
Does all their deeds deface, and dims their glories all.

II

But by record of antique times I find,
That women wont in warres to beare most sway,
And to all great exploits them selues inclind:
Of which they still the girond bore away,
Till enuisious Men fearing their rules decay,
Gan coyne streight lawes to curb their liberty;
Yet sith they warlike armes haue layd away,
They haue exceld in artes and pollicy,
That now we foolish men that prayse gin eke t'enuy.

III

Of warlike puissaunce in ages spent,
Be thou faire Britomart, whose prayse I write,
But of all wisedome be thou precedent,
O soueraigne Queene, whose prayse I would endite,
Endite I would as dewtie doth excite;
But ah my rimes too rude and rugged arre,
When in so high an obiect they do lite,
And striuing, fit to make, I feare do marre:
Thy selfe thy prayses tell, and make them knowen farre.

IV

She trauelling with Guyon by the way,
Of sundry things faire purpose gan to find,
T'abridg their iourney long, and lingring day;
Mongst which it fell into that Faeries mind,
To aske this Briton Mayd, what vncouth wind,
Brought her into those parts, and what inquest
Made her dissemble her disguised kind:
Faire Lady she him seemed, like Lady drest,
But fairest knight aliue, 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 feuer fit, did quake,
And euery daintie limbe with horrour shake;
And euer and anone the rosy red,
Flasht through her face, as it had beene a flake
Of lightning, through bright heauen 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 haue beene trained vp in warlike stowre,
To tossen speare and shield, and to affrap
The warlike ryder to his most mishap;
Sithence I loathed haue my life to lead,
As Ladies wont, in pleasures wanton lap,
To finger the fine needle and nyce thread;
Me leuer were with point of foemans speare be dead.

VII

All my delight on deedes of armes is set,
To hunt out perils 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 parts I came,
Withouten compasse, or withouten card,
Far fro my natiue soyle, that is by name
The greater Britaine, here to seeke for prayse and fame.

VIII

Fame blazed hath, that here in Faery lond
Do many famous Knightes and Ladies wonne,
And many straunge aduentures to be fond,
Of which great worth and worship may be wonne;
Which I to proue, this voyage haue begonne.
But mote I weet of you, right curteous knight,
Tydings of one, that hath vnto me donne
Late foule dishonour and reprochfull spight,
The which I seeke to wreake, and Arthegall he hight.

IX

The word gone out, she backe againe would call,
As her repenting so to haue missayd,
But that he it vp-taking ere the fall,
Her shortly answered; Faire martiall Mayd
Certes ye misauised beene, t’vpbrayd
A gentle knight with so vnknightly blame:
For weet ye well of all, that euer playd
At tilt or tourney, or like warlike game,
The noble Arthegall hath euer borne the name.

X

For thy great wonder were it, if such shame
Should euer enter in his bounteous thought,
Or euer do, that mote deseruen blame:
The noble courage neuer weeneth ought,
That may vnworthy of it selfe be thought.
Therefore, faire Damzell, be ye well aware,
Least that too farre ye haue your sorrow sought:
You and your countrey both I wish welfare,
And honour both; for each of other worthy are.

XI

The royall Mayd woxe inly wondrous glad,
To heare her Loue so highly magnifide,
And ioyd that euer she affixed had,
Her hart on knight so goodly glorifide,
How euer finely she it faind to hide:
The louing mother, that nine monethes did beare,
In the deare closet of her painefull side,
Her tender babe, it seeing safe appeare,
Doth not so much rejoyce, as she rejoyced theare.

XII

But to occasion him to further talke,
To feed her humour with his pleasing stile,
Her list in strifull termes with him to balke,
And thus replide, How euer, Sir, ye file
Your curteous tongue, his prayses to compile,
It ill beseemes a knight of gentle sort,
Such as ye haue him boasted, to beguile
A simple mayd, and worke so haynous tort,
In shame of knighthood, as I largely can report.

XIII

Let be therefore my vengeaunce to disswade,
And read, where I that faytour false may find.
Ah, but if reason faire might you perswade,
To slake your wrath, and mollifie your mind,
(Said he) perhaps ye should it better find:
For hardy thing it is, to weene by might,
That man to hard conditions to bind,
Or euer hope to match in equall fight,
Whose prowesse paragon saw neuer liuing wight.

XIV

Ne soothlich is it easie for to read,
Where now on earth, or how he may be found;
For he ne wonneth in one certaine stead,
But restlesse walketh all the world around,
Ay doing things, that to his fame redound,
Defending Ladies cause, and Orphans right,
Where so he heares, that any doth confound
Them comfortlesse, through tyranny or might;
So is his soueraine honour raisde to heauens hight.

XV

His feeling words 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 words are like to Magick art,
That doth the charmed Snake in slomber lay:
Such secret ease felt gentle Britomart,
Yet list the same efforce with faind gainesay;
So dischord oft in Musick makes the sweeter lay.

XVI

And said, Sir knight, these idle termes forbeare,
And sith it is vneath to find his haunt,
Tell me some markes, by which he may appeare,
If chaunce I him encounter parauaunt;
For perdie one shall other slay, or daunt:
What shape, what shield, what armes, what steed, what sted,
And what so else his person most may vaunt?
All which the Redcrosse knight to point ared,
And him in euery part before her fashioned.

Yet him in euery part before she knew,
How euer list her now her knowledge faine,
Sith him whilome in Britaine she did vew,
To her reuealed in a mirrhour plaine,
Whereof did grow her first engraffed paine;
Whose root and stalke so bitter yet did tast,
That but the fruit more sweetnesse did containe,
Her wretched dayes in dolour she mote wast,
And yield the pray of loue to lothsome death at last.

By strange occasion she did him behold,
And much more strangely gan to loue his sight,
As it in bookes hath written bene of old.
In Deheubarth that now South-wales is hight,
What time king Ryence raign’d, and dealed right,
The great Magitian Merlin had deuiz’d,
By his deepe science, and hell-dreaded might,
A looking glasse, right wondrously aguiz’d,
Whose vertues through the wyde world soone were solemniz’d.

It vertue had, to shew in perfect sight,
What euer thing was in the world contaynd,
Betwixt the lowest earth and heauens hight,
So that it to the looker appertaynd;
What euer foe had wrought, or frend had faynd,
Therein discouered was, ne ought mote pas,
Ne ought in secret from the same remaynd;
For thy it round and hollow shaped was,
Like to the world it selfe, and seem’d a world of glas.

XX

Who wonders not, that reades so wonderous worke?
But who does wonder, that has red the Towre,
Wherein th’ Egyptian 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 loue was false, he with a peaze it brake.

XXI

Such was the glassie globe that Merlin made,
And gaue vnto king Ryence for his gard,
That neuer foes his kingdome might inuade,
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 conuince;
Happie this Realme, had it remained euer since.

XXII

One day it fortuned, faire Britomart
Into her fathers closet to repayre;
For nothing he from her reseru’d apart,
Being his onely daughter and his hayre:
Where when she had espyde that mirrhour fayre,
Her selfe a while therein she vewd in vaine;
Tho her auizing of the vertues rare,
Which thereof spoken were, she gan againe
Her to bethinke of, that mote to her selfe pertaine.

XXIII

But as it falleth, in the gentlest harts
Imperious Loue 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 vse to done)
Whom fortune for her husband would allot,
Not that she lusted after any one;
For she was pure from blame of sinfull blot,
Yet wist her life at last must lincke in that same knot.

XXIV

Eftsoones there was presented to her eye
A comely knight, all arm’d in complete wize,
Through whose bright ventayle lifted vp on hye
His manly face, that did his foes agrize,
And friends to termes of gentle truce entize,
Lookt foorth, as Phœbus face out of the east,
Betwixt two shadie mountaines doth arize;
Portly his person was, and much increast
Through his Heroicke grace, and honorable gest.

XXV

His crest was couered with a couchant Hound,
And all his armour seem'd of antique mould,
But wondrous massie and assured sound,
And round about yfretted all with gold,
In which there written was with cyphers old,
Achilles armes, which Arthegall did win.
And on his shield enueloped seuenfold
He bore a crowned little Ermilin,
That deckt the azure field with her faire pouldred skin.

XXVI

The Damzell well did vew his personage,
And liked well, ne further fastned not,
But went her way; ne her vnguilty age
Did weene, vnwares, that her vnlucky lot
Lay hidden in the bottome of the pot;
Of hurt vnwist 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.

XXVII

Thenceforth the feather in her loftie crest,

Ruffed of loue, gan lowly to auail,

And her proud portance, 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 neither 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 loue, but some melancholy.

XXVIII

So soone as Night had with her pallid hew

Defast the beautie of the shining sky,

And reft from men the worlds desired vew,

She with her Nourse adowne to sleepe did lye;

But sleepe full farre 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 daintie couch with teares, which closely she did weepe.

XXIX

And if that any drop of solmbring rest

Did chaunce to still into her wearie spright,
When feeble nature felt her selfe opprest,
Streight way with dreames, and with fantasticke 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 faire visage, written in her hart.

XXX

One night, when she was tost with such vnrest,
Her aged Nurse, whose name was Glauce hight,
Feeling her leape out of her loathed nest,
Betwixt her feeble armes her quickly keight,
And downe againe in her warme bed her dight;
Ah my deare daughter, ah my dearest dread,
What vncouth fit (said she) what euill plight
Hath thee opprest, and with sad drearyhead
Chaunged thy liuely cheare, and liuing made thee dead?

XXXI

For not of nought these suddeine 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 youthes fairest flowre, but lose
Both leafe and fruit, both too vntimely shed,
As one in wilfull bale for euer buried.

XXXII

The time, that mortall men their weary cares
Do lay away, and all wilde beastes do rest,
And euery riever eke his course forbeares,
Then doth this wicked euill thee infest,
And riue with thousand throbs thy thrilled brest;
Like an huge Aetn’ of deepe engulfed grieue,
Sorrow is heaped in thy hollow chest,
Whence forth it breaks in sighes and anguish rife,
As smoke and sulphure mingled with confused strife.

XXXIII

Aye me, how much I feare, least loue it bee;
But if that loue it be, as sure I read
By known signes and passions, which I see,
Be it worthy of thy race and royall sead,
Then I auow by this most sacred head
Of my deare foster child, to ease thy grieue,
And win thy will: Therefore away doe dread;
For death nor daunger from thy dew relieue
Shall me debarre, tell me therefore my lieuest lieue.

XXXIV

So having said, her twixt her armes twaine
She straightly straynd, and colled tenderly,
And euery trembling ioynt, and euery vaine
She softly felt, and rubbed busily,
To doe the frozen cold away to fly;
And her faire deawy eies with kisses deare
She oft did bath, and oft againe did dry;
And euer her importund, not to feare
To let the secret of her hart to her appeare.

XXXV

The Damzell pauzd, and then thus fearefully;
Ah Nurse, what needeth thee to eke my paine?
Is not enough, that I alone doe dye,
But it must doubled be with death of twaine?
For nought for me but death there doth remaine.
O daughter deare (said she) despaire no whit;
For neuer sore, but might a salue obtaine:
That blinded God, which hath ye blindly smit,
Another arrow hath your louers hart to hit.

XXXVI

But mine is not (quoth she) like others wound;
For which no reason can find remedy.
Was neuer such, but mote the like be found,
(Said she) and though no reason may apply
Salue to your sore, yet loue can higher stye,
Then reasons reach, and oft hath wonders donne.
But neither God of loue, nor God of sky
Can doe (said she) that, which cannot be donne.

Things oft impossible (quoth she) seeme, ere begonne.

XXXVII

These idle words (said she) doe nought asswage

My stubborne smart, but more annoyance breed,

For no no vsuall fire, no vsuall rage

It is, O Nurse, which on my life doth feed,

And suckes the bloud, which from my hart doth bleed.

But since thy faithfull zeale lets me not hyde

My crime, (if crime it be) I will it reed.

Nor Prince, nor pere it is, whose loue hath gryde

My feeble brest of late, and launched this wound wyde.

XXXVIII

Nor man it is, nor other liuing wight;

For then some hope I might vnto me draw,

But th'only shade and semblant of a knight,

Whose shape or person yet I neuer saw,

Hath me subiected to loues cruell law:

The same one day, as me misfortune led,

I in my fathers wondrous mirrhour saw,

And pleased with that seeming goodly-hed,

Vnwares the hidden hooke with baite I swallowed.

XXXIX

Sithens it hath infixed faster hold

Within my bleeding bowels, and so sore
Now ranckleth in this same fraile fleshly mould,
That all mine entrailes flow with poysnous gore,
And th'vlcier groweth daily more and more;
Ne can my running sore find remedie,
Other then my hard fortune to deplore,
And languish as the leafe falne from the tree,
Till death make one end of my dayes and miserie.

Daughter (said she) what need ye be dismayd,
Or why make ye such Monster of your mind?
Of much more vncoth thing I was affrayd;
Of filthy lust, contrarie vnto kind:
But this affection nothing straunge I find;
For who with reason can you aye reproue,
To loue the semblant pleasing most your mind,
And yield your heart, whence ye cannot remoue?
No guilt in you, but in the tyranny of loue.

Not so th'Arabian Myrrhe did set her mind;
Nor so did Biblis spend her pining hart,
But lou'd their natuie flesh against all kind,
And to their purpose vsed wicked art:
Yet playd Pasiphae a more monstrous part,
That lou'd a Bull, and learnt a beast to bee;
Such shamefull lusts who loaths not, which depart
From course of nature and of modestie?
Sweet loue such lewdnes bands from his faire companie.

XLII

But thine my Deare (welfare thy heart my deare)
Though strange beginning had, yet fixed is
On one, that worthy may perhaps appeare;
And certes seemes bestowed not amis:
Ioy thereof haue thou and eternall blis.
With that vpleaning on her elbow weake,
Her alabaster brest she soft did kis,
Which all that while she felt to pant and quake,
As it an Earth-quake were; at last she thus bespake.

XLIII

Beldame, your words doe worke me litle ease;
For though my loue 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 grieue augment.
For they, how euer shamefull and vnkind,
Yet did possesse their horrible intent:
Short end of sorrowes they thereby did find;
So was their fortune good, though wicked were their mind.

XLIV

But wicked fortune mine, though mind be good,
Can haue no end, nor hope of my desire,
But feed on shadowes, whiles I die for food,

And like a shadow wexe, whiles with entire

Affection, I doe languish and expire.

I fonder, then Cephisus foolish child,

Who hauing vewed in a fountaine shere

His face, was with the loue thereof beguild;

I fonder loue a shade, the bodie farre exild.

Nought like (quoth she) for that same wretched boy

Was of himselfe the idle Paramoure;

Both loue and louer, without hope of ioy,

For which he faded to a watry flowre.

But better fortune thine, and better howre,

Which lou’st the shadow of a warlike knight;

No shadow, but a bodie hath in powre:

That bodie, wheresoeuer that it light,

May learned be by cyphers, or by Magicke might.

But if thou may with reason yet represse

The growing euill, ere it strength haue got,

And thee abandond wholly doe possesse,

Against it strongly striue, and yield thee not,

Till thou in open field adowne be smot.

But if the passion mayster thy fraile might,

So that needs loue or death must be thy lot,
Then I auow to thee, by wrong or right
To compass thy desire, and find that loued knight.

XLVII

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 busie ayd;
So that at last a little creeping sleepe
Surprisd her sense: She therewith well apayd,
The drunken lampe downe in the oyle did steepe,
And set her by to watch, and set her by to weepe.

XLVIII

Earely the morrow next, before that day
His ioyous face did to the world reuale,
They both vprose and tooke their readie way
Vnto the Church, their prayers to appeale,
With great deuotion, and with little zeale:
For the faire Damzell from the holy herse
Her loue-sicke hart to other thoughts did steale;
And that old Dame said many an idle verse,
Out of her daughters hart fond fancies to reuerse.

XLIX

Returned home, the royall Infant fell
Into her former fit; for why, no powre
Nor guidance of her selfe in her did dwell.

But th’aged Nurse her calling to her bowre,

Had gathered Rew, and Sauine, and the flowre

Of Camphora, and Calamint, and Dill,

All which she in a earthen Pot did poure,

And to the brim with Colt wood did it fill,

And many drops of milke and bloud through it did spill.

Then taking thrise three haires from off her head,

Them trebly breaded in a threefold lace,

And round about the pots mouth, bound the thread,

And after hauing whispered a space

Certaine sad words, with hollow voice and bace,

She to the virgin said, thrise said she it;

Come daughter come, come; spit vpon my face,

Spit thrise vpon me, thrise vpon me spit;

Th’vneuen number for this businesse is most fit.

That sayd, her round about she from her turnd,

She turned her contrarie to the Sunne,

Thrise she her turnd contrary, and returnd,

All contrary, for she the right did shunne,

And euer what she did, was streight vndonne.

So thought she to vndoe her daughters loue:

But loue, that is in gentle brest begonne,
No idle charmes so lightly may remoue,
That well can witnesse, who by trial it does proue.

Ne ought it mote the noble Mayd auayle,
Ne slake the furie of her cruell flame,
But that she 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 Glauce saw, for feare least blame
Of her miscarriage should in her be fond,
She wist not how t'amend, nor how it to withstand.

Canto III

Merlin bewrayes to Britomart,
the state of Artegaill.
And shewes the famous Progeny
which from them springen shall.

Most sacred fire, that burnest mightily
In liuing brests, ykindled first aboue,
Emongst th'eternall spheres and lamping sky,
And thence pourd into men, which men call Loue;
Not that same, which doth base affections moue
In brutish minds, and filthy lust inflame,
But that sweet fit, that doth true beautie loue,
And choseth vertue for his dearest Dame,
Whence spring all noble deeds and neuer dying fame:

II

Well did Antiquitie a God thee deeme,
That ouer mortall minds hast so great might,
To order them, as best to thee doth seeme,
And all their actions to direct aright;
The fatall purpose of diuine foresight,
Thou doest effect in destined descents,
Through deepe impression of thy secret might,
And stirredst vp th'Heroes high intents,
Which the late world admyres for wondrous moniments.

III

But thy dread darts in none doe triumph more,
Ne brauer proofe in any, of thy powre
Shew'dst thou, then in this royall Maid of yore,
Making her seeke an vnknowne Paramoure,
From the worlds end, through many a bitter stowre:
From whose two loynes thou afterwards did rayse
Most famous fruits of matrimoniall bowre,
Which through the earth haue spred their liuving prayse,
That fame in trompe of gold eternally displayes.

IV

Begin then, O my dearest sacred Dame,
Daughter of Phœbus and of Memorie,
That doest ennoble with immortall name
The warlike Worthies, from antiquitie,
In thy great volume of Eternitie:
Begin, O Clio, and recount from hence
My glorious Soueraines goodly auncestrie,
Till that by dew degrees and long protense,
Thou haue it lastly brought unto her Excellence.

V

Full many wayes within her troubled mind,
Old Glauce cast, to cure this Ladies griefe:
Full many waies she sought, but none could find,
Nor herbes, nor charmes, nor counsell, that is chiefe
And choisest med’cine for sicke harts reliefe:
For thy great care she tooke, and greater feare,
Least that it should her turne to foule repriefe,
And sore reproch, when so her father deare
Should of his dearest daughters hard misfortune heare.

VI

At last she her auisd, that he, which made
That mirrhour, wherein the sicke Damosell
So straungely wewed her straunge louers shade,
To weet, the learned Merlin, well could tell,
Vnder what coast of heauen the man did dwell,
And by what means his loue might best be wrought:
For though beyond the Africk Ismaell,
Or th' Indian Peru he were, she thought
Him forth through infinite endeuour to haue sought.

VII

Forthwith themselues disguising both in straunge
And base attyre, that none might them bewray,
To Maridunum, that is now by chaunge
Of name Cayr-Merdin cald, they take their way:
There the wise Merlin whylome wont (they say)
To make his wonne, low vnderneath the ground,
In a deepe delue, farre from the vew of day,
That of no liuing wight he mote be found,
When so he counseld with his sprights encompast round.

VIII

And if thou euer happen that same way
To trauell, goe to see that dreadfull place:
It is an hideous hollow caue (they say)
Vnder a rocke that lyes a little space
From the swift Barry, tombling downe apace,
Emongst the woodie hilles of Dyneuowre:
But dare thou not, I charge, in any cace,
To enter into that same balefull Bowre,
For fear the cruell Feends should thee vnwares deuowre.

IX

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 stounds,
When too huge toile and labour them constraines:
And oftentimes loud strokes, and ringing sounds
From vnder that deepe Rocke most horribly rebounds.

The cause some say is this: A little while
Before that Merlin dyde, he did intend,
A brasen wall in compas to compile
About Caimardin, and did it commend
Vnto these Sprights, to bring to perfect end.
During which worke the Ladie of the Lake,
Whom long he lou’d, for him in hast did send,
Who thereby forst his workemen to forsake,
Them bound till his returne, their labour not to slake.

In the meane time through that false Ladies traine,
He was surpris’d, and buried vnder beare,
Ne euer to his worke return’d againe:
Nath’lesse those feends may not their worke forbeare,
So greatly his commaundement they feare,
But there doe toyle and trauell day and night,
Vntill that brasen wall they vp doe reare:
For Merlin had in Magicke more insight,  
Then euer him before or after liuing wight.  

XII

For he by words could call out of the sky  
Both Sunne and Moone, and make them him obay:  
The land to sea, and sea to maineland dry,  
And darkesome night he eke could turne to day:  
Huge hostes of men he could alone dismay,  
And hostes of men of meanest things 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.  

XIII

And sooth, men say that he was not the sonne  
Of mortall Syre, or other liuing wight,  
But wondrously begotten, and begonne  
By false illusion of a guilefull Spright,  
On a faire Ladie Nonne, that whilome hight  
Matilda, daughter to Pubidius,  
Who was the Lord of Mathrauall by right,  
And coosen vnto king Ambrosius:  
Whence he indued was with skill so maruellous.  

XIV

They here ariuing, staid a while without,  
Ne durst adventure rashly in to wend,
But of their first intent gan make new doute
For dread of daunger, which it might portend:
Vntill the hardie Mayd (with loue to frend)
First entering, the dreadfull Mage there found
Deepe busied bout worke of wondrous end,
And writing strange characters in the ground,
With which the stubborn feends he to his seruice bound.

XV

He nought was moued at their entrance bold:
For of their comming well he wist afore,
Yet list them bid their businesse to vnfold,
As if ought in this world in secret store
Were from him hidden, or vnknowne of yore.

Then Glauce thus, let not it thee offend,
That we thus rashly through thy darkesome dore,
Vnwares haue prest: for either fatall end,
Or other mightie cause vs two did hither send.

XVI

He bad tell on; And then she thus began.

Now haue three Moones with borrow’d brothers light,
Thrice shined faire, and thrice seem’d dim and wan,
Sith a sore euill, 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 cannot read aright:
But this I read, that but if remedee,  
Thou her afford, full shortly I her dead shall see.

XVII

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 need of leach-craft hath your Damozell,  
Then of my skill: who helpe may haue elsewhere,  
In vaine seekes wonders out of Magicke spell.  
Th’old woman wox half blanck, those words to heare;  
And yet was loth to let her purpose plaine appeare.

XVIII

And to him said, If any leaches skill,  
Or other learned meanes could haue redrest  
This my deare daughters deepe engraffed ill,  
Certes I should be loth thee to molest:  
But this sad euill, 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 euill spright, that in her doth such torment breed.

XIX

The wisard could no lenger beare her bord,  
But brusting forth in laughter, to her sayd;
Glauce, what needs this colourable word,
To cloke the cause, that hath it selve bewrayd?
Ne ye faire Britomartis, thus arayd,
More hidden are, then Sunne in cloudy vele;
Whom thy good fortune, hauing fate obayd,
Hath hither brought, for succour to appele:
The which the powres to thee are pleased to reuele.

XX

The doubtfull Mayd, seeing her selfe descryde,
Was all abasht, and her pure yuory
Into a cleare Carnation suddeine dyde;
As faire Aurora rising hastily,
Doth by her blushing tell, that she did lye
All night in old Tithonus frozen bed,
Whereof she seemes ashamed inwardly.
But her old Nourse was nought dishartened,
But vauntage made of that, which Merlin had ared.

XXI

And sayd, Sith then thou knowest all our grieve,
(For what doest not thou know?) of grace I pray,
Pitty our plaint, and yield vs meet reliefe.
With that the Prophet still awhile did stay,
And then his spirite thus gan forth display;
Most noble Virgin, that by fatall lore
Hast learn’d to loue, let no whit thee dismay
The hard begin, that meets thee in the dore,
And with sharpe fits thy tender hart oppresseth sore.

XXII

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 heauens hight forth stretched bee.

For from thy wombe a famous Progenie
Shall spring, out of the auncient Troian blood,
Which shall reuiue the sleeping memorie
Of those same antique Peres, the heauens brood,
Which Greeke and Asian riuers stained with their blood.

XXIII

Renowmed kings, and sacred Emperours,
Thy fruitfull Ofspring, shall from thee descend;
Braue 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 vpreare, and mightily defend
Against their forrein foe, that comes from farre,

Till vniuersall peace compound all ciuill iarre.

XXIV

It was not, Britomart, thy wandring eye,
Glauncing vnwares in charmed looking glas,
But the streight course of heauenly destiny,
Led with eternall prouidence, that has
Guided thy glaunce, to bring his will to pas:
Ne is thy fate, ne is thy fortune ill,
To loue the prowest knight, that euer was.
Therefore submit thy wayes vnto his will,
And do by all dew meanes thy destiny fulfill.

XXV

But read (said Glauce) thou Magitian
What meanes shall she out seeke, or what wayes take?
How shall she know, how shall she find the man?
Or what needs her to toyle, sith fates can make
Way for themselues, their purpose to partake?
Then Merlin thus; Indeed the fates are firme,
And may not shrinck, though all the world do shake:
Yet ought mens good endeuors them confirme,
And guide the heauenly causes to their constant terme.

XXVI

The man whom heauens haue 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 whilome by false Faries stolne away,
Whiles 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.

XXVII

But sooth he is the sonne of Gorlois,
And brother vnto Cador Cornish king,
And for his warlike feates renowned is,
From where the day out of the sea doth spring,
Vntill the closure of the Euening.
From thence, him firmly bound with faithfull band,
To this his native soyle thou backe shalt bring,
Strongly to aide his countrey, to withstand
The powre of forrein Paynims, which inuade thy land.

XXVIII

Great aid thereto his mighty puissaunce,
And dreaded name shall giue in that sad day:
Where also proofe of thy prow valiaunce
Thou then shalt make, t'increase thy louers 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 secret foes, that him shall make in mischiefe fall.

XXIX

With thee yet shall he leaue for memory
Of his late puissaunce, his Image dead,
That living him in all activity
To thee shall represent. He from the head
Of his coosin 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 bloudy field to fight.

XXX

Like as a Lyon, that in drowsie caue
Hath long time slept, himselfe so shall he shake,
And comming forth, shall spred his banner braue
Ouer 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 faire accordaunce make:
And if he then with victorie can lin,
He shall his dayes with peace bring to his earthly In.

XXXI

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 battels try:
But at the last to th'importunity
Of froward fortune shall be forst to yield.
But his sonne Malgo shall full mightily
Auenge his fathers losse, with speare and shield,
And his proud foes discomfit in victorious field.

XXXII

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 maiestee,
That one of th’old Heroes seemes to bee:

He the six Islands, comproinciall
In auncient times vnto great Britanee,
Shall to the same reduce, and to him call
Their sundry kings to do their homage seuerall.

XXXIII

All which his sonne Careticus awhile
Shall well defend, and Saxons powre supresse,
Vntill a straunger king from vnknowne soyle
Arriuing, him with multitude oppresse;

Great Gormond, hauing with huge mightinesse
Ireland subdewd, and therein fixt his throne,
Like a swift Otter, fell through emptinesse,
Shall ouerswim the sea with many one
Of his Norueyses, to assist the Britons fone.

XXXIV

He in his furie all shall ouerrunne,
And holy Church with faithlesse hands deface,
That thy sad people utterly fordonne,
Shall to the utmost mountaines fly apace:
Was neuer so great wast in any place,
Nor so fowle outrage doen by liuing men:
For all thy Cities they shall sacke and race,
And the greene grasse, that groweth, they shall bren,
That euen the wild beast shall dy in starued den.

XXXV

Whiles thus thy Britons do in languour pine,
Proud Etheldred shall from the North arise,
Seruing 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 pittyng his peoples ill,
Shall stoutly him defeat, and thousand Saxons kill.

XXXVI

But after him, Cadwallin mightily
On his sonne Edwin all those wrongs shall wreake;
Ne shall auaile the wicked sorcery
Of false Pellite, his purposes to breake,
But him shall slay, and on a gallowes bleake
Shall giue 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 auenge their ranckled ire.

XXXVII

Ne shall he yet his wrath so mitigate,
Till both the sonnes of Edwin he haue slaine,
Offricke and Ossrke, twinnes vnfortunate,
Both slaine in battell vpon Layburne plaine,
Together with the king of Louthiane,
Hight Adin, and the king of Orkeny,
Both ioynt partakers of their fatall疼痛:
But Penda, fearefull of like desteny,
Shall yield him selfe his liegeman, and sweare fealty.

XXXVIII

Him shall he make his fatall Instrument,
T'afflict the other Saxons vnsubdewd;
He marching forth with fury insolent
Against the good king Oswald, who indewd
With heauenly powre, and by Angels reskewd,
All holding crosses in their hands on hye,
Shall him defeate withouten bloud imbrewd:
Of which, that field for endlesse memory,
Shall Heuenfield be cald to all posterity.

XXXIX

Whereat Cadwallin wroth, shall forth issew,
And an huge hoste into Northumber lead,
With which he godly Oswald shall subdew,
And crowne with martyrdome his sacred head.
Whose brother Oswin, daunted with like dread,
With price of siluer shall his kingdome buy,
And Penda, seeking him adowne to tread,
Shall tread adowne, and do him fowly dye,
But shall with gifts his Lord Cadwallin pacify.

XL

Then shall Cadwallin dye, 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,
Shalbe expird of Britons regiment.
For heauen it selfe shall their successe enuy,
And them with plagues and murrins pestilent
Consume, till all their warlike puissaunce be spent.

XLI

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 liu’d, returning to his natuie place,
Shalbe by vision staid from his intent:
For th’heauens haue decreed, to displace
The Britons, for their sinnes dew punishment,
And to the Saxons ouer-giue their gouernment.

XLII

Then woe, and woe, and euerlasting woe,
Be to the Briton babe, that shalbe borne,
To liue in thraldome of his fathers foe;
Late King, now captiue, late Lord, now forlorne,
The worlds reproch, the cruell victours scorne,
Banisht from Princely bowre to wastfull wood:
O who shall helpe me to lament, and mourne
The royall seed, the antique Troian blood,
Whose Empire lenger here, then euer any stood.

XLIII

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 heauens fury neuer slake,
Nor vengeaunce huge relent it selfe at last?
Will not long misery late mercy make,
But shall their name for euer be defast,
And quite from of the earth their memory be rast?

XLIV

Nay but the terme (said he) is limited,
That in this thraldome Britons shall abide,
And the iust reuolution measured,
That they as Straungers shalbe notifide.
For twise foure hundredth yeares shalbe supplide,
Ere they to former rule restor’d shalbee,
And their importune fates all satisfide:
Yet during this their most obscuritee,
Their beames shall oft breake forth, that men them faire may see.

XLV

For Rhodoricke, whose surname shalbe Great,
Shall of him selfe a braue ensample shew,
That Saxon kings his friendship shall intreat;
And Howell Dha shall goodly well indew
The saluage minds with skill of iust and trew;
Then Griffyth Conan also shall vp reare
His dreaded head, and the old sparkes renew
Of natuie courage, that his foes shall feare,
Least backe againe the kingdome he from them should beare.

XLVI

Ne shall the Saxons selues all peaceably
Eniøy the crowne, which they from
Britons wonne First ill, and after ruled wickedly:
For ere two hundred yeares be full outrone,
There shall a Rauen far from rising Sunne,
With his wide wings vpon them fiercely fly,
And bid his faithlesse chickens ouerronne
The fruitfull plaines, and with fell cruelty,
In their auenge, tread downe the victours surquedry.

XLVII

Yet shall a third both these, and thine subdew;
There shall a Lyon from the sea-bord 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\'vsurped crowne, as if that he were wood,
And the spoile of the countrey conquered
Eamongst his young ones shall diuide with bountyhed.

XLVIII

Tho when the terme is full accomplishid,
There shall a sparke of fire, which hath long-while
Bene in his ashes raked vp, and hid,
Be 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 royall maiesty and soueraigne name;
So shall the Briton bloud their crowne againe reclame.

XLIX

Thenceforth eternall vnion shall be made
Betweene the nations different afore,
And sacred Peace shall louingly perswade
The warlike minds, to learne her goodly lore,
And ciuile armes to exercise no more:
Then shall a royall virgin raine, which shall
Stretch her white rod ouer the Belgicke shore,
And the great Castle smite so sore with all,
That it shall make him shake, and shortly learne to fall.

But yet the end is not. There Merlin stayd,
As ouercomen of the spirites powre,
Or other ghastly spectacle dismayd,
That secretly he saw, yet note discoure:
Which suddein fit, and halfe extatick stoure
When the two fearefull women saw, they grew
Greatly confused in behauiore;
At last the fury past, to former hew
Hee turnd againe, and chearefull looks as earst did shew.

Then, when them selues they well instructed had
Of all, that needed them to be inquird,
They both conceiuing hope of comfort glad,
With lighter hearts vnto 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 devise,
And diuerse plots did frame, to maske in strange disguise.

LII

At last the Nourse in her foolhardy wit
Conceiu'd a bold devise, and thus bespake;
Daughter, I deeme that counsell aye most fit,
That of the time doth dew aduaintage take;
Ye see that good king Vther now doth make
Strong warre vpon the Paynim brethren, hight
Octa and Oza, whom he lately brake
Beside Cayr Verolame, in victorious fight,
That now all Britanie doth burne in armes bright.

LIII

That therefore nought our passage may empeach,
Let vs in feigned armes our selues disguize,
And our weake hands (whom need new strength shall teach)
The dreadfull speare and shield to exercize:
Ne certes daughter that same warlike wize
I weene, would you misseeme; for ye bene tall,
And large of limbe, t'atchieue an hard emprize,
Ne ought ye want, but skill, which practize small
Will bring, and shortly make you a mayd Martiall.

LIV

And sooth, it ought your courage much inflame,
To heare so often, in that royall hous,
From whence to none inferiour ye came:
Bards tell of many women valorous
Which haue full many feats aduenturous
Performd, in paragone of proudest men:
The bold Bunduca, whose victorious
Exploits made Rome to quake, stout Guendolen,
Renowned Martia, and redoubted Emmilen.

LV

And that, which more then all the rest may sway,
Late dayes ensample, which these eyes beheld,
In the last field before Meneuia
Which Vther with those forrein Pagans held,
I saw a Saxon Virgin, the which feld
Great Vlfin thrise vpon the blody plaine,
And had not Carados her hand withheld
From rash reuenge, she had him surely slaine,
Yet Carados himselfe from her esapt with paine.

LVI

Ah read, (quoth Britomart) how is she hight?
Faire Angela (quoth she) men do her call,
No whit lesse faire, then terrible in fight:
She hath the leading of a Martiall
And mighty people, dreaded more then all
The other Saxons, which do for her sake
And loue, themselues of her name Angles call.
Therefore faire Infant her ensample make
Vnto thy selfe, and equall courage to thee take.

LVII

Her harty words so deepe into the mynd
Of the young Damzell sunke, that great desire
Of warlike armes in her forthwith they tynd,
And generous stout courage did inspire,
That she resolu’d, vnweeting to her Sire,
Aduent’rous knighthood on her selfe to don,
And counseld with her Nourse, her Maides attire
To turne into a massy habergeon,
And bad her all things put in readinesse anon.

LVIII

Th’ old woman nought, that needed, did omit;
But all things did conueniently puruay:
It fortuned (so time their turne did fit)
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 well beseene.

LIX

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 auising readily,

In th'euening late old Glauce thither led

Faire Britomart, and that same Armory

Downe taking, her therein appareled,

Well as she might, and with braue bauldrick garnished.

LX

Beside those armes there stood a mighty speare,

Which Bladud made by Magick art of yore,

And vsd the same in battell aye to beare;

Sith which it had bin here preseru'd in store,

For his great vertues proued long afore:

For neuer wight so fast in sell could sit,

But him perforce vnto 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.

LXI

Thus when she had the virgin all arayd,

Another harnesse, which did hang thereby,

About her selfe she dight, that the young Mayd

She might in equall armes accompany,

And as her Squire attend her carefully:

Tho to their ready Steeds they clombe full light,

And through back wayes, that none might them espy,
Couered with secret cloud of silent night,
Themselues they forth conuayd, and passed forward right.

LXII

Ne rested they, till that to Faery lond
They came, as Merlin them directed late:
Where meeting with this Redcrosse knight, she fond
Of diuerse things 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 vnfained hart,
The Redcrosse knight diuerst, but forth rode Britomart.

Canto IV

Bold Marinell of Britomart,
Is throwne on the Rich strond:
Faire Florimell of Arthur is
Long followed, but not fond.

I

Where is the Antique glory now become,
That whilome wont in women to appeare?
Where be the braue atchieuements 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?
Bene they all dead, and laid in dolefull herse?

Or doen they onely sleepe, and shall againe reuerse?

II

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 enuy sore,

To heare the warlike feates, which Homere spake

Of bold Pænthesilee, which made a lake

Of Greekish bloud so oft in Troian plaine;

But when I read, how stout Debora strake

Proud Sisera, and how Camill’ hath slaine

The huge Orsilochus, I swell with great disdaine.

III

Yet these, and all that else had puissaunce,

Cannot with noble Britomart compare,

Aswell for glory of great valiaunce,

As for pure chastitie and vertue rare,

That all her goodly deeds do well declare.

Well worthy 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 deriue along.

IV

Who when through speaches with the Redcrosse knight,

She learned had th’estate of Artheall,
And in each point her selfe informd aright,
A friendly league of loue perpetuall
She with him bound, and Congé tooke withall.
Then he forth on his iourney did proceede,
To seeke adventures, which mote him befall,
And win him worship through his warlike deed,
Which alwayes of his paines he made the chiefest meed.

V

But Britomart kept on her former course,
Ne euer dofte her armes, but all the way
Grew pensiue through that amorous discourse,
By which the Redcrosse knight did earst display
Her louers shape, and cheualrous aray;
A thousand thoughts she fashioned in her mind,
And in her feigning fancie did pourtray
Him such, as fittest she for loue could find,
Wise, warlike, personable, curteous, and kind.

VI

With such selfe-pleasing thoughts her wound she fed,
And thought so to beguile her grieuous smart;
But so her smart was much more grieuous bred,
And the deepe wound more deepe 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 guidance of her blinded guest,
Till that to the sea-coast at length she her addrest.

VII

There she alighted from her light-foot beast,
And sitting downe upon the rocky shore,
Bad her old Squire vnlace her lofty creast;
Tho hauing vewd a while 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 deuouring couetize restraynd,
Thereat she sighed deepe, and after thus complaynd.

VIII

Huge sea of sorrow, and tempestuous griefe,
Wherein my feeble barke is tossed long,
Far from the hoped hauen of reliefe,
Why do thy cruell billowes beat so strong,
And thy moyst mountaines each on others throng,
Threatning to swallow vp my fearefull life?
O do thy cruell wrath and spightfull wrong
At length allay, and stint thy stormy strife,
Which in these troubled bowels raignes, and rageth rife.

IX

For else my feeble vessell crazd, and crackt
Through thy strong buffets and outrageous blowes,
Cannot endure, but needs it must be wrackt

On the rough rocks, or on the sandy shallowes,

The whiles that loue it steres, and fortune rowes;

Loue my lewd Pilot hath a restlesse mind

And fortune Boteswaine no assuraunce knowes,

But saile withouten starres, gainst tide and wind:

How can they other do, sith both are bold and blind?

X

Thou God of winds, that raignest in the seas,

That raignest also in the Continent,

At last blow vp some gentle gale of ease,

The which may bring my ship, ere it be rent,

Vnto 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 ieopardee,

Great Neptune, I auow to hallow vnto thee.

XI

Then sighing softly sore, and inly deepe,

She shut vp all her plaint in priuy griefe;

For her great courage would not let her weeppe,

Till that old Glauce gan with sharpe reprieve,

Her to restraine, and giue 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 wombe, to be in heauen enrold.

XII

Thus as she her recomforted, she spyde,
Where farre away one all in armour bright,
With hastie 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,
Conuerting, forth she beates the dustie path;
Loue and despight attonce her courage kindled hath.

XIII

As when a foggy mist hath ouercast
The face of heauen, and the cleare aire engrost,
The world in darkenesse dwels, till that at last
The watry Southwinde from the seabord cost
Vpblowing, doth disperse the vapour lo'ست,
And poures it selfe forth in a stormy showre;
So the faire Britomart hauing disclo'ست
Her clowdy care into a wrathfull stowre,
The mist of griefe dissolu'd, did into vengeance powre.

XIV

Eftsoones her goodly shield addressing faire,
That mortall speare she in her hand did take,
And vnto battell did her selfe prepaire.
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.

XV

Ythril with deepe disdaine of his proud threat,
She shortly thus; Fly they, that need to fly;
Words 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 crowne.

XVI

But she againe him in the shield did smite
With so fierce furie and great puissaunce,
That through his threesquare 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 sandie shore,
He tumbled on an heape, and wallowd in his gore.

XVII

Like as the sacred Oxe, that carelesse stands,
With gilden hornes, and flowry girlonds crownd,
Proud of his dying honor and deare bands,
Whiles th’altars fume with frankincense arownd,
All suddenly with mortall stroke astownd,
Doth groueling 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 vpon the pretious shore.

XVIII

The martiall Mayd stayd not him to lament,
But forward rode, and kept her readie way
Along the strond, which as she ouer-went,
She saw bestrowed all with rich aray
Of pearles and pretious stones of great assay,
And all the grauell 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.

XIX

Whiles thus he lay in deadly stonishment,
Tydings hereof came to his mothers eare;
His mother was the blacke-browd Cymoent,
The daughter of great Nereus, which did beare
This warlike sonne vnto an earthly peare,
The famous Dumarin; who on a day
Finding the Nymph a sleepe in secret wheare,
As he by chaunce did wander that same way,
Was taken with her loue, and by her closely lay.

XX

There he this knight of her begot, whom borne
She of his father Marinell did name,
And in a rocky caue as wight forlorne,
Long time she fostred vp, till he became
A mightie man at armes, and mickle fame
Did get through great aduentures by him donne:
For neuer man he suffred by that same
Rich strond to trauell, whereas he did wonne,
But that he must do battell with the Sea-nymphes sonne.

XXI

An hundred knights of honorable name
He had subdued, and them his vassals made,
That through all Farie lond his noble fame
Now blazed was, and feare did all inuade,
That none durst passen through that perilous glade.
And to advance his name and glorie more,
Her Sea-god syre she dearely did perswade,
T’endow her sonne with threasure and rich store,
Boue all the sonnes, that were of earthly wombes ybore.

XXII

The God did graunt his daughters deare demaund,
To doen his Nephew in all riches flow;
Eftsoones his heaped waues he did commaund,
Out of their hollow bosome forth to throw
All the huge threasure, which the sea below
Had in his greedie gulfe deuoured deepe,
And him enriched through the overthrow
And wreckes of many wretches, which did weepe,
And often waile their wealth, which he from them did keepe.

XXIII

Shortly vpon 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, yuorie, perles, owches, rings,
And all that else was pretious and deare,
The sea vnto him voluntary brings,
That shortly he a great Lord did appeare,
As was in all the lond of Faery, or elsewheare.

XXIV

Thereto he was a doughtie 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:
For thy she oft him counseld to forbeare
The bloudie battell, and to stirre vp strife,
But after all his warre, to rest his wearie knife.

XXV

And for his more assurance, she inquir’d
One day of Proteus by his mightie spell,
(For Proteus was with prophecie inspir’d)
Her deare sonnes destinie 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 haue much ill,
A virgin strange and stout him should dismay, or kill.

XXVI

For thy she gaue him warning euery day,
The loue of women not to entertaine;
A lesson too too hard for liuing clay,
From loue in course of nature to refraine:
Yet he his mothers lore did well retaine,
And euer from faire Ladies loue did fly;
Yet many Ladies faire did oft complaine,
That they for louse of him would algates dy:
Dy, who so list for him, he was louses enimy.

XXVII

But ah, who can deceiue his destiny,
Or weene by warning to auoyd his fate?
That when he sleepees 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 womens loue to hate,
For she of womans force did feare no harme;
So weening to haue arm’d him, she did quite disarme.

XXVIII

This was that woman, this that deadly wound,
That Proteus prophecide should him dismay,
The which his mother vainely did expound,
To be hart-wounding loue, which should assay
To bring her sonne vnto his last decay.
So tickle be the termes of mortall state,
And full of subtile sophisms, which do play
With double senses, and with false debate,
T’aproue the vnknowen purpose of eternall fate.

XXIX

Too true the famous Marinell it fownd,
Who through late triall, on that wealthy Strond
Inglorious now lies in senselesse swownd,
Through heauy stroke of Britomartis hond.
Which when his mother deare did vnderstond,
And heauy tydings heard, whereas she playd
Amongst her watry sisters by a pond,
Gathering sweet daffadillyes, to haue made
Gay gironds, from the Sun their forheads faire to shade.

XXX

Eftsoones both flowres and gironds farre away
She flong, and her faire deawy lockes yrent,
To sorrow huge she turnd her former play,
And gamesom merth to grieuous dreriment:
She 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 euery one did teare her girond from her crowne.

XXXI

Soone as she vp out of her deadly fit
Arose, she bad her charet to be brought,
And all her sisters, that with her did sit,
Bad eke attonce their charets to be sought;
Tho full of bitter griefe and pensiue thought,
She to her wagon clombe; clombe all the rest,
And forth together went, with sorrow fraught.
The waues obedient to their beheast,
Them yielded readie passage, and their rage surceast.

XXXII

Great Neptune stood amazed at their sight,
Whiles on his broad round backe they softly slid
And eke himselfe mournd at their mournfull plight,
Yet wist not what their wailing ment, yet did
For great compassion of their sorrow, bid
His mightie waters to them buxome bee:
Eftsoones the roaring billowes still abid,
And all the grisly Monsters of the See
Stood gaping at their gate, and wondred them to see.

XXXIII

A teme of Dolphins raunged in aray,
Drew the smooth charet of sad Cymoent;
They were all taught by Triton, to obay
To the long raynes, at her commaundement:
As swift as swallowes, on the waues they went,
That their broad flaggie finnes no fome did reare,
Ne bubbling roundell they behind them sent;
The rest of other fishes drawen weare,
Which with their finny oars the swelling sea did sheare.

XXXIV

Soone as they bene arriu’d vpon the brim
Of the Rich strond, their charets they forlore,
And let their tamed fishes softly swim
Along the margent of the fomy shore,
Least they their finnes should bruze, and surbate sore
Their tender feet vpon the stony ground:
And comming to the place, where all in gore
And cruddy bloud enwallowed they found
The lucklesse Marinell, lying in deadly swound;

XXXV

His mother swowned thrise, and the third time
Could scarce recouered be out of her paine;
Had she not bene deuoyd of mortall slime,
She should not then haue bene reliu’d againe,
But soone as life recouered had the raine,
She made so piteous mone and deare wayment,
That the hard rocks could scarse fro teares refraine,
And all her sister Nymphes with one consent
Supplide her sobbing breaches with sad complement.

XXXVI

Deare image of my selfe (she said) that is,
The wretched sonne of wretched mother borne,
Is this thine high aduauncement, O is this
Th’immortall name, with which thee yet vnborne
Thy Gransire Nereus promist to adorne?
Now lyest thou of life and honor reft;
Now lyest thou a lumpe of earth forlorn.
Ne of thy late life memory is left,
Ne can thy irreuocable destiny be weft?

XXXVII

Fond Proteus, father of false prophecis,
And they more fond, that credit to thee giue,
Not this the worke of womans hand ywis,
That so deepe wound through these deare members driue.
I feared loue: but they that loue do liue,
But they that die, doe neither loue nor hate.
Nath'lesse to thee thy folly I forgiue,
And to my selfe, and to accursed fate
The guilt I doe ascribe: deare wisedome bought too late.

XXXVIII

O what auailes it of immortall seed
To beene ybred and neuer borne to die?
Farre better I it deeme to die with speed,
Then waste in woe and wailefull miserie.
Who dyes the vtmost dolour doth abye,
But who that liues, is left to waile his losse:
So life is losse, and death felicitie.
Sad life worse then glad death: and greater crosse
To see friends graue, then dead the graue selfe to engrosse.

XXXIX

But if the heauens did his dayes enuie,
And my short blisse maligne, yet mote they well
Thus much afford me, ere that he did die
That the dim eyes of my deare Marinell
I mote haue closed, and him bed farewell,
Sith other offices for mother meet
They would not graunt.
Yet maulgre them farewell, my sweetest sweet;
Farewell my sweetest sonne, sith we no more shall meet.

XL

Thus when they all had sorrowed their fill,
They softly gan to search his griesly wound:
And that they might him handle more at will,
They him disarm’d, and spredding on the ground
Their watchet mantles frindgd with siluer round,
They softly wipt away the gelly blood
From th’orifice; which hauing well vpbound,
They pourd in soueraine balme, and Nectar good,
Good both for earthly med’cine, and for heauenly food.

XLI

Tho when the lilly handed Liagore,
(This Liagore whylome had learned skill
In leaches craft, by great Appolloes lore,
Sith her whylome vpon the high Pindus hill,
He loued, and at last her wombe did fill
With heauenly seed, whereof wise Paeon sprong)
Did feele his pulse, she knew there staid still
Some little life his feeble sprites among;
Which to his mother told, despeire she from her long.

Tho vp him taking in their tender hands,
They easily unto her chariot bare:
Her teme at her commaundement quiet stands,
Whiles they the corse into her wagon rear,
And strow with flowres the lamentable bare:
Then all the rest into their coches clim,
And through the brackish waues their passage sheare;
Vpon 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 hie,
Like to thicke cloudes, that threat a stormy shoure,
And vauted all within, like to the sky,
In which the Gods do dwell eternally:
There they him laid in easie couch well dight;
And sent in haste for Tryphon, to apply
Salues to his wounds, and medicines of might:
For Tryphon of sea gods the soueraine leach is hight.

The whiles the Nymphes sit all about him round,
Lamenting his mishap and heavy plight;
And oft his mother vewing his wide wound,
Cursed the hand, that did so deadly smight
Her dearest sonne, her dearest harts delight.
But none of all those curses ouertooke
The warlike Maid, th’enexample of that might,
But fairely well she thriu’d, and well did brooke
Her noble deeds, ne her right course for ought forsooke.

XLV

Yet did false Archimage her still pursuwe,
To bring to passe his mischieuous intent,
Now that he had her singled from the crew
Of courteous knights, the Prince, and Faery gent,
Whom late in chace of beautie excellent
She left, pursewing that same foster strong;
Of whose foule outrage they impatient,
And full of fiery zeale, him followed long,
To reskew her from shame, and to reuenge her wrong.

XLVI

Through thick and thin, through mountaines and through plains,
Those two great champions did attonce pursuwe
The fearefull damzell, with incessant paines:
Who from them fled, as light-foot hare from vew
Of hunter swift, and sent of houndes trew.
At last they came vnto a double way,
Where, doubtfull which to take, her to reskew,
Themselues they did dispart, each to assay,
Whether more happie were, to win so godly pray.

XLVII

But Timias, the Princes gentle Squire,
That Ladies loue vnto his Lord forlent,
And with proud enuy, and indignant ire,
After that wicked foster fiercely went.
So beene they three three sundry wayes ybent.
But fairest fortune to the Prince befell,
Whose chaunce it was, that soone he did repent,
To take that way, in which that Damozell
Was fled afore, affraid of him, as feend of hell.

XLVIII

At last of her farre off he gained vew:
Then gan he freshly pricke his fomy steed,
And euer as he nigher to her drew,
So euermore he did increase his speed,
And of each turning still kept warie heed:
Aloud 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.

XLIX

But nothing might relent her hastie flight;
So deepe the deadly feare of that foule swaine
Was earst impressed in her gentle spright:

Like as a fearefull Doue, which through the raine,

Of the wide aire her way does cut amaine,

Hauing farre off espyde a Tassell gent,

Which after her his nimble wings doth straine,

Doubleth her haste for feare to be for-hent,

And with her pineons cleaues the liquid firmament.

With no lesse haste, and eke with no lesse dreed,

That fearefull Ladie fled from him, that ment

To her no euill thought, nor euill deed;

Yet former feare of being fowly shent,

Carried her forward with her first intent:

And though oft looking backward, well she vewd,

Her selfe freed from that foster insolent,

And that it was a knight, which now her sewd,

Yet she no lesse the knight feard, then that villein rude.

His vncouth shield and straunge armes her dismayd,

Whose like in Faery lond were seldome seene,

That fast she from him fled, no lesse affrayd,

Then of wild beastes if she had chased beene:

Yet he her followd still with courage keene,

So long that now the golden Hesperus

Was mounted high in top of heauen sheene,
And warn'd his other brethren joyeous,
To light their blessed lamps in Ioues eternall hous.

LII

All suddenly dim soxe the dampish ayre,
And griesly shadowes couered heauen 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 surcease 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.

LIII

Tho when her wayes he could no more descry,
But to and fro at disauenture strayd;
Like as a ship, whose Lodestarre suddenly
Couered with cloudes, her Pilot hath dismayd;
His wearisome pursuit perforce he stayd,
And from his loftie steed dismounting low,
Did let him forage. Downe himselfe he layd
Vpon the grassie ground, to sleepe a throw;
The cold earth was his couch, the hard steele his pillow.

LIV

But gentle Sleepe enuyde him any rest;
In stead thereof sad sorrow, and disdaine
Of his hard hap did vexe his noble brest,
And thousand fancies bet his idle braine
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 euer hastie Night he blamed bitterlie.

LV

Night thou foule Mother of annoyance sad,
Sister of heauie death, and nourse of woe,
Which wast begot in heauen, 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 blacke hous,
(Blacke Herebus thy husband is the foe
Of all the Gods) where thou vngratious,
Halfe of thy dayes doest lead in horrour hideous.

LVI

What had th'eternall Maker need of thee,
The world in his continuall course to keepe,
That doest all things deface, ne lettest see
The beautie of his worke? Indeed in sleepe
The slouthfull bodie, that doth loue 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 error blind,
And great Dame Natures handmaide, chearing every kind.

LVII

But well I wote, that to an heavy hart
Thou art the root and nurse of bitter cares,
Breeder of new, renewer of old smarts:
In stead of rest thou sendest rayling tears,
In stead of sleepe thou sendest troublous feares,
And dreadfull visions, in the which alie
The drearie image of sad death appeares:
So from the weary spirit thou doest drive
Desired rest, and men of happiness deprive.

LVIII

Vnder thy mantle blacke there hidden lye,
Light-shonning theft, and traiterous intent,
Abhorred bloudshed, and vile felony,
Shamefull deceit, and daunger imminent;
Foule 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 loue, doe hate the light to see.

LIX

For day discouers all dishonest wayes,
And sheweth each thing, as it is indeed:
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 subdew, and heauen win:
Truth is his daughter; he her first did breed,
Most sacred virgin, without spot of sin.
Our life is day, but death with darknesse doth begin.

LX

O when will day then turne to me againe,
And bring with him his long expected light?
O Titan, haste to reare thy ioyous waine:
Speed thee to spred abroad thy beames bright,
And chase away this too long lingring night,
Chase 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 yeeld her roome to day, that can it gouerne well.

LXI

Thus did the Prince that wearie night outweare,
In restlesse anguish and vnquiet paine:
And earely, ere the morrow did vpreare
His deawy head out of the Ocean maine,
He vp arose, as halfe in great disdaine,
And clombe vnto his steed. So forth he went,
With heauie looke and lumpish pace, that plaine
In him bewraid great grudge and maltalent:

His steed eke seem’d t’apply his steps to his intent.

Canto V

Prince Arthur heares of Florimell:

three fosters Timias wound,

Belphebe finds him almost dead,

and reareth out of sownd.

I

Wonder it is to see, in diuerse minds,
How diuersly loue doth his pageants play,
And shewes his powre in variable kinds:
The baser wit, whose idle thoughts alway
Are wont to cleaue vnto the lowly clay,
It stirreth vp to sensuall desire,
And in lewd slouth to wast his carelesse day:
But in braue sprite it kindles goodly fire,
That to all high desert and honour doth aspire.

II

Ne suffereth it vncomely idlenesse,
In his free thought to build her sluggish nest:
Ne suffereth it thought of vngentlenesse,
Euer to creepe into his noble brest,
But to the highest and the worthiest
Lifteth it vp, that else would lowly fall:
It lets not fall, it lets it not to rest:
It lets not scarse this Prince to breath at all,
But to his first poursuit him forward still doth call.

III

Who long time wandred through the forrest wyde,
To finde some issue thence, till that at last
He met a Dwarf, 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 bescratcht, and both his feet nigh lame.

IV

Panting for breath, and almost out of hart,
The Dwarf him answerd, Sir, ill mote I stay
To tell the same. I lately did depart
From Faery court, where I haue many a day
Serued a gentle Lady of great sway,
And high accompt though out all Elfin land,
Who lately left the same, and tooke this way:
Her now I seeke, and if ye vnderstand
Which way she fared hath, good Sir tell out of hand.

V

What mister wight (said 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 fairer wight did neuer Sunne behold,
And on a Palfrey rides 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 aliue, I trow.

VI

Now certes swaine (said he) such one I weene,
Fast flying through this forest from her fo,
A foule ill fauoured foster, I haue 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 find, or where?

VII

Perdy me leuer were to weeten that,
(Said he) then ransome of the richest knight,
Or all the good that euer yet I gat:
But froward fortune, and too forward Night
Such happinesse did, maugre, to me spight,
And fro me reft both life and light attone.
But Dwarf aread, what is that Lady bright,
That through this forest wandreth thus alone;
For of her errour straunge I haue great ruth and mone.

VIII

That Lady is (quoth he) where so she bee,
The bountiest virgin, and most debonaire,
That euer liuing eye I weene did see;
Liues 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 belou’d of many a knight,
Yet she loues none but one, that Marinell is hight.

IX

A Sea-nymphes sonne, that Marinell is hight,
Of my deare Dame is loued 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 loue 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.

X

Fiue dayes there be, since he (they say) was slaine,
And foure, since Florimell the Court for-went,
And vowed never to returne againe,
Till him aliue or dead she did inuent.

Therefore, faire Sir, for loue 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.

XI

So may you gaine to you full great renowne,
Of all good Ladies through the world 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; Dwarf, comfort to thee take,
For till thou tidings learne, what her betide,
I here auow thee never to forsake.
Ill weares he armes, that nill them use for Ladies sake.

XII

So with the Dwarf he backe return’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 left behind,
For whom he wondrous pensiue grew in mind,
For doubt of daunger, which mote him betide;
For him he loued aboue all mankind,
Hauing him trew and faithfull euer tride,
And bold, as euer Squire that waited by knights side.

XIII

Who all this while full hardly was assayd
Of deadly daunger, which to him betid;
For whiles his Lord pursuwd that noble
Mayd, After that foster fowle he fiercely rid,
To bene auenged of the shame, he did
To that faire Damzell: Him he chaced long
Through the thicke woods, wherein he would haue hid
His shamefull head from his auengement strong,
And oft him threatned death for his outrageous wrong.

XIV

Nathlesse the villen 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 deeds, which dayly he increast,
Ne ceased not, till him oppressed hard
The heauy plague, that for such leachours is prepard.

XV

For soone as he was vanisht out of sight,
His coward courage gan emboldned bee,
And cast t'auenge him of that fowle despight,
Which he had borne of his bold enimee.
Tho to his brethren came: for they were three
Vngratious children of one gracelesse sire,
And vnto them complained, how that he
Had vsed bene of that foolehardy Squire;
So them with bitter words he stird to bloudy ire.

XVI

Forthwith themselues with their sad instruments
Of spoyle and murder they gan arme byliue,
And with him forth into the forest went,
To wreake the wrath, which he did earst reuiue
In their sterne brests, on him which late did driue
Their brother to reproch and shamefull flight:
For they had vow'd, that neuer he aliue
Out of that forest should escape their might;
Vile rancour their rude harts had fild with such despight.

XVII

Within that wood there was a couert glade,
Foreby a narrow foord, to them well knowne,
Through which it was vneath for wight to wade;
And now by fortune it was ouerflowne:
By that same way they knew that Squire vnknowne
Mote algates passe; for thy themselues they set
There in await, with thicke woods ouer growne,
And all the while their malice they did whet
With cruel threats, his passage through the ford to let.

XVIII

It fortuned, as they devised had,
The gentle Squire came riding that same way,
Unwitting of their wile and treason bad,
And through the ford to passen did assay;
But that fierce foster, which late fled away,
Stoutly forth 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 done afore.

XIX

With that at him a quavering dart he threw,
With so fell force and vileneous despighte,
That through his habeiron the forkehead flew,
And through the linked mayles empierced quite,
But had no power 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 means the high banke he could sease,
But labour’d long in that deep ford with vain disease.

XX

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 vnucky quill;
The wicked steele stayd not, till it did light
In his left thigh, and deepeely did it thrill:
Exceeding griefe that wound in him empight,
But more that with his foes he could not come to fight.

XXI

At last through wrath and vengeaunce making way,
He on the bancke arriu’d with mickle paine,
Where the third brother did him sore assay,
And drue at him with all his might and maine
A forrest bill, which both his hands did straine;
But warily he did auoide the blow,
And with his speare requited him againe,
That both his sides were thrilled with the throw,
And a large streame of bloud out of the wound did flow.

XXII

He tombling downe, with gnashing teeth did bite
The bitter earth, and bad to let him in
Into the balefull house of endlesse night,
Where wicked ghosts do waile their former sin.
Tho gan the battell 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 vpon him layd, his life for to haue had.

XXIII

Tho when that villain he auiz'd, which late
Affrighted had the fairest Florimell,
Full of fiers fury, and indignant hate,
To him he turned, and with rigour fell
Smote him so rudely on the Pannikell,
That to the chin he cleft his head in twaine:
Downe on the ground his carkas groueling fell;
His sinfull soule with desperate disdaine,
Out of her fleshly ferme fled to the place of paine.

XXIV

That seeing now the onely last of three,
Who with that wicked shaft him wounded had,
Trembling with horrour, as that did foresee
The fearefull end of his auengement sad,
Through which he follow should his brethren bad,
His bootelesse bow in feeble hand vpcaught,
And therewith shot an arrow at the lad;
Which faintly fluttring, scarce his helmet raught,
And glauncing fell to ground, but him annoyed naught.

XXV

With that he would haue fled into the wood;
But Timias him lightly ouerhent,
Right as he entering was into the flood,
And strooke at him with force so violent,
That headlesse him into the foord he sent:
The carkas with the streame was carried downe,
But th'head fell backeward on the Continent.
So mischief fel vpon the meaners crowne;
They three be dead with shame, the Squire liues with renowne.

XXVI

He liues, but takes small ioy of his renowne;
For of that cruell wound he bled so sore,
That from his steed he fell in deadly swowne;
Yet still the bloud forth gusht in so great store,
That he lay wallowd all in his owne gore.
Now God thee keepe, thou gentliest Squire aliue,
Else shall thy louing Lord thee see no more,
But both of comfort him thou shalt deprieue,
And eke thy selfe of honour, which thou didst atchiue.

XXVII

Prouidence heauenly passeth liuing 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,
She, that base Braggadochio did affray,
And made him fast out of the forest runne;

Belphoebe was her name, as faire as Phoebus sunne.

XXVIII

She on a day, as she pursuwd the chace

Of some wild 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 green;

By the great persue, which she there perceau’d,

Well hoped she the beast engor’d had beene,

And made more hast, the life to have bereau’d:

But ah, her expectation greatly was deceau’d.

XXIX

Shortly she came, whereas that woefull Squire

With blood deformed, lay in deadly swownd:

In whose faire eyes, like lamps of quenched fire,

The Christall humour stood congealed round;

His locks, like faded leaves fallen to ground,

Knotted with blood, in bunches rudely ran,

And his sweete lips, on which before that stownd

The bud of youth to blossome faire began,

Spoild of their rosie red, were woxen pale and wan.

XXX

Saw neuer living eye more heauy sight,

That could haue made a rocke of stone to rew,
Or riu in twaine: which when that Lady bright

Besides all hope with melting eyes did vew,

All suddeinly abasht she chaunged hew,

And with sterne horour backward gan to start:

But when she better him beheld, she grew

Full of soft passion and vnwonted smart:

The point of pitty perced through her tender hart.

XXXI

Meekely she bowed downe, to weete if life

Yet in his frozen members did remaine,

And feeling by his pulses beating rife,

That the weake soule her seat did yet retaine,

She cast to comfort him with busie paine:

His double folded necke she reard vpright,

And rubd his temples, and each trembling vaine;

His mayled haberieon she did vndight,

And from his head his heauy burganet did light.

XXXII

Into the woods thenceforth in hast she went,

To seeke for hearbes, that mote him remedy;

For she of hearbes had great intendiment,

Taught of the Nymphe, which from her infancy

There, whether it diuine Tobacco were,

Or Panachaea, or Polygony,
She found, and brought it to her patient deare
Who al this while lay bleeding out his hart-bloud neare.

XXXIII

The soueraigne weede betwixt two marbles plaine
She pownded small, and did in peeces bruze,
And then atweene her lilly handes twaine,
Into his wound the iuyce thereof did scruze,
And round about, as she could well it vze,
The fleshe therewith she supplled and did steepe,
T'abate all spasme, and soke the swelling bruze,
And after hauing searcht the intuse deepe,
She with her scarfe did bind the wound from cold to keepe.

XXXIV

By this he had sweet life recur’d againe,
And groning inly deepe, at last his eyes,
His watry eyes, drizling like deawy raine,
He vp gan lift toward the azure skies,
From whence descend all hopelesse remedies:
Therewith he sigh’d, and turning him aside,
The goodly Mayd full of diuinities,
And gifts of heauenly grace he by him spide,
Her bow and gilden quiuer lying him beside.

XXXV

Mercy deare Lord (said he) what grace is 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 do I call thee right?
What servise may I do vnto thee meete,
That hast from darkenesse me returnd to light,
And with thy heauenly salues and med’cines sweete,
Hast drest my sinfull wounds? I kisse thy blessed feete.

XXXVI

Thereat she blushing said, Ah gentle Squire,
Nor Goddesse I, nor Angell, but the Mayd,
And daughter of a woody Nymphe, desire
No servise, but thy safety and ayd;
Which if thou gaine, I shalbe well apayd.
We mortall wights, whose liues and fortunes bee
To commun accidents still open layd,
Are bound with commun bond of frailtee,
To succour wretched wights, whom we captiued see.

XXXVII

By this her Damzels, which the former chace
Had vndertaken after her, arriu’d,
As did Belphoebe, in the bloudy place,
And thereby deemd the beast had bene depriu’d
Of life, whom late their Ladies arrow ryu’d:
For thy the bloudy tract they followd fast,
And euery one to runne the swiftest stryu’d;
But two of them the rest far overpast,
And where their Lady was, arrived at the last.

XXXVIII

Where when they saw that goodly boy, with blood
Defowled, and their Lady dresse his wound,
They wondred much, and shortly understood,
How him in deadly case their Lady found,
And reskewed out of the heavy stound.

Eftsoones his warlike courser, which was strayd
Farre in the woods, whiles that he lay in swoond,
She made those Damzels search, which being stayd,
They did him set thereon, and forth with them conuayd.

XXXIX

Into that forest farre they thence him led,
Where was their dwelling, in a pleasant glade,
With mountaines round about enuironed,
And mighty woods, 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 course they did restraine.

XL

Beside the same a dainty place there lay,
Planted with mirtle trees and laurels greene,
In which the birds song many a louely lay
Of gods high prayse, and of their loues sweet teene,
As it an earthly Paradize had beene:
In whose enclosed shadow there was pight
A faire Pauilion, scarcely to be seene,
The which was all within most richly dight,
That greatest Princes liuing it mote well delight.

Thither they brought that wounded Squire, and layd
In easie couch his feeble limbes to rest,
He rested him a while, and then the Mayd
His ready wound with better salues new drest;
Dayly she dressed him, and did the best
His grieuous hurt to garish, 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 vnfruitfull paine,
That heales vp one and makes another wound:
She his hurt thigh to him recur’d againe,
But hurt his hart, the which before was sound,
Through an vnwary dart, which did rebound
From her faire eyes and gracious countenaunce.
What bootes it him from death to be vnbound,
To be captiued in endlesse duraunce
Of sorrow and despaire without aleggeaunce?

XLIII

Still as his wound did gather, and grow hole,
So still his hart woxe sore, and health decayd:
Madnesse to saue a part, and lose the whole.
Still whenas he beheld the heauenly Mayd,
Whiles dayly plaisters to his wound 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 loue so faire a Lady, that his life releast?

XLIV

Long while he stroue in his courageous brest,
With reason dew the passion to subdew,
And loue for to dislodge out of his nest:
Still when her excellencies he did vew,
Her soueraigne bounty, and celestiall hew,
The same to loue he strongly was constraind:
But when his meane estate he did reuew,
He from such hardy boldnesse was restraind,
And of his lucklesse lot and cruell loue thus plaind.

XLV

Vnthankfull wretch (said he) is this the meed,
With which her soueraigne mercy thou doest quight?
Thy life she saued by her gracious deed,
But thou doest weene with villeinous despight,
To blot her honour, and her heauenly light.
Dye rather, dye, then so disloyally
Deeme of her high desert, or seeme so light:
Faire death it is to shonne more shame, to dy:
Dye rather, dy, then euer loue disloyally.

XLVI

But if to loue 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 do, then her loue therefore,
Sith I her dew reward cannot restore:
Dye rather, dye, and dying do her serue,
Dying her serue, and liuing her adore;
Thy life she gaue, thy life she doth deserue:
Dye rather, dye, then euer from her seruice swerue.

XLVII

But foolish boy, what bootes thy seruice bace
To her, to whom the heauens do serue and sew?
Thou a meane Squire, of meeke and lowly place,
She heauenly borne, and of celestiall hew.
How then? of all loue taketh equall vew:
And doth not highest God vouchsafe to take
The loue and seruice of the basest crew?
If she will not, dye meekly for her sake;
Dye rather, dye, then ever so faire loue forsake.

XLVIII

Thus warred he long time against his will,
Till that through weaknesse he was forst at last,
To yield himselfe vnto the mighty ill:
Which as a victour proud, gan ransack fast
His inward parts, and all his entrayles wast,
That neither bloud in face, nor life in hart
It left, but both did quite drye vp, and blast;
As percing leuin, which the inner part
Of euery thing consumes, and calcineth by art.

XLIX

Which seeing faire Belphœbe, gan to feare,
Least that his wound were inly well not healed,
Or that the wicked steele empoynd were:
Litle she weend, that loue he close concealed;
Yet still he wasted, as the snow congealed,
When the bright sunne his beams thereon doth beat;
Yet never he his hart to her reuealed,
But rather chose to dye for sorrow great,
Then with dishonorable termes her to entreat.

L

She gracious Lady, yet no paines did spare,
To do him ease, or do him remedy:
Many Restoratues of vertues rare,
And costly Cordialles she did apply,
To mitigate his stubborne mally:
But that sweet Cordiall, which can restore
A loue-sick hart, she did to him enuy;
To him, and to all th’vnworthy world forlore
She did enuy that soueraigne salue, in secret store.

LI

That dainty Rose, the daughter of her Morne,
More deare then life she tendered, whose fowre
The girland of her honour did adorne:
Ne suffred she the Middayes scorchie powre,
Ne the sharp Northerne wind thereon to shoure,
But lapped vp her silken leaues most chaire,
When so the froward skye began to lowre:
But soone as calmed was the Christall aire,
She did it faire dispred, and let to florish faire.

LII

Eternall God in his almighty powre,
To make ensample of his heauenly grace,
In Paradize whilome did plant this fowre,
Whence he it fetcht out of her natuie place,
And did in stocke of earthly flesh enrace,
That mortall men her glory should admire:
In gentle Ladies brest, and bounteous race
Of woman kind it fairest flowre doth spire,
And beareth fruit of honour and all chast desire.

LIII

Faire ympes of beautie, whose bright shining beames
Adorne the world with like to heauenly light,
And to your willes both royalties and Realmes
Subdew, through conquest of your wondrous might,
With this faire flowre your goodly girlonds dight,
Of chastity and vertue virginall,
That shall embellish more your beautie bright,
And crowne your heades with heauenly coronall,
Such as the Angels weare before Gods tribunall.

LIV

To your faire selues a faire ensample frame,
Of this faire virgin, this Belphœbe faire,
To whom in perfect loue, and spotlesse fame
Of chastitie, none liuing may compaire:
Ne poysnous Enuy iustly can empaire
The prayse of her fresh flowring Maidenhead;
For thy she standeth on the highest staire
Of th'honorable stage of womanhead,
That Ladies all may follow her ensample dead.

LV

In so great prayse of stedfast chastity,
Nathlesse she was so curteous and kind,
Tempred with grace, and goodly modesty,
That seemed those two vertues stroue to find
The higher place in her Heroick mind:
So striuing each did other more augment,
And both encreast the prayse of woman kind,
And both encreast her beautie excellent;
So all did make in her a perfect complement.

Canto VI

The birth of faire Belphœbe and
Of Amoret is told.
The Gardins of Adonis fraught
With pleasures manifold.

I

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 saluage forests she did dwell,
So farre from court and royall Citadell,
The great schoolmistresse of all curtesy:
Seemeth that such wild woods should far expell
All ciuill vsage and gentility,
And gentle sprite deforme with rude rusticity.

II

But to this faire Belphœbe in her berth
The heauens so fauourable were and free,
Looking with myld aspect vpon the earth,
In th’Horoscope of her natuuitee,
That all the gifts of grace and chastitee
On her they poured forth of plenteous horne;
Ioue laught on Venus from his soueraigne see,
And Phœbus with faire beames did her adorne,
And all the Graces rockt her cradle being borne.

III

Her berth was of the wombe of Morning dew,
And her conception of the ioyous Prime,
And all her whole creation did her shew
Pure and vnspotted from all loathly crime,
That is ingenerate in fleshly slime.
So was this virgin borne, so was she bred,
So was she trayned vp from time to time,
In all chast vertue, and true bounti-hed
Till to her dew perfection she was ripened.

IV

Her mother was the faire Chrysogonee,
The daughter of Amphisa, who by race
A Faerie was, yborne of high degree,
She bore Belphaebe, she bore in like cace
Faire 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 seem’d they robbed bare
Of bountie, and of beautie, and all vertues rare.

V

It were a goodly storie, to declare,
By what straunge accident faire Chrysogone
Conceiu’d these infants, and how she them bare,
In this wild 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.

VI

But wondrously they were begot, and bred
Through influence of th’heauens fruitfull ray,
As it in antique bookes is mentioned.
It was vpon a Sommers shynie day,
When Titan faire his beames did display,
In a fresh fountaine, farre 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 flowres, that in the forrest grew.

VII

Till faint through irkesome wearinesse, adowne
Vpon the grassie ground her selfe she layd
To sleepe, the whiles a gentle slumbring swowne
Vpon her fell all naked bare displayd;
The sunne-beames bright vpon her body playd,
Being through former bathing mollifide,
And pierst into her wombe, where they embayd
With so sweet sense and secret power vnspide,
That in her pregnant flesh they shortly fructifide.

VIII

Miraculous may seeme to him, that reades
So strange ensample of conception;
But reason teacheth that the fruitfull seades
Of all things living, through impression
Of the sunbeames in moyst complexion,
Doe life conceiue and quickned are by kynd:
So after Nilus invndation,
Infinite shapes of creatures men do fynd,
Informed in the mud, on which the Sunne hath shynd.

IX

Miraculous may seeme to him, that reades
So strange ensample of conception;
But reason teacheth that the fruitfull seades
Of all things living, through impression
Of the sunbeames in moyst complexion,
Doe life conceiue and quickned are by kynd:
So after Nilus invndation,
Infinite shapes of creatures men do fynd,
Informed in the mud, on which the Sunne hath shynd.

Whereof conceiuing shame and foule disgrace,
Albe her guiltlesse conscience her cleard,
She fled into the wildernesse a space,
Till that vnweeldy burden she had reard,
And shund dishonor, which as death she feard:
Where wearie of long trauell, downe to rest
Her selfe she set, and comfortably cheard;
There a sad cloud of sleepe her ouerkest,
And seized euery sense with sorrow sore opprest.

It fortuned, faire Venus hauing lost
Her little sonne, the winged god of loue,
Who for some light displeasure, which him crost,
Was from her fled, as flit as ayerie Doue,
And left her blisfull bowre of ioy aboue,
(So from her often he had fled away,
When she for ought him sharply did reprove,
And wandred in the world in strange aray,
Disguiz’d in thousand shapes, that none might him bewray.)

Him for to seeke, she left her heauenly hous,
The house of goodly formes and faire aspects,
Whence all the world deriues the glorious
Features of beautie, and all shapes select,
With which high God his workmanship hath deckt;
And searched euery way, through which his wings
Had borne him, or his tract she mote detect:
She promist kisses sweet, and sweeter things
Vnto the man, that of him tydings to her brings.

XIII

First she him sought in Court, where most he vsed
Whylome to haunt, but there she found him not;
But many there she found, which sore accused
His falsehood, and with foule infamous blot
His cruell deedes and wicked wyles did spot:
Ladies and Lords she euery where 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.

XIV

She then the Citties sought from gate to gate,
And euery one did aske, did he him see;
And euery one her answerd, that too late
He had him seene, and felt the crueltie
Of his sharpe darts and whot artillerie;
And euery one threw forth reproches rife
Of his mischievous deedes, and said, That hee
Was the disturber of all ciuill life,
The enimy of peace, and author of all strife.

XV

Then in the countrey she abroad him sought,
And in the rurall cottages inquired,
Where also many plaints to her were brought,
How he their heedlesse harts with loue had fyred,
And his false venim through their veines inspyred;
And eke the gentle shepheard swaynes, which sat
Keeping their fleecie flockes, as they were hyred,
She sweetly heard complains, both how and what
Her sonne had to them doen; yet she did smile thereat.

XVI

But when in none of all these she him got,
She gan auize, where else he mote him hyde:
At last she her bethought, that she had not
Yet sought the saluage woods and forrests wyde,
In which full many louely Nymphes abyde,
Mongst whom might be, that he did closely lye,
Or that the loue of some of them him tyde:
For thy she thither cast her course t'apply,
To search the secret haunts of Dianes company.

XVII

Shortly vnto 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 limbes the dustie sweat,
And soyle which did deforme their liuely hew;
Others lay shaded from the scorching heat;
The rest vpon her person gaue attendance great.

XVIII

She hauing hong vpon a bough on high
Her bow and painted quiuer, had vnlaste
Her siluer buskins from her nimble thigh,
And her lancke loynes vngirt, and brests vnbraste,
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 vnlight,
And were with sweet Ambrosia all besprinckled light.

XIX

Soone as she Venus saw behind her backe,
She was asham’d to be so loose surprized
And woxe halfe wroth against her damzels slacke,
That had not her thereof before auized,
But suffred her so carelesly disguized
Be ouertaken. Soone her garments loose
Vgath’ring, in her bosome she comprized,
Well as she might, and to the Goddesse rose,
While all her Nymphes did like a girond her enclose.  

XX

Goodly she gan faire Cytherea greet,
And shortly asked her, what cause her brought
Into that wildernesse for her vnmeet,
From her sweet bowres, and beds with pleasures fraught:
That suddein change she strange aduenture thought.
To whom halfe weeping, she thus answered,
That she her dearest sonne Cupido sought,
Who in his frowardnesse from her was fled;
That she repented sore, to haue him angered.

XXI

Thereat Diana gan to smile, in scorne
Of her vaine plaint, and to her scoffing sayd;
Great pittie sure, that ye be so forlorne
Of your gay sonne, that giues ye so good ayd
To your disports: ill mote ye bene apayd.
But she was more engrieued, and replide;
Faire sister, ill beseemes it to vpbrayd
A dolefull heart with so disdainfull pride;
The like that mine, may be your paine another tide.

XXII

As you in woods and wanton wildernesse
Your glory set, to chace the saluage beasts,
So my delight is all in ioyfulnesse,
In beds, in bowres, in banckets, and in feasts:
And ill becomes you with your loftie creasts,
To scorne the ioy, that loue is glad to seeke;
We both are bound to follow heauens beheasts,
And tend our charges with obeisance meeke:
Spare, gentle sister, with reproch my paine to eeke.

XXIII

And tell me, if that ye my sonne haue heard,
To lurke amongst your Nymphes 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 himselfe full easie hide:
For he is faire and fresh in face and guize,
As any Nymph (let not it be enuyde.)
So saying euery Nymph full narrowly she eyde.

XXIV

But Phœbe therewith sore was angered,
And sharply said; Goe Dame, goe seeke your boy,
Where you him lately left, in Mars his bed;
He comes not here, we scorne his foolish ioy,
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 dearely shall abye:
Ile clip his wanton wings, that he no more shall fly.

XXV

Whom when as Venus saw so sore displeased,
She inly sory was, and gan relent,
What she had said: so her she soone appeased,
With sugred words and gentle blandishment,
Which as a fountaine from her sweet lips went,
And welled goodly forth, that in short space
She was well pleas'd, and forth her damzels sent,
Through all the woods, to search from place to place,
If any tract of him or tydings they mote trace.

XXVI

To search the God of loue, her Nymphes she sent
Throughout the wandring forrest euery where:
And after them her selfe eke with her went
To seeke the fugitiue, both farre and nere,
So long they sought, till they arriued were
In that same shadie couert, whereas lay
Faire Crysogone in slombry traunce whilere:
Who in her sleepe (a wondrous thing to say)
Vnwares had borne two babes, as faire as springing day.

XXVII

Vnwares she them conceiu'd, vnwares she bore:
She bore withouten paine, that she conceived
Withouten pleasure: ne her need implore
Lucinaes aide: which when they both perceiued,
They were through wonder nigh of sense bereaued,
And gazing each on other, nought bespake:
At last they both agreed, her seeming grieued
Out of her heauy swowne not to awake,
But from her louing side the tender babes to take.

XXVIII

Vp they them tooke, each one a babe vptooke,
And with them carried, to be fostered;
Dame Phaebe to a Nymph her babe betooke,
To be vp brought in perfect Maydenhed,
And of her selfe her name Belphœbe red:
But Venus hers thence farre away conuayd,
To be vp brought in goodly womanhed,
And in her little loues stead, which was strayd,
Her Amoretta cald, to comfort her dismayd.

XXIX

She brought her to her ioyous Paradize,
Where most she wonnes, when she on earth does dwel.
So faire a place, as Nature can deuize:
Whether in Paphos, or Cytheron hill,
Or it in Gnidus be, I wote not well;
But well I wote by tryall, that this same
All other pleasant places doth excell,
And called is by her lost louers name,
The Gardin of Adonis, farre renownd by fame.

XXX

In that same Gardin all the goodly flowres,
Wherewith dame Nature doth her beautifie,
And decks the girlonds of her paramoures,
Are fetcht: there is the first seminarie
Of all things, that are borne to liue and die,
According to their kindes. Long worke it were,
Here to account the endlesse progenie
Of all the weedes, that bud and blossome there;
But so much as doth need, must needs be counted here.

XXXI

It sited was in fruitfull soyle of old,
And girt in with two walles on either side;
The one of yron, the other of bright gold,
That none might thorough breake, nor ouer-stride:
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.

XXXII

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 weedes would them attire:
Such as him list, such as eternall fate
Ordained hath, he clothes with sinfull mire,
And sendeth forth to liue in mortall state,
Till they againe returne backe by the hinder gate.

XXXIII

After that they againe returned beene,
They in that Gardin planted be againe;
And grow afresh, as they had neuer seene
Fleshly corruption, nor mortall paine.
Some thousand yeares so doen they there remaine;
And then of him are clad with other hew,
Or sent into the chaungefull world againe,
Till thither they returne, where first they grew:
So like a wheele around they runne from old to new.

XXXIV

Ne needs there Gardiner to set, or sow,
To plant or prune: for of their owne accord
All things, as they created were, doe grow,
And yet remember well the mightie 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 themselues eternall moisture they imply.

XXXV

Infinite shapes of creatures there are bred,
And uncouth formes, which none yet euer knew,
And euery sort is in a sundry bed
Set by it selfe, and ranckt in comely reaw:
Some fit for reasonable soules 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 seem’d the Ocean could not containe them there.

XXXVI

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 euerlasting store,
As it at first created was of yore.
For in the wide wombe of the world there lyes,
In hatefull darkenesse and in deepe horrore,
An huge eternall Chaos, which supplyes
The substances of natures fruitfull progenyes.

XXXVII

All things from thence doe their first being fetch,
And borrow matter, whereof they are made,
Which when as forme and feature it does ketch,
Becomes a bodie, and doth then inuade
The state of life, out of the grisly shade.
That substance is eterne, and bideth so,
Ne when the life decayes, and forme does fade,
Doth it consume, and into nothing go,
But chaunged is, and often altred to and fro.

XXXVIII

The substance is not chaunged, nor altered,
But th'only forme and outward fashion;
For euery substance is conditioned
To change her hew, and sundry formes to don,
Meet for her temper and complexion:
For formes are variable and decay,
By course of kind, and by occasion;
And that faire flowre of beautie fades away,
As doth the lilly fresh before the sunny ray.

XXXIX

Great enimy to it, and to all the rest,
That in the Gardin of Adonis springs,
Is wicked Time, who with his scyth addrest,
Does mow the flowring herbes and goodly things,
And all their glory to the ground downe flings,
Where they doe wither, and are fowly mard:
He flyes about, and with his flaggy wings
Beates downe both leaves and buds without regard,
Ne euer pittie may relent his malice hard.

Yet pittie often did the gods relent,
To see so faire things mard, and spoyled quight:
And their great mother Venus did lament
The losse of her deare brood, her deare delight;
Her hart was pierst with pittie at the sight,
When walking through the Gardin, them she spyde,
Yet no'te she find redresse for such despight.
For all that liues, is subject to that law:
All things decay in time, and to their end do draw.

But were it not, that Time their troubler is,
All that in this delightfull Gardin growes,
Should happie be, and haue immortall blis:
For here all plentie, and all pleasure flowes,
And sweet loue gentle fits amongst them throwes,
Without fell rancor, or fond gealosie;
Franckly each paramour his leman knowes,
Each bird his mate, ne any does enuie
Their goodly meriment, and gay feliciti.

There is continuall spring, and harvest there
Continuall, both meeting at one time:
For both the boughes doe laughing blossomes beare,
And with fresh colours decke the wanton Prime,
And eke attonce the heauy trees they clime,
Which seeme to labour vnder their fruits lode:
The whiles the ioyous birdes make their pastime
Emongst the shadie leaues, their sweet abode,
And their true loues without suspition tell abrode.

XLIII

Right in the middest of that Paradise,
There stood a stately Mount, on whose round top
A gloomy groue of mirtle trees did rise,
Whose shadie boughes sharpe steele did neuer lop,
Nor wicked beasts their tender buds did crop,
But like a girlond compassed the hight,
And from their fruitfull sides sweet gum did drop,
That all the ground with precious deaw bedight,
Threw forth most dainty odours, and most sweet delight.

XLIV

And in the thickest couert of that shade,
There was a pleasant arbour, not by art,
But of the trees owne inclination made,
Which knitting their rancke braunches part to part,
With wanton yuie twyne entrayld athwart,
And Eglantine, and Caprifole emong,
Fashiond aboue within their inmost part,
That nether Phœbus beams could through them throng,
Nor Aeolus sharp blast could worke them any wrong.

XLV

And all about grew euery sort of flowre,
To which sad louers were transformd of yore;
Fresh Hyacinthus, Phœbus paramoure,
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 giuen endlesse date.

XLVI

There wont faire Venus often to enioy
Her deare Adonis ioyous company,
And reap 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 loue enuy;
But she her selfe, when euer that she will,
Possesseth him, and of his sweetnesse takes her fill.

XLVII

And sooth it seemes they say: for he may not
For euer die, and euer buried bee
In balefull night, where all things are forgot;
All be he subject to mortalitie,
Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,
And by succession made perpetuall,
Transformed oft, and chaunged diuerslie:
For him the Father of all formes they call;
Therefore needs mote he liue, that liuing giues to all.

XLVIII

There now he liueth in eternall blis,
Ioying his goddesse, and of her enioyd:
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 loue his malice mote auoyd,
In a strong rocky Caue, which is they say,
Hewen vnderneath that Mount, that none him losen may.

XLIX

There now he liues in everlasting ioy,
With many of the Gods in company,
Which thither haunt, and with the winged boy
Sporting himselfe 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 resorts, and laying his sad darts
Aside, with faire Adonis playes his wanton parts.

And his true loue faire Psyche with him playes,
Faire Psyche to him lately reconcyld,
After long troubles and vnmeet vpbrayes,
With which his mother Venus her reuyld,
And eke himselfe her cruelly exyld:
But now in stedfast loue and happy state
She with him liues, 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 faire,
The younger daughter of Chrysogonee,
And vnto Psyche with great trust and care
Committed her, yfostered to bee,
And trained vp in true 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 loue, and goodly womanhead.

In which when she to perfect ripenesse grew,
Of grace and beautie noble Paragone,
She brought her forth into the worldes vew,
To be th’ensample of true loue alone,
And Lodestarre of all chaste affectione,
To all faire Ladies, that doe liue on ground.
To Faery court she came, where many one
Admyrd her goodly haueour, and found
His feeble hart wide launched with loues cruell wound.

LIII

But she to none of them her loue did cast,
Saue to the noble knight Sir Scudamore,
To whom her louing hart she linked fast
In faithfull loue, t’abide for euermore,
And for his dearest sake endured sore,
Sore trouble of an hainous enimy;
Who her would forced haue to haue forlore
Her former loue, and stedfast loialty,
As ye may elsewhere read that ruefull history.

LIV

But well I weene, ye first desire to learne,
What end vnto that fearefull Damozell,
Which fled 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 louer deare,
Her louer deare, her dearest Marinell,
Into misfortune fell, as ye did heare,
And from Prince Arthur fled with wings of idle fear.

Canto VII

*The witches sonne loves Florimell:*

*she flies, he faines to die.*

*Satyrane saues the Squire of Dames*

*from Gyants tyranny.*

Like as an Hynd forth singled from the heard,
That hath escaped from a ravenous beast,
Yet flyes away of her owne feet afffeard,
And euery leafe, that shaketh with the least
Murmure of winde, her terror hath encreast;
So fled faire 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 whyleare.

All that same euening she in flying spent,
And all that night her course continewed:
Ne did she let dull sleepe once to relent,
Nor wearinesse to slackle her hast, but fled
Euer alike, as if her former dred
Were hard behind, her readie to arrest:
And her white Palfrey hauing conquered
The maistring raines out of her weary wrest,
Perforce her carried, where euer he thought best.

III

So long as breath, and hable puissance
Did natuie courage vnto him supply,
His pace he freshly forward did aduance,
And carried her beyond all ieopardy,
But nought that wanteth rest, can long aby.
He having through incessant trauell spent
His force, at last perforce a downe did ly,
Ne foot could further moue: The Lady gent
Thereat was suddein strooke with great astonishment.

IV

And forst t'alight, on foot mote algates fare,
A traueller vnwonted to such way:
Need teacheth her this lesson hard and rare,
That fortune all in equall lance doth sway,
And mortall miseries doth make her play.
So long she trauelled, till at length she came
To an hilles side, which did to her bewray
A little valley, subject to the same,
All couerd with thick woods, that quite it ouercame.

V

Through the tops of the high trees she did descry
A little smoke, whose vapour thin and light,
Reeking aloft, vprolled to the sky:
Which, chearefull signe did send vnto her sight,
That in the same did wonne some liuing wight.
Eftsoones her steps she thereunto applyde,
And came at last in weary wretched plight
Vnto the place, to which her hope did guyde,
To find some refuge there, and rest her weary syde.

VI

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 deuilish deedes
And hellish arts from people she might hide,
And hurt far off vnknowne, whom euer she enuide.

VII

The Damzell there arriuing 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 vpstarted 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.

VIII

At last turning her feare to foolish wrath,
She askt, what deuill had her thither brought,
And who she was, and what vnwonted path
Had guided her, vnwelcomed, vnsought?
To which the Damzell full of doubfull thought,
Her mildly answer’d; Beldame be not wroth
With silly Virgin by aduenture brought
Vnto your dwelling, ignorant and loth,
That craue but rowme to rest, while tempest ouerblo’th.

IX

With that adowne out of her Christall eyne
Few trickling teares she softly forth let fall,
That like two Orient pearles, did purely shyne
Vpon her snowy cheeke; and therewithall
She sighed soft, that none so bestiall,
Nor saluage 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 moued at so pitteous sight.

X

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 a while. She nothing quaint
Nor s'deignfull of so homely fashion,
Sith brought she was now to so hard constraint,
Sate downe vpon the dusty ground anon,
As glad of that small rest, as Bird of tempest gon.

XI

Tho gan she gather vp 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 heauenly 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 diuine as beauty, were but right.

XII

This wicked woman had a wicked sonne,
The comfort of her age and weary dayes,
A laesie loord, for nothing good to donne,
But stretched forth inidlenesse alwayes,
Ne euer cast his mind to couet prayse,
Or ply him selfe to any honest trade,
But all the day before the sunny rayes
He vs'd to slug, or sleepe in slothfull shade:
Such laesinessse both lewd and poore attonce him made.

XIII

He coming home at vndertime, there found
The fairest creature, that he euer saw,
Sitting beside his mother on the ground;
The sight whereof did greatly him adaw,
And his base thought with terour and with aw
So inly smot, that as one, which had gazed
On the bright Sunne vnwares, doth soone withdraw
His feeble eyne, with too much brightnesse dazed;
So stared he on her, and stood long while amazed.

XIV

Softly at last he gan his mother aske,
What mister wight that was, and whence deriued,
That in so straunge disguizement there did maske,
And by what accident she there arriued:
But she, as one nigh of her wits depriued,
With nought but ghastly lookes him answered,
Like to a ghost, that lately is reuiued
From Stygian shores, where late it wandered;
So both at her, and each at other wondered.

XV

But the faire Virgin was so meeke and mild,
That she to them vouchsafed to embace
Her goodly port, and to their senses vild,
Her gentle speach applide, that in short space
She grew familiare in that desert place.
During which time, the Chorle through her so kind
And curteise vse conceiu’d affection bace,
And cast to loue her in his brutish mind;
No loue, but brutish lust, that was so beastly tind.

XVI

Closely the wicked flame his bowels brent,
And shortly grew into outrageous fire;
Yet had he not the hart, nor hardiment,
As vnto her to vtter his desire;
His caytiue thought durst not so high aspire,
But with soft sighes, and louely semblances,
He ween’d that his affection entire
She should aread; many resemblaunces
To her he made, and many kind remembraunces.

XVII

Oft from the forrest wildings he did bring,
Whose sides empurpled were with smiling red,
And oft young birds, which he had taught to sing
His mistresse prayses, sweetly caroled,
Girlonds of flowres sometimes for her faire hed
He fine would dight; sometimes the squirell wild
He brought to her in bands, as conquered
To be her thrall, his fellow seruant vild;
All which, she of him tooke with countenance meeke and mild.

XVIII

But past awhile, when she fit season saw

To leave that desert mansion, she cast

In secret wise her selfe thence to withdraw,

For feare of mischiefe, which she did forecast

Might by the witch or by her sonne compast:

Her weare 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.

XIX

And early ere the dawning day appeard,

She forth issewed, and on her journey went;

She went in peril, of each noyse affeard,

And of each shade, that did it selfe present;

For still she feared to be ouerhent,

Of that vile hag, or her vncliuile sonne:

Who when too late awaking, well they kent,

That their faire guest was gone, they both begonne

To make exceeding mone, as they had bene vndone.

XX

But that lewd lover did the most lament

For her depart, that euer 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 loue to frenzy turnd, sith loue is frantick.resolution

XXI

All wayes she sought, him to restore to plight,
With herbs, with charms, with counsell, 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 deuilish arts thought to preuaile,
To bring her backe againe, or worke her finall bale.

XXII

Eftsoones out of her hidden caue she cald
An hideous beast, of horrible aspect,
That could the stoutest courage haue appald;
Monstrous mishapt, and his backe was spect
With thousand spots of colours queint elect,
Thereto so swift, that it all beasts did pas:
Like neuer yet did liuing eye detect;
But likest it to an Hyena was,
That feeds on womens flesh, as others feede on gras.

XXIII

It forth she cald, and gaue it streight in charge,
Through thicke and thin her to purs \( \overline{w} \) apace,
Ne once to stay to rest, or breath at large,
Till her he had attaind, and brought in place,
Or quite deuourd her beauties scornefull grace.
The Monster swift as word, that from her went,
Went forth in hast, and did her footing trace
So sure and swiftly, through his perfect sent,
And passing speede, that shortly he her ouerhent.

XXIV

Whom when the fearefull Damzell nigh espide,
No need to bid her fast away to flie;
That vgly shape so sore her terrifide,
That it she shund no lesse, then dread to die,
And her flit Palfrey did so well apply
His nimble feet to her conceiued feare,
That whilst his breath did strength to him supply,
From perill free he her away did beare:
But when his force gan faile, his pace gan wex areare.

XXV

Which whenas she perceiu’d, she was dismayd
At that same last extremitie full sore,
And of her safetie greatly grew afrayd;
And now she gan approch to the sea shore,
As it befell, that she could flie no more,
But yield her selfe 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 sickenesse.

XXVI

Not halfe so fast the wicked Myrrha fled
From dread of her reuenging fathers hond:
Nor halfe so fast to saue her maidenhed,
Fled fearefull Daphne on th’AEgaean strond,
As Florimell fled from that Monster yond,
To reach the sea, ere she of him were raught:
For in the sea to drowne her selfe she fond,
Rather then of the tyrant to be caught:
Thereto feare gaue her wings, and neede her courage taught.

XXVII

It fortuned (high God did so ordaine)
As she arriued on the roring shore,
In minde to leape into the mighty maine,
A little boate lay houing her before,
In which there slept a fisher old and pore,
The whiles his nets were drying on the sand:
Into the same she leapt, and with the ore
Did thrust the shallop from the floting strand:
So safetie found at sea, which she found not at land.

XXVIII

The Monster ready on the pray to sease,
Was of his forward hope deceiued 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 auenge his deuilish despight,
He set vpon her Palfrey tired lame,
And slew him cruelly, ere any reskew came.

XXIX

And after hauing him embowelled,
To fill his hellish gorge, it chaunst a knight
To passe that way, as forth he trauelled;
It was a goodly Swaine, and of great might,
As euer man that blodyd field did fight;
But in vaine sheows, that wont yong knights bewitch,
And courtly services tooke no delight,
But rather ioyd to be, then seemen sich:
For both to be and seeme to him was labour lich.

XXX

It was to weete the good Sir Satyrane,
That raungd abroad to seeke aduentures wilde,
As was his wont in forrest, and in plaine;
He was all armd in rugged steele vnfilde,
As in the smoky forge it was compilde,
And in his Scutchin bore a Satyres hed:
He comming present, where the Monster vilde
Vpon that milke-white Palfreyes carkas fed,
Vnto his reskew ran, and greedily him sped.

XXXI

There well perceiu’d 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 Mayd, the flowre of womens pride;
For her he dearely loued, and in all
His famous conquests highly magnifide:
Besides her golden girdle, which did fall
From her in flight, he found, that did him sore apall.

XXXII

Full of sad feare, and doubtfull agony,
Fiercely he flew vpon that wicked feend,
And with huge strokes, and cruell battery
Him forst to leaue his pray, for to attend
Him selfe from deadly daunger to defend:
Full many wounds in his corrupted flesh
He did engraue, and muchell bloud did spend,
Yet might not do him dye, but aye more fresh
And fierce he still appeard, the more he did him thresh.

XXXIII

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
Vpon the beast, that with great cruelty
Rored, and raged to be vnder-kept:
Yet he perforce him held, and strokes vpon him hept.

XXXIV

As he that striues to stop a suddein flood,
And in strong banckes his violence enclose,
Forceth it swell aboue his wonted mood,
And largely ouerflow 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 labour lost so soone,
For which to God he made so many an idle boone.

XXXV

So him he held, and did through might amate:
So long he held him, and him bet so long,
That at the last his fiercenesse gan abate,
And meekely stoup vnto the victour strong:
Who to auenge the implacable wrong,
Which he supposed donne to Florimell,
Sought by all meanes his dolour to prolong,
Sith dint of steele his carcass could not quell:
His maker with her charmes had framed him so well.

XXXVI

The golden ribband, which that virgin wore
About her sclender wast, he tooke in hand,
And with it bound the beast, that lowd did rore
For great despight of that vnwonted band,
Yet dared not his victour 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 neuer learned he such seruice, till that day.

XXXVII

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.

XXXVIII

Which whenas Satyrane beheld, in hast
He left his captiue 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 for thy,
But forward gallopt fast; which when he spyde,
His mighty speare he couched warily,
And at her ran: she hauing him descryde,
Her selfe to fight addrest, and threw her lode aside.

XXXIX

Like as a Goshauke, that in foote doth beare
A trembling Culuer, hauing spied on hight
An Egle, that with plumy wings doth sheare
The subtile ayre, stouping with all his might,
The quarrey throwes to ground with fell despight,
And to the battell doth her selfe prepare:
So ran the Geauntesse vnto the fight;
Her firie eyes with furious sparkes did stare,
And with blasphemous bannes high God in peeces tare.

XL

She caught in hand an huge great yron mace,
Wherewith she many had of life depreviued,
But ere the stroke could seize his aymed place,
His speare amid her sun-broad shield arriued;
Yet nathemore the steele a sunder riued,
All were the beame in bignesse like a mast,
Ne her out of the stedfast sadle driued,
But glauncing on the tempred mettall, brast
In thousand shiuers, and so forth beside her past.

XLI

Her Steed did stagger with that puissaunt strooke;
But she no more was moued with that might,
Then it had lighted on an aged Oke;
Or on the marble Pillour, that is pight
Vpon the top of Mount Olympus hight,
For the braue youthly Champions to assay,
With burning charet wheeles it nigh to smite:
But who that smites it, mars his ioyous play,
And is the spectacle of ruinous decay.

XLII

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 vnto him addioyned side to syde;

And on his collar laying puissant hand,
Out of his wauering seat him pluckt perforse,
Perforse him pluckt, vnable to withstand,
Or helpe himselfe, and laying thwart her horse,
In loathly wise like to a carion corse,
She bore him fast away. Which when the knight,
That her pursewed, saw with great remorse,
He neare 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 battell to abide,
But made her selfe more light, away to fly:
Yet her the hardy knight pursewed 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 cheuisaunce:
At length he spide, whereas that wofull Squire,
Whom he had reskewed from captiuaunce
Of his strong foe, lay tumbled in the myre,
Vnable to arise, or foot or hand to styre.

XLVI
To whom approching, well he mote perceiue
In that foule plight a comely personage,
And louely face, made fit for to deceiue
Fraile Ladies hart with loues consuming rage,
Now in the blossome of his freshest age:
He reard him vp, and loosd his yron bands,
And after gan inquire his parentage,
And how he fell into that Gyaunts hands,
And who that was, which chaced her along the lands.

XLVII
Then trembling yet through feare, the Squire bespake,
That Geauntesse Argante is behight,
A daughter of the Titans which did make
Warre against heauen, and heaped hils on hight,
To scale the skyes, and put Ioue from his right:
Her sire Typhœus was, who mad through merth,
And drunke with bloud of men, slaine by his might,
Through incest, her of his owne mother Earth
Whilome begot, being but halfe twin of that berth.

XLVIII

For at that berth another Babe she bore,
To weet the mighty 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)

Whiles in their mothers wombe enclosd they were,
Ere they into the lightsome world were brought,
In fleshly lust were mingled both yfere,
And in that monstrous wise did to the world appere.

XLIX

So liu’d they euer after in like sin,
Against natures law, and good behauioure:

But greatest shame was to that maiden twin,
Who not content so fowly to deuoure
Her natuie flesh, and staine her brothers bowre,
Did wallow in all other fleshly myre,
And suffred beasts her body to deflowre:
So whot she burned in that lustfull fyre,
Yet all that might not slake her sensuall desyre.

L

But ouer all the countrey she did raunge,
To seeke young men, to quench her flaming thurst,
And feed her fancy with delightfull chaunge:
Whom so she fittest finds to serue her lust,
Through her maine strength, in which she most doth trust,
She with her brings 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.

LI

Me seely wretch she so at vauntage caught,
After she long in waite for me did lye,
And meant vnto her prison to haue brought,
Her lothesome pleasure there to satisfye;
That thousand deathes me leuer were to dye,
Then breake the vow, that to faire Columbell
I plighted haue, and yet keepe stedfastly:
As for my name, it mistreth not to tell;
Call me the Squyre of Dames that me beseemeth well.

LII

But that bold knight, whom ye pursuing saw
That Geauntesse, is not such, as she seemed,
But a faire virgin, that in martiall law,
And deedes of armes aboue all Dames is deemed,
And aboue many knights is eke esteemed,
For her great worth; She Palladine is hight:
She you from death, you me from dread redeemed.

Ne any may that Monster match in fight,
But she, or such as she, that is so chaste a wight.

LIII

Her well beseemes that Quest (quoth Satyrane)
But read, thou Squyre of Dames, what vow is this,
Which thou vpon thy selve 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 loue and serue,
After long suit and weary seruicis,
Did aske me, how I could her loue deserue,
And how she might be sure, that I would neuer swerue.

LIV

I glad by any meanes her grace to gaine,
Bad her commaund my life to saue, or spill.
Eftsoones she bad me, with incessaunt paine
To wander through the world abroad at will,
And euery where, where with my power or skill
I might do seruice vnto gentle Dames,
That I the same should faithfully fulfill,
And at the twelue monethes end should bring their names
And pledges; as the spoiles of my victorious games.

LV

So well I to faire Ladies seruice did,
And found such fauour in their louing hartes,
That ere the yeare his course had compassid,
Three hundred pledges for my good desartes,
And thrise 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 grieuous punishment.

LVI

To weet, that I my trauell should resume,
And with like labour walke the world around,
Ne euer to her presence should presume,
Till I so many other Dames had found,
The which, for all the suit I could propound,
Would me refuse their pledges to afford,
But did abide for euer chast and sound.
Ah gentle Squire (quoth he) tell at one word,
How many foundst thou such to put in thy record?

LVII

In deed Sir knight (said he) one word may tell
All, that I euer found so wisely stayd;
For onely three they were disposd so well,
And yet three yeares I now abroad haue strayd,
To find 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 auizd to bee,
Or brutishly brought vp, that neu’r did fashions see.

LVIII

The first which then refused me (said hee)

Certes was but a common Courtisane,

Yet flat refusd to haue a do with mee,

Because I could not giue her many a lane.

(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.

LIX

The third a Damzell was of low degree,

Whom I in countrey cottage found by chaunce;

Full little weened I, that chastitee

Had lodging in so meane a maintenaunce,

Yet was she faire, and in her countenance

Dwelt simple truth in seemely fashion.

Long thus I woo’d her with dew obseruance,

In hope vnto my pleasure to haue won;

But was as farre at last, as when I first begun.

LX

Safe her, I neuer 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 euer to attaine
My Ladies loue, in such a desperate case,
But all my dayes am like to wast in vaine,
Seeking to match the chaste with th'vnchaste Ladies traine.

LXI

Perdy, (said Satyrane) thou Squire 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 ouercame,
He found him not; for he had broke his band,
And was return'd againe vnto his Dame,
To tell what tydings of faire Florimell became.

Canto VIII

The Witch creates a snowy Lady,
like to Florimell,
Who wrongd by Carle by Proteus sau'd,
is sought by Paridell.

SO oft as I this history record,
My hart doth melt with meere compassion,
To thinke, how causelesse of her owne accord
This gentle Damzell, whom I write vpon,
Should plonged be in such affliction,
Without all hope of comfort or reliefe,
That sure I weene, the hardest hart of stone,
Would hardly find to aggrauate her griefe;
For misery craues rather mercie, then repriefe.

II
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 forth she sent, she backe returning spyde,
Tyde with her broken girdle, it a part
Of her rich spoyles, whom he had earst destroyd,
She weend, and wondrous gladnesse to her hart applyde.

III
And with it running hast'ly to her sonne,
Thought with that sight him much to haue reliued;
Who thereby deeming sure the thing as donne,
His former griefe with furie fresh reuiued,
Much more then earst, and would haue algates riued
The hart out of his brest: for sith her ded
He surely dempt, himselfe he thought depriued
Quite of all hope, wherewith he long had fed
His foolish maladie, and long time had misled.

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 Sprights to entertaine
The masters of her art: there was she faine
To call them all in order to her ayde,
And them conjure upon eternal paine,
To counsel her so carefully dismayd,
How she might heale her sonne, whose senses were decayd.

By their advise, and her owne wicked wit,
She there devised a wondrous worke to frame,
Whose like on earth was never framed yet,
That even Nature herself enuide 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 bodie made,
Was purest snow in massie mould congeald,
Which she had gathered in a shadie glade
Of the Riphœan hills, to her reueald

By errant Sprights, but from all men conceal'd:

The same she tempred with fine Mercury,

And virgin wex, that never yet was seal'd,

And mingled them with perfect vermily,

That like a lively sanguine it seem'd to the eye.

VII

In stead of eyes two burning lampes she set

In siluer sockets, shyning like the skyes,

And a quicke mouing Spirit did arret

To stirre and roll them, like a womans eyes;

In stead of yellow lockes she did devise,

With golden wyre to weave her curled head;

Yet golden wyre was not so yellow thrice

As Florimells faire haire: and in the stead

Of life, she put a Spright to rule the carkasse dead.

VIII

A wicked Spright yfraught with fawning guile,

And faire resemblance aboue all the rest,

Which with the Prince of Darknesse fell somewhat,

From heauens blisse and euerlasting rest;

Him needed not instruct, which way were best

Himselfe to fashion likest Florimell,

Ne how to speake, ne how to vse his gest,

For he in counterfeisance did excell,
And all the wyles of wemens wits knew passing well.

IX

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 fairer then her selfe, if ought algate
Might fairer be. And then she forth her brought
Vnto her sonne, that lay in feeble state;
Who seeing her gan streight vpstart, and thought
She was the Lady selfe, whom he so long had sought.

X

Tho fast her clipping twixt his armes twaine,
Extremely ioyed in so happie sight,
And soone forgot his former sickly paine;
But she, the more to seeme such as she hight,
Coyly rebutted his embracement light;
Yet still with gentle countenaunce retained,
Enough to hold a foole in vaine delight:
Him long she so with shadowes entertained,
As her Creatresse had in charge to her ordained.

XI

Till on a day, as he disposed was
To walke the woods with that his Idole faire,
Her to disport, and idle time to pas,
In th'open freshnesse 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 euer in despaire,
Proud Braggadocchio, that in vaunting vaine
His glory did repose, and credit did maintaine.

XII

He seeing with that Chorle so faire a wight,
Decked with many a costly ornament,
Much merueiled thereat, as well he might,
And thought that match a fowle disparagement:
His bloudie speare eftsoones he boldly bent
Against the silly clowne, who dead through feare,
Fell streight to ground in great astonishment;
Villein (said he) this Ladie is my deare,
Dy, if thou it gainesay: I will away her beare.

XIII

The fearefull Chorle durst not gainesay, nor dooe,
But trembling stood, and yielded him the pray;
Who finding little leasure her to wooe,
On Tromparts steed her mounted without stay,
And without reskew led her quite away.
Proud man himselfe then Braggadocchio deemed,
And next to none, after that happie day,
Being possessed of that spoyle, which seemed
The fairest wight on ground, and most of men esteemed.

XIV

But when he saw himselfe free from poursute,
He gan make gentle purpose to his Dame,
With termes of loue and lewdnesse dissolve;
For he could well his glozing speaches frame
To such vaine vses, that him best became:
But she thereto would lend but light regard,
As seeming sory, that she euer came
Into his powre, that vsed her so hard,
To reaue her honor, which she more then life prefard.

XV

Thus as they two of kindnesse treated long,
There them by chaunce encountred on the way
An armed knight, vpon a courser strong,
Whose trampling feet vpon the hollow lay
Seemed to thunder, and did nigh affray
That Capons courage: yet he looked grim,
And fain’d to cheare his Ladie in dismay;
Who seem’d for feare to quake in euery lim,
And her to saue from outrage, meekely prayed him.

XVI

Fiercely that stranger forward came, and nigh
Approching, with bold words and bitter threat,
Bad that same boaster, as he mote, on high
To leaue to him that Lady for excheat,
Or bide him battell without further treat.
That challenge did too peremptory seeme,
And fild his senses with abashment great;
Yet seeing nigh him leopardy extreme,
He it dissembled well, and light seem’d to esteeme.

XVII

Saying, Thou foolish knight, that weenst with words
To steale away, that I with blowes haue wonne,
And brought throgh points of many perilous swords:
But if thee list to see thy Courser ronne,
Or proue thy selfe, this sad encounter shonne,
And seeke else without hazard of thy hed.
At those proud words that other knight begonne
To wexe exceeding wroth, and him ared
To turne his steede about, or sure he should be ded.

XVIII

Sith then (said Braggadocchio) needes thou wilt
Thy dayes abridge, through profe of puissance,
Turne we our steedes, that both in equall tilt
May meet againe, and each take happie chance.
This said, they both a furlongs mountenance
Retyrd their steeds, to ronne in euen race:
But Braggadocchio with his bloudie lance
Once hauing turnd, no more returnd his face,
But left his loue to losse, and fled himselfe apace.

XIX

The knight him seeing fly, had no regard
Him to pournsew, but to the Ladie rode,
And hauing her from Trompart lightly reard,
Vpon his Courser set the louely 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 heauen, that was in hell.

XX

But Florimell her selfe was farre away,
Driuen 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:
Yet there that cruell Queene auengeresse,
Not satisfide so farre her to estraunge
From courtly blisse and wonted happinesse,
Did heape on her new waues of weary wretchednesse.

XXI

For being fled into the fishers bote,
For refuge from the Monsters crueltie,
Long so she on the mightie maine did flote,
And with the tide droue forward careleslie;
For th’aire was milde, and cleared was the skie,
And all his windes Dan Aeolus did keepe,
From stirring vp their stormy enmitie,
As pittying to see her waile and weepe;
But all the while the fisher did securely sleepe.

XXII

At last when droncke with drowsinesse, he woke,
And saw his drouer driue along the streame,
He was dismayd, and thrise his breast he stroke,
For maruell of that accident extreame;
But when he saw that blazing beauties beame,
Which with rare light his bote did beautifie,
He marueild more, and thought he yet did dreame
Not well awakt, or that some extasie
Assotted had his sense, or dazed was his eie.

XXIII

But when her well auizing, he perceiued
To be no vision, nor fantasticke sight,
Great comfort of her presence he conceiued,
And felt in his old courage new delight
To gin awake, and stirre his frozen spright:
Tho rudely askt her, how she thither came.
Ah (said she) father, I note read aright,
What hard misfortune brought me to the same;
Yet am I glad that here I now in safety am.

XXIV

But thou good man, sith farre in sea we bee,
And the great waters gin apace to swell,
That now no more we can the maine-land see,
Haue care, I pray, to guide the cock-bote well,
Least worse on sea then vs on land befell.
Thereat th'old man did nought but fondly grin,
And said, his boat the way could wisely tell:
But his deceiptfull eyes did neuer lin,
To looke on her faire face, and marke her snowy skin.

XXV

The sight whereof in his congealed flesh,
Infxt such secret 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 hand
Where ill became him, rashly would haue thrust,
But she with angry scorne him did withstond,
And shamefully reproved for his rudenesse fond.

XXVI

But he, that neuer 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 vnto his will,
Forcing to doe, that did him fowle misseeme:
Beastly he threw her downe, ne car’d to spill
Her garments gay with scales of fish, that all did fill.

XXVII

The silly virgin strove him to withstand,
All that she might, and him in vaine reuild:
She struggled strongly both with foot and hand,
To saue her honor from that villaine vild,
And cride to heauen, from humane helpe exild.
O ye braue knights, that boast this Ladies loue,
Where be ye now, when she is nigh defild
Of filthy wretch? well may shee you reproue
Of falshood or of slouth, when most it may behoue.

XXVIII

But if that thou, Sir Satyran, didst weete,
Or thou, Sir Peridure, her sorie state,
How soone would yee assemble many a fleete,
To fetch from sea, that ye at land lost late;
Towres, Cities, Kingdomes ye would ruinate,
In your auengement and dispiteous 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 soueraine favour towards chastity,
Doe succour send to her distressed case:
So much high God doth innocence embrace.

It fortuned, whilst thus she stifly stroue,
And the wide sea importuned long space
With shrilling shrieks, Proteus abrode did roue,
Along the fomy waues driuing his finny droue.

Proteus is Shepheard of the seas of yore,
And hath the charge of Neptunes mightie heard;
An aged sire with head all frory hore,
And sprinckled frost vpon his deawy beard:
Who when those pittifull outcries he heard,
Through all the seas so ruefully resound,
His charet swift in haste he thither steard,
Which with a teeme of scaly Phocas bound
Was drawne vpon the waues, that fomed him around.

And comming to that Fishers wandring bote,
That went at will, withouten carde 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 little fayle,
And with his staffe, that driues his Heard astray,
Him bet so sore, that life and sense did much dismay.

XXXII

The whiles the pitteous Ladie vp 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 saue her selfe from that outrageous spoyle,
But when she looked vp, 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 loudly shright.

XXXIII

Her selfe not saued yet from daunger dred
She thought, but chaung’d from one to other feare;
Like as a fearefull Partridge, that is fled
From the sharpe Hauke, which her attached neare,
And fals to ground, to seeke for succour theare,
Whereas the hungry Spaniels she does spy,
With greedy iawes her readie for to teare;
In such distresse and sad perplexity
Was Florimell, when Proteus she did see thereby.

XXXIV

But he endeuored with speeches 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 preuayld;
For her faint heart was with the frozen cold
Benumbd so inly, that her wits nigh fayld,
And all her senses with abashment quite were quayld.

XXXV

Her vp betwixt his rugged hands he reard,
And with his froy lips full softly kist,
Whiles the cold ysickles from his rough beard,
Dropped adowne vpon her yuorie brest:
Yet he himselfe so busily addrest,
That her out of astonishment he wrought,
And out of that same fishers filthy nest
Remouing her, into his charet brought,
And there with many gentle termes her faire besought.

XXXVI

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 waues in scornefull state,
And after cast him vp, vpon the shore;
But Florimell with him vnto his bowre he bore.

XXXVII

His bowre is in the bottome of the maine,
Vnder a mightie rocke, gainst which do raue
The roaring billowes in their proud disdaine,
That with the angry working of the waue,
Therein is eaten out an hollow caue,
That seemes rough Masons hand with engines keene
Had long while laboured it to engrae:
There was his wonne, ne liuing wight was seene,
Saue one old Nymph, hight Panope to keepe it cleane.

XXXVIII

Thither he brought the sory Florimell,
And entertained her the best he might
And Panope her entertaind eke well,
As an immortall mote a mortall wight,
To winne her liking vnto his delight:
With flattering words he sweetly wooed her,
And offered faire gifts t’allure her sight,
But she both offers and the offerer
Despysde, and all the fawning of the flatterer.

Daily he tempted her with this or that,
And neuer suffred her to be at rest:
But euermore she him refused flat,
And all his fained kindnesse did detest,
So firmely she had sealed vp her brest.

Sometimes he boasted, that a God he hight:
But she a mortall creature loued best:
Then he would make himselfe a mortall wight;
But then she said she lou’d none, but a Faerie knight.

Then like a Faerie knight himselfe he drest;
For euery shape on him he could endew:
Then like a king he was to her exprest,
And offred kingdoms vnto her in vew,
To be his Leman and his Ladie trew:
But when all this he nothing saw preuaile,
With harder meanes he cast her to subdew,
And with sharpe threates her often did assaile,
So thinking for to make her stubborne courage quaile.

To dreadfull shapes he did himselfe transforme,
Now like a Gyant, now like to a feend,
Then like a Centaure, then like to a storme,
Raging within the waues: thereby he weend
Her will to win vnto his wished end.
But when with feare, nor fauour, nor with all
He else could doe, he saw himselfe esteemd,
Downe in a Dongeon deepe he let her fall,
And threatned there to make her his eternall thrall.

XLII

Eternall thraldome was to her more liefe,
Then losse of chastitie, or chaunge of loue:
Die had she rather in tormenting grieffe,
Then any should of falsenesse her reprooue,
Or loosenesse, that she lightly did remoue.
Most vertuous virgin, glory be thy meed,
And crowne of heauenly praise with Saints aboue,
Where most sweet hymmes of this thy famous deed
Are still amongst them song, that far my rymes exceed.

XLIII

Fit song of Angels caroled to bee;
But yet what so my feeble Muse can frame,
Shall be t'aduance thy goodly chastitee,
And to enroll thy memorable name,
In th'heart of euery honourable Dame,
That they thy vertuous deedes may imitate,
And be partakers of thy endlessse fame.

It yrkes me, leaue thee in this wofull state,
To tell of Satyrane, where I him left of late.

XLIV

Who hauing ended with that Squire of Dames
A long discourse of his adventures vaine,
The which himselfe, then Ladies more defames,
And finding not th’Hyena to be slaine,
With that same Squire, returned backe againe
To his first way. And as they forward went,
They spyde a knight faire pricking on the plaine,
As if he were on some adventure bent,
And in his port appeared manly hardiment.

XLV

Sir Satyrane him towards 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 tydings farre abrode;
And afterwardes, on what adventure now he rode.

XLVI

Who thereto answering, said; The tydings bad,
Which now in Faerie court all men do 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 braue knights, that doen in armes excell,
To sauegard her, ywanded all alone;
Emongst the rest my lot (vnworthy) is to be one.

XLVII

Ah gentle knight (said then Sir Satyrane)
Thy labour all is lost, I greatly dread,
That hast a thanklesse seruice on thee ta'ne,
And offrest sacrifice vnto the dead:
For dead, I surely doubt, thou maist aread
Henceforth for euer Florimell to be,
That all the noble knights of Maydenhead,
Which her ador'd, may sore repent with me,
And all faire Ladies may for euer sory be.

XLVIII

Which words when Paridell had heard, his hew
Gan greatly chaunge, and seem'd dismayd to bee;
Then said, Faire Sir, how may I weene it trew,
That ye doe tell in such vncertaintee?
Or speake ye of report, or did ye see
Just cause of dread, that makes ye doubt so sore?
For perdie else how mote it euer bee,
That euer hand should dare for to engore
Her noble bloud? the heauens such crueltie abhore.

XLIX

These eyes did see, that they will euer rew

T'haue seene, (quoth he) when as a monstrous beast T
he Palfrey, whereon she did trauell, slew,

And of his bowels made his bloudie feast:

Which speaking token sheweth at the least

Her certaine losse, if not her sure decay:

Besides, that more suspition encreast,

I found her golden girdle cast astray,

Distaynd with durt and bloud, as relique of the pray.

L

Aye me, (said Paridell) the signes be sad,

And but God turne the same to good soothsay,

That Ladies safetie is sore to be drad:

Yet will I not forsake my forward way,

Till triall doe more certaine 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.

LI

Ye noble knights (said then the Squire of Dames)

Well may ye speed in so praiseworthy paine:

But sith the Sunne now ginne to slake his beames,
In deawy vapours of the westerne maine,
And lose the teme out of his weary waine,
Mote not mislike you also to abate
Your zealous hast, till morrow next againe
Both light of heauen, and strength of men relate:
Which if ye please, to yonder castle turne your gate.

LII

That counsell pleased well; so all yfere
Forth marched to a Castle them before,
Where soone arriving, they restrained were
Of readie entrance, which ought euermore
To errant knights be commun: wondrous sore
Thereat displeasd they were, till that young Squire
Gan them informe the cause, why that same dore
Was shut to all, which lodging did desire:
The which to let you weet, will further time require.

Canto IX

_Malbecco will no straunge knights host,
For peeuish gealosie:
Paridell giusts with Britomart:
Both shew their auncestrie._

REdoubted knights, and honorable Dames,
To whom I leuell all my labours end,
Right sore I feare, least with vnworthy blames
This odious argument my rimes should shend,
Or ought your goodly patience offend,
Whiles of a wanton Lady I do write,
Which with her loose incontinence doth blend
The shyning glory of your soueraigne light,
And knighthood fowle defaced by a faithlesse knight.

II
But neuer let th'ensample of the bad
Offend the good: for good by paragone
Of euill, may more notably be rad,
As white seemes fairer, macht with blacke attone;
Ne all are shamed by the fault of one:
For lo in heauen, whereas all goodnesse is,
Emongst the Angels, a whole legione
Of wicked Sprights did fall from happy blis;
What wonder then, if one of women all did mis?

III
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 Squire 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 priuittie,
Yet has full large to liue, and spend at libertie.

**IV**

But all his mind is set on mucky pelfe,
To hoord vp heapes of euill gotten masse,
For which he others wrongs, and wreckes himselfe;
Yet he is lincked to a louely lasse,
Whose beauty doth her bounty far surpasse,
The which to him both far vnequall yeares,
And also far vnlike conditions has;
For she does ioy to play amongst her peares,
And to be free from hard restraint and gealous feares.

**V**

But he is old, and withered like hay,
Vnfit faire Ladies seruice to supply;
The priuie guilt whereof makes him alway
Suspect her truth, and keepe continuall spy
Vpon her with his other blincked eye;
Ne suffreth he resort of liuing wight
Approch to her, ne keepe her company,
But in close bowre her mewes from all mens sight,
Depriu’d of kindly ioy and naturall delight.

**VI**

Malbecco he, and Hellenore she hight,
Vnfitly ykot together in one teeme,
That is the cause, why neuer any kniht
Is suffred here to enter, but he seeme
Such, as no doubt of him he neede misdeeme.
Thereat Sir Satyrane gan smile, and say;
Extremely mad the man I surely deeme,
That weenes with watch and hard restraint to stay
A womans will, which is disposd to go astray.

VII

In vaine he feares that, which he cannot shonne:
For who wotes not, that womans subtilyes
Can guilen 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 good will with gentle curtesyes,
And timely seruice to her pleasures meet
May her perhaps containe, that else would algates fleet.

VIII

Then is he not more mad (said Paridell)
That hath himselfe vnto such seruice sold,
In dolefull thraldome all his dayes to dwell?
For sure a foole I do him firmely hold,
That loues his fetters, though they were of gold.
But why do we deuise of others ill,
Whilest thus we suffer this same dotard old,
To keepe vs out, in scorne of his owne will,
And rather do not ransack all, and him selfe kill?

Nay let vs first (said Satyrane) entreat
The man by gentle meanes, to let vs in,
And afterwardes affray with cruell threat,
Ere that we to efforce it do 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
Vnto their rest, and all the keyes conuayd
Vnto 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 threatened 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 ouercast,
Gan blowen vp a bitter stormy blast,
With shoure 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 swine was ordered.

XII

It fortuned, soone after they were gone,
Another knight, whom the 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 displeasd, and thought
How to auenge himselfe so sore abused,
And euermore the Carle of curtesie accusd.

XIII

But to auoyde th'intollerable 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 defide them each, and so defide them both.

XIV

Both were full loth to leaue that needfull tent,
And both full loth in darkenesse to debate;
Yet both full liefe him lodging to haue lent,
And both full liefe his boasting to abate;
But chiefly Paridell his hart did grate,
To heare him threaten so despightfully,
As if he did a dogge to kenell rate,
That durst not barke; and rather had he dy,
Then when he was defide, in coward corner ly.

XV

Tho hastily remounting to his steed,
He forth issew'd; like as a boistrous wind,
Which in th'earthes hollow caues hath long bin hid,
And shut vp fast within her prisons blind,
Makes the huge element against her kind
To moue, and tremble as it were agast,
Vntill that it an issew forth may find;
Then forth it breaks, and with his furious blast
Confounds both land and seas, and skyes doth ouercast.

XVI

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 droue to ground both man and horse,
That each awhile lay like a sencelesse corse.
But Paridell sore brused with the blow,
Could not arose, the counterchaunge to scorse,
Till that young Squire him reared from below;
Then drew he his bright sword, and gan about him throw.

XVII

But Satyrane forth stepping, did them stay
And with faire treatie pacifide their ire,
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 bene agreed, and to the gates they goe
To burne the same with vnquenchable fire,
And that vncurteous Carle their commune foe
To do fowle death to dye, or wrap in grieuous woe.

XVIII

Malbecco seeing them resolu'd in deed
To flame the gates, and hearing them to call
For fire in earnest, ran with fearefull speed,
And to them calling from the castle wall,
Besought them humbly, him to beare with all,
As ignoraunt of servaunts bad abuse,
And slacke attendaunce vnto straungers call.
The knights were willing all things to excuse,
Though nought beleu’d, and entraunce late did not refuse.

XIX

They bene ybrought into a comely bowre,
And seru’d 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 themselues. Each gan vndight
Their garments wet, and weary armour free,
To dry them selues by Vulcanes flaming light,
And eke their lately bruzed parts to bring in plight.

XX

And eke that straunger knight emongst the rest,
Was for like need enforst to disaray:
Tho whenas vailed was her loftie crest,
Her golden locks, that were in tramels gay
Vpbounden, did them selues adowne display,
And raught vnto her heeles; like sunny beames,
That in a cloud their light did long time stay,
Their vapour vaded, shew their golden gleames,
And through the persant aire shoote forth their azure streames.

XXI

She also dofte her heauy haberieon,
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,
She 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, vnwist to bee,
The fairest woman wight, that euer eye did see.

XXII

Like as Minerua, being late returnd
From slaughter of the Giaunts conquered;
Where proud Encelade, whose wide noethrilis burnd
With breathed flames, like to a furnace red,
Transfixed with the speare, downe tombled ded
From top of Hemus, by him heaped yye;
Hath losd her helmet from her lofty hed,
And her Gorgonian shield gins to vntye
From her left arme, to rest in glorious victorye.

XXIII

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 surprised. At last auizing right,
Her goodly personage and glorious hew,
Which they so much mistooke, they tooke delight
In their first errour, and yet still anew
With wonder of her beauty fed their hungry vew.

Yet note their hungry vew be satisfide,
But seeing still the more desir’d to see,
And euer firmly fixed did abide
In contemplation of diuinitie:
But most they meruaild at her cheualree,
And noble prowesse, which they had approued,
That much they faynd to know, who she mote bee;
Yet none of all them her thereof amoued,
Yet euery one her likte, and euery one her loued.

And Paridell though partly discontent
With his late fall, and fowle indignity,
Yet was soone wonne his malice to relent,
Through gracious 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 curtesy,
That of his Lady they might haue the sight,
And company at meat, to do them more delight.

But he to shift their curious request,
Gan causen, why she could not come in place;
Her crased health, her late recourse to rest,
And humid euening ill for sicke folkes cace:
But none of those excuses could take place;
Ne would they eate, till she in presence came.
She came in presence with right comely grace,
And fairely them saluted, as became,
And shewd her selfe in all a gentle curteous Dame.

XXVII

They sate to meat, and Satyrane his chaunce
Was her before, and Paridell besyde;
But he him selfe sate looking still askaunce,
Gainst Britomart, and euer closely eyde
Sir Satyrane, that glaunces might not glyde:
But his blind eye, that syded Paridell,
All his demeanure from his sight did hyde:
On her faire face so did he feede his fill,
And sent close messages of loue to her at will.

XXVIII

And euer and anone, when none was ware,
With speaking lookes, that close embassage bore,
He rou’d at her, and told his secret care:
For all that art he learned had of yore.
Ne was she ignoraunt of that lewd lore,
But in his eye his meaning wisely red,
And with the like him answerd euermore:
She sent at him one firie dart, whose hed
Empoisioned was with privy lust, and jealous dread.

He from that deadly throw made no defence,

But to the wound his weak heart opened wide;

The wicked engine through false influence,

Past through his eyes, and secretly did glide

Into his heart, which it did sorely grieve.

But nothing new to him was that same pain,

Neither pain at all; for he so oft had tried

The power thereof, and loved so oft in vain,

That thing of course he counted, love to entertain.

Thenceforth to her he sought to intimate

His inward grief, by means to him well known,

Now Bacchus fruit out of the silver plate

He on the table dash'd, as overthrown,

Or of the fruitful liquor overflown,

And by the dancing bubbles did divine,

Or therein write to let his love be shown;

Which well she read out of the learned line,

A sacrament profane in mystery of wine.

And when so of his hand the pledge she raught,

The guilty cup she fain'd 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

Vnto their wils, and one eyes watch escape;

Two eyes him needeth, for to watch and wake,

Who louers will deceiue. Thus was the ape,

By their faire handling, put into Malbeccoes cape.

XXXII

Now when of meats and drinks they had their fill,

Purpose was moued by that gentle Dame,

Vnto those knights aduenturous, to tell

Of deeds of armes, which vnto them became,

And euery one his kindred, and his name.

Then Paridell, in whom a kindly pryde

Of gracious speach, and skill his words to frame

Abounded, being glad of so fit tyde

Him to commend to her, thus spake, of all well eyde.

XXXIII

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 skye

Vpon thee heapt a direfull destinie,

What boots it boast thy glorious descent,

And fetch from heauen thy great Genealogie,

Sith all thy worthy prayses being blent,
Their of-spring hath embaste, and later glory shent.

XXXIV

Most famous Worthy of the world, by whome
That warre was kindled, which did Troy inflame,
And stately towres of Ilion whilome
Brought vnto balefull ruine, was by name
Sir Paris far renownd through noble fame,
Who through great provesse and bold hardinesse,
From Lacedaemon fetcht the fairest Dame,
That euer Greece did boast, or knight possesse,
Whom Venus to him gaue for meed of worthinesse.

XXXV

Faire Helene, flowre of beautie excellent,
And girdon of the mighty Conquerours,
That madest many Ladies deare lament
The heauie losse of their braue Paramours,
Which they far off beheld from Troian toures,
And saw the fieldes of faire Scamander strowne
With carcasses of noble warrioures,
Whose fruitlesse liues were vnder furrow sowne,
And Xanthus sandy bankes with bloud all ouerflowne.

XXXVI

From him my linage I deriue aright,
Who long before the ten yeares siege of Troy,
Whiles yet on Ida he a shepheard hight,
On faire Oenone got a louely boy,
Whom for remembraunce of her passed ioy,
She of his Father Parius did name;
Who, after Greekes did Priams realme destroy,
Gathred the Troian reliques sau’d from flame,
And with them sayling thence, to th’Isle of Paros came.

XXXVII

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 left next in remaine
To Paridas his sonne.
From whom I Paridell by kin descend;
But for faire Ladies loue, and glories gaine,
My native soile haue left, my dayes to spend
In sewing deeds of armes, my liues and labours end.

XXXVIII

Whenas the noble Britomart heard tell
Of Troian warres, and Priams Citie sackt,
The ruefull story of Sir Paridell,
She was empassiond at that piteous act,
With zelous enuy of Greekes cruell fact,
Against that nation, from whose race of old
She heard, that she was lineally extract:
For noble Britons sprong from Troians bold,
And Troynouant was built of old Troyes ashes cold.

XXXIX

Then sighing soft awhile, at last she thus:

O lamentable fall of famous towne,

Which raigned so many yeares victorious,

And of all Asie bore the soueraigne 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 flores so fresh at morne, and fades at euening late?

XL

Behold, Sir, how your pitifull complaint

Hath found another partner of your payne:

For nothing may impresse so deare constraint,

As countries cause, and commune foes disdayne.

But if it should not grieue 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 safetie retyre.

XLI

Anchyses sonne begot of Venus faire,

(Said he,) out of the flames for safegard fled,

And with a remnant did to sea repaire,
Where he through fatall errore long was led
Full many yeares, and weetlesse wandered
From shore to shore, amongst the Lybicke sands,
Ere rest he found. Much there he suffered,
And many perils past in forreine lands,
To saue his people sad from victours vengefull hands.

XLII

At last in Latium he did arrieue,
Where he with cruell warre was entertaind
Of th’inland folke, which sought him backe to driue,
Till he with old Latinus was constraind,
To contract wedlock: (so the fates ordaind.)
Wedlock contract in bloud, and eke in blood
Accomplished, that many deare complaind:
The riuall slaine, the victour through the flood
Escaped hardly, hardly praisd his wedlock good.

XLIII

Yet after all, he victour did suruiue,
And with Latinus did the kingdome part.
But after, when both nations gan to striue,
Into their names the title to conuart,
His sonne Iu”lus did from thence depart,
With all the warlike youth of Troians bloud,
And in long Alba plast his throne apart,
Where faire it florished, and long time stoud,
Till Romulus renewing it, to Rome remoud.

XLIV

There there (said Britomart) a fresh appeard
The glory of the later world to spring,
And Troy againe out of her dust was reard,
To sit in second seat of soueraigne king,
Of all the world vnder her gouerning.
But a third kingdome yet is to arise,
Out of the Troians scattered of-spring,
That in all glory and great enterprise,
Both first and second Troy shall dare to equalise.

XLV

It Troynouant is hight, that with the waues
Of wealthy Thamis washed is along,
Vpon whose stubborne neck, whereat he raues
With roring rage, and sore him selfe does throng,
That all men feare to tempt his billowes strong,
She fastned hath her foot, which standes so hy,
That it a wonder of the world is song
In forreine landes, and all which passen by,
Beholding it from far, do thinke it threates the skye.

XLVI

The Troian Brute did first that Citie found,
And Hygate made the meare thereof by West,
And Ouert gate by North: that is the bound
Toward the land; two rivers bound the rest.
So huge a scope at first him seemed best,
To be the compass of his kingdom's seat:
So huge a mind could not in lesser rest,
Ne in small measures contain his glory great,
That Albion had conquered first by warlike feat.

Ah fairest Lady knight, (said Paridell)
Pardon I pray my heedless oversight,
Who had forgot, that whilome I heard tell
From aged Mnemon; for my wits bene light.
Indeed he said (if I remember right,)
That of the antique Troian stocke, there grew
Another plant, that raught to wondrous height,
And far abroad his mighty branches threw,
Into the utmost Angle of the world he knew.

For that same Brute, whom much he did advantage
In all his speech, was Sylius his sonne,
Whom having slain, through luckless arrowes glaunce
He fled for feare of that he had misdone,
Or else for shame, so foul reproach to shone,
And with him led to sea an youthful traine,
Where weary wandering they long time did wone,
And many fortunes proud in th'Ocean mayne,
And great adventures found, that now were long to sayne.

XLIX

At last by fatall course they driuen were

Into an Island spatious and brode,

The furthest North, that did to them appeare:

Which after rest they seeking far abrode,

Found it the fittest soyle for their abode,

Fruitfull of all things fit for liuing foode,

But wholy wast, and void of peoples trode,

Saue an huge nation of the Geaunts broode,

That fed on liuing flesh, and druncke mens vitall blood.

L

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 ouerthrowne, and layd on th'earth full cold,

Which quaked vnder their so hideous masse,

A famous history to be enrold

In euerlasting moniments of brasse,

That all the antique Worthies merits far did passe.

LI

His worke great Troynouant, his worke is eke

Faire Lincolne, both renowned 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 entirely pray
Of pardon for the strife, which late befell
Betwixt vs both vnknowne. So ended Paridell.

LII

But all the while, that he these speaches spent,
Vpon his lips hong faire Dame Hellenore,
With vigilant regard, and dew attent,
Fashioning worlds of fancies euermore
In her fraile wit, that now her quite forlore:
The whiles vnwares away her wondring eye,
And greedy eares her weake hart from her bore:
Which he perceiuing, euer priuily
In speaking, many false belgardes at her let fly.

LIII

So long these knights discoursed diuersly,
Of straunge affaires, and noble hardiment,
Which they had past with mickle ieopardy,
That now the humid night was farforth spent,
And heauenly lampes were halfendeale ybrent:
Which th'old man seeing well, who too long thought
Euery discourse and euery argument,
Which by the houres he measured, besought
Them go to rest. So all vnto their bowres were brought.

Canto X

"Paridell rapeth Hellenore:

Malbecco her pursewes:

Findes amongst Satyres, whence with him

To turne she doth refuse.

I

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 heauen amoued quight,

Faire Britomart and that same Faerie knight

Vprose, forth on their iourney 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.

II

So forth 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 left not liberty:

Might wanting measure moueth surquedry.

Two things he feared, but the third was death;

That fierce youngmans vnrule maistery;

His money, which he lou’d as liuing breath;
And his faire wife, whom honest long he kept vneath.

III

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 euery way,
By which he feareth euill happen may:
So th'euill thinkes by watching to preuent;
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 himselse torment.

IV

But Paridell kept better watch, then hee,
A fit occasion for his turne to find:
False loue, why do men say, thou canst not see,
And in their foolish fancie feigne thee blind,
That with thy charmes the sharpest sight doest bind,
And to thy will abuse? Thou walkest free,
And seest euery secret of the mind;
Thou seest all, yet none at all sees thee;
All that is by the working of thy Deitee.

V

So perfect in that art was Paridell,
That he Melbecoes halfen eye did wyle,
His halfen eye he wiled wondrous well,

https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Literature_and_Literacy/Book%3A_British_Literature_I_-_Middle_Ages_to_the_Eigh…
Updated: Thu, 18 Feb 2021 07:27:55 GMT
Powered by
And Hellenors both eyes did eke beguyle,
Both eyes and hart attonce, during the whyle
That he there soiourned his wounds to heale;
That Cupid selfe it seeing, close did smyle,
To weet how he her loue away did steale,
And bad, that none their ioyous treason should reueale.

VI

The learned louer lost no time nor tyde,
That least auantage mote to him afford,
Yet bore so faire a saile, 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
Her courted her, yet bayted euery word,
That his vngentle hoste n’ote him appeach
Of vile vngentlenesse, or hospitages breach.

VII

But when apart (if euer her apart)
He found, then his false engins fast he plyde,
And all the sleights vnbosomd 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 liue,
He wept, and wayld, and false laments belyde,
Saying, but if she Mercie would him giue
That he mote algates dye, yet did his death forgiue.

VIII

And otherwhiles with amorous delights,
And pleasing toyes he would her entertaine,
Now singing sweetly, to surprise her sprights,
Now making layes of loue and louers paine,
Bransles, Ballads, virelayes, and verses vaine;
Oft purposes, oft riddles he deuysd,
And thousands like, which flowed in his braine,
With which he fed her fancie, and entysd
To take to his new loue, and leaue her old despysd.

IX

And euery where he might, and euery while
He did her seruice dewtifull, and sewed
At hand with humble pride, and pleasing guile,
So closely yet, that none but she it vewed,
Who well perceiued all, and all indewed.
Thus finely did he his false nets dispred,
With which he many weake harts had subdewed
Of yore, and many had ylike misled:
What wonder then, if she were likewise carried?

X

No fort so fensible, no wals so strong,
But that continuall battery will rieue,
Or daily siege through dispuruayance long,
And lacke of reskewes will to parlede driue;
And Peece, that vnto parlede eare will giue,
Will shortly yeeld it selfe, and will be made
The vassall of the victors will byliue:
That stratageme had oftentimes assayd
This crafty Paramoure, and now it plaine displayd.

XI

For through his traines he her intrapped hath,
That she her loue 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 faire Cucquold.
Nought wants but time and place, which shortly shee
Deuized hath, and to her louer told.
It pleased well. So well they both agree;
So readie rype to ill, ill wemens counsels bee.

XII

Darke was the Euening, fit for louers stealth,
When chaunst Melbecco 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 Troiane flames, and reach to heauens hight
Did clap her hands, and ioyed at that dolefull sight.

XIII

This second Hellene, faire Dame Hellenore,
The whiles her husband ranne with sory haste,
To quench the flames which she had tyn’d before,
Laught at his foolish labour spent in waste;
And ranne into her louers armes right fast;
Where streight embraced, she to him did cry,
And call aloud for helpe, ere helpe were past;
For loe that Guest would beare her forcibly,
And meant to rauish her, that rather had to dy

XIV

The wretched man hearing her call for ayd,
And readie seeing him with her to fly,
In his disquiet mind was much dismayd:
But when againe he backward cast his eye,
And saw the wicked fire so furiously
Consume his hart, and scorch his Idoles face,
He was therewith distressed diuersly,
Ne wist he how to turne, nor to what place;
Was neuer wretched man in such a wofull cace.

XV

Ay when to him she cryde, to her he turnd,
And left the fire; loue money ouercame:
But when he marked, how his money burnd,
He left his wife; money did love disclaim:
Both was he loth to lose his loved Dame,
And loth to leave his liefest pelfe behind,
Yet sith he n’ote saue both, he sau’d that same,
Which was the dearest to his dongsill mind,
The God of his desire, the joy of misers blind.

XVI

Thus whilst all things in troublous vprore were,
And all men busie to suppress the flame,
The loving couple need no reskew feare,
But leasure had, and libertie to frame
Their purpstock flight, free from all mens reclame;
And Night, the patronesse of loue-stealth faire,
Gave them safe conduct, till to end they came:
So bene they gone yfeare, a wanton paire
Of louers loosely knit, where list them to repaire.

XVII

Soone as the cruel flames yslaked were,
Malbecco seeing, how his losse did lye,
Out of the flames, which he had quencht whylere
Into huge waues of griefe and gealosye
Full deepe emplonged was, and drowned nye,
Twixt inward doole and felonous despight;
He rau’d, he wept, he stamp’t, he lowd did cry,
And all the passions, that in man may light,
Did him atonce oppresse, and vex his caytiue spright.

XVIII

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 seem’d more grieuous, then it was before:
At last when sorrow he saw booted nought,
Ne griefe might not his loue to him restore,
He gan deuise, how her he reskew mought,
Ten thousand wayes he cast in his confused thought.

XIX

At last resoluing, 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 leaues in ground: So takes in hond
To seeke her endlong, both by sea and lond.
Long he her sought, he sought her farre and nere,
And euer where that he mote vnderstond,
Of knights and ladies any meetings were,
And of eachone he met, he tydings did inquere.

XX

But all in vaine, his woman was too wise,
Euer to come into his clouch againe,
And he too simple euer to surprise
The ily Paridell, for all his paine.

One day, as he forpassed by the plaine

With weary pace, he farre away espide

A couple, seeming well to be his twaine,

Which houed close vnder a forest side,

As if they lay in wait, or else themselues did hide.

XXI

Well weened he, that those the same mote bee,

And as he better did their shape auize,

Him seemed more their manner did agree;

For th’one was armed all in warlike wise,

Whom, to be Paridell he did deuide;

And th’other all yclad in garments light,

Discolour’d like to womanish disguise,

He did resemble to his Ladie bright;

And euer his faint hart much earned at the sight.

XXII

And euer faine he towards them would goe,

But yet durst not for dread approchen nie,

But stood aloofe, vnweeting what to doe;

Till that prickt forth with loues extremitie,

That is the father of foule 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.

XXIII

But it was scornefull Braggadocchio,
That with his seruant Trompart houerd there,
Sith late he fled from his too earnest foe:
Whom such when as Malbecco spyed clere,
He turned backe, and would haue fled arere;
Till Trompart ronning hastily, him did stay,
And bad before his soueraine Lord appere:
That was him loth, yet durst he not gainesay,
And comming him before, low louted on the lay.

XXIV

The Boaster at him sternely bent his browe,
As if he could haue kild him with his looke,
That to the ground him meekely made to bowe,
And awfull terror deepe into him strooke,
That euery member of his bodie quooke.

Said he, thou man of nought, what doest thou here,
Vnfitly furnisht with thy bag and booke,
Where I expected one with shield and spere,
To proue some deedes of armes vpon an equall pere.

XXV

The wretched man at his imperious speach,
Was all abasht, and low prostrating, said;
Good Sir, let not my rudenesse be no breach
Vnto your patience, ne be ill ypaid;
For I vnwares this way by fortune straid,
A silly Pilgrim driuen to distresse,
That seeke a Lady, There he suddein staid,
And did the rest with grieuous sighes suppresse,
While teares stood in his eies, few drops of bitternesse.

XXVI

What Ladie, man? (said Trompart) take good hart,
And tell thy griefe, if any hidden lye;
Was neuer better time to shew thy smart,
Then now, that noble succour is thee by,
That is the whole worlds commune remedy.
That chearefull word his weake hart much did cheare,
And with vaine hope his spirits faint supply,
That bold he said; O most redoubted Pere,
Vouchsafe with mild regard a wretches cace to heare.

XXVII

Then sighing sore, It is not long (said hee)
Sith I enioyd the gentlest Dame aliue;
Of whom a knight, no knight at all perdee,
But shame of all, that doe for honor striue,
By treacherous deceipt did me depriue;
Through open outrage he her bore away,
And with fowle force vnto his will did drие, Which all good knights, that armes do beare this day,
Are bound 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 quarrell, then defence of right,
And for a Ladie against a faithlesse knight;
So shall your glory be aduaunced much,
And all faire Ladies magnifie your might,
And eke my selfe, albe I simple such,
Your worthy paine shall well 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 scornfully askew,
As much disdeining to be so misdempt,
Or a war-monger to be basely nempt;
And said; thy offers base I greatly loth,
And eke thy words vncourteous and vnkempt;
I tread in dust thee and thy money both,
That, were it not for shame, So turned from him wroth.

But Trompart, that his maisters humor knew,
In lofty lookes to hide an humble mind,
Was inly tickled with that golden vew,
And in his eare him rounded close behind:
Yet stoupt he not, but lay still in the wind,
Waiting aduaantage on the pray to sease;
Till Trompart lowly to the ground inclind,
Besought him his great courage to appease,
And pardon simple man, that rash did him displease.

XXXI

Bigge looking like a doughtie Doucepere,
At last he thus; Thou clod of vilest clay,
I pardon yield, and with thy rudenesse beare;
But weete henceforth, that all that golden pray,
And all that else the vaine world vaunten may,
I loath as doung, ne deeme my dew reward:
Fame is my meed, and glory vertues pray.
But minds of mortall men are muchell mard,
And mou’d amisse with massie mucks vnmeet regard.

XXXII

And more, I graunt to thy great miserie
Gratious respect, thy wife shall backe be sent,
And that vile knight, who euer that he bee,
Which hath thy Lady reft, and knighthood shent,
By Sanglamort my sword, whose deadly dent
The bloud hath of so many thousands shed,
I sweare, ere long shall dearely it repent;
Ne he twixt heauen and earth shall hide his hed,
But soone he shall be found, and shortly doen be ded.

XXXIII

The foolish man thereat woxe wondrous blith,
As if the word so spoken, were halfe done,
And humbly thanked him a thousand sith,
That had from death to life him newly wonne.
Tho forth the Boaster marching, braue begonne
His stolen steed to thunder furiously,
As if he heauen and hell would ouerronne,
And all the world confound with cruelty,
That much Malbecco ioyed in his iollity.

XXXIV

Thus long they three together trauelled,
Through many a wood, and many an uncouth way,
To seeke his wife, that was farre 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 set,
With purpose, how they might it best betray;
For sith the houre, that first he did them let
The same behold, therewith their keene desires were whet.

XXXV

It fortuned as they together far’d,
They spide, where Paridell came pricking fast
Vpon the plaine, the which himselfe prepar’d
To giust with that braue straunger knight a cast,
As on aduenture by the way he past:
Alone he rode without his Paragone;
For hauing filcht her bels, her vp he cast
To the wide world, and let her fly alone,
He nould be clogd. So had he serued many one.

XXXVI

The gentle Lady, loose at randon left,
The greene-wood long did walke, and wander wide
At wilde aduenture, like a forlorne weft,
Till on a day the Satyres her espide
Straying alone withouten groome or guide;
Her vp they tooke, and with them home her led,
With them as housewife euer to abide,
To milke their gothes, and make them cheese and bred,
And euery one as commune good her handeled.

XXXVII

That shortly she Malbecco has forgot,
And eke Sir Paridell, all were he deare;
Who from her went to seeke another lot,
And now by fortune was arriued here,
Where those two guilers with Malbecco were:
Soone as the oldman saw Sir Paridell,
He fainted, and was almost dead with feare,
Ne word he had to speake, his grieve to tell,
But to him louted low, and greeted goodly well.

XXXVIII

And after asked him for Hellenore,

I take no keepe of her (said Paridell)

She wonneth in the forrest there before.

So forth he rode, as his aduenture 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 vp remounted light, and after faind to wend.

XXXIX

Perdy nay (said Malbecco) shall ye not:

But let him passe as lightly, as he came:

For little good of him is to be got,

And mickle perill to be put to shame.

But let vs go to seeke my dearest Dame,

Whom he hath left in yonder forrest wyld:

For of her safety in great doubt I am,

Least saluage beastes her person haue despoyld:

Then all the world is lost, and we in vaine haue toyld.

XL

They all agree, and forward them addrest:

Ah but (said craftie Trompart) weete ye well,

That yonder in that wastefull wildnesse
Huge monsters haunt, and many dangers dwell;
Dragons, and Minotaures, and feendes of hell,
And many wilde woodmen, which robbe and rend
All travellers; therefore advise ye well,
Before ye enterprise that way to wend:
One may his journey bring too soone to euill end.

Malbecco stopt in great astonishment,
And with pale eyes fast fixed on the rest,
Their counsell crau’d, in danger imminent.
Said Trompart, you that are the most opprest
With burden of great treasure, I thinke best
Here for to stay in saffetie behind;
My Lord and I will search the wide forrest.
That counsell pleased not Malbeccoes mind;
For he was much afraid, himselfe alone to find.

Then is it best (said he) that ye doe leaue
Your treasure here in some securitie,
Either fast closed in some hollow greaue,
Or buried in the ground from ieopardie,
Till we returne againe in saffetie:
As for vs two, least doubt of vs ye haue,
Hence farre away we will blindfolded lie,
Ne priuie be vnto your treasures graue.
It pleased: so he did. Then they march forward braue.

XLIII

Now when amid the thickest woods they were,
They heard a noyse of many bagpipes shrill,
And shrieking Hububs them approching nere,
Which all the forrest did with horror fill:
That dreadfull sound the boasters hart did thrill,
With such amazement, that in haste he fled,
Ne euer looked backe for good or ill,
And after him eke fearefull Trompart sped;
The old man could not fly, but fell to ground halfe ded.

XLIV

Yet afterwards close creeping, as he might,
He in a bush did hide his fearefull hed,
The iolly Satyres full of fresh delight,
Came dauncing forth, and with them nimbly led
Faire Helenore, with girlonds all bespred,
Whom their May-lady they had newly made:
She proud of that new honour, which they red,
And of their louely fellowship full glade,
Daunst liuely, and her face did with a Lawrell shade.

XLV

The silly man that in the thicket lay
Saw all this goodly sport, and grieued sore,
Yet durst he not against it doe or say,
But did his hart with bitter thoughts engore,
To see th’vnkindnesse of his Hellenore.
All day they daunced with great lustihed,
And with their horned feet the greene grasse wore,
The whiles their Gotes vpon the brouzes fed,
Till drouping Phœbus gan to hide his golden hed.

Tho vp they gan their merry pypes to trusse,
And all their goodly heards did gather round,
But euery Satyre first did giue a busse
To Hellenore: so busses did abound.
Now gan the humid vapour shed the ground
With perly deaw, and th’Earthes gloomy shade
Did dim the brightnesse of the welkin round,
That euery bird and beast awarned made,
To shrowd themselues, whiles sleepe their senses did inuade.

Which when Melbecco saw, out of his bush
Vpon his hands and feete he crept full light,
And like a Gote amongst the Gotes did rush,
That through the helpe of his faire hornes on hight,
And misty dampe of misconceiuing night,
And eke through likenesse of his gotish beard,
He did the better counterfeite aright:
So home he marcht amongst the horned heard,
That none of all the Satyres him espyde or heard.

XLVIII

At night, when all they went to sleepe, he vewd,
Whereas his louely wife amongst them lay,
Embraced of a Satyre rough and rude,
Who all the night did minde his ioyous play:
Nine times he heard him come aloft ere day,
That all his hart with gealosie did swell;
But yet that nights ensample did bewray,
That not for nought his wife them loued so well,
When one so oft a night did ring his matins bell.

XLIX

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 turned her, and returned backe againe:
Yet her for to awake he did the more constraine.

L

At last with irkesome trouble she abrayd;
And then perceiving, that it was indeed
Her old Malbecco, which did her vpbrayd,
With loosenesse of her loue, and loathly deed,
She was astonisht with exceeding dreed,
And would haue wakt the Satyre by her syde;
But he her prayd, for mercy, or for meed,
To saue his life, ne let him be descryde,
But hearken to his lore, and all his counsell hyde.

LI

Tho gan he her perswade, to leaue that lewd
And loathsome life, of God and man abhord,
And home returne, where all should be renewd
With perfect peace, and bandes of fresh accord,
And she receiu’d againe to bed and bord,
As if no trespasse euer had bene donne:
But she it all refused at one word,
And by no meanes would to his will be wonne,
But chose amongst the iolly Satyres still to wonne.

LII

He wooed her, till day spring he espyde;
But all in vaine: and then turnd to the heard,
Who butted him with hornes on euery syde,
And trode downe in the durt, where his hore beard
Was fowly dight, and he of death afeard.
Early before the heauens fairest light
Out of the ruddy East was fully reard,
The heardes out of their foldes were loosed quight,
And he amongst the rest crept forth in sory plight.

LIII

So soone as he the Prison dore did pas,
He ran as fast, as both his feete could beare,
And neuer looked, who behind him was,
Ne scarsely who before: like as a Beare
That creeping close, amongst the hiues to reare
An hony combe, the wakefull dogs espy,
And him assayling, sore his carkasse teare,
That hardly he with life away does fly,
Ne stayes, till safe himselfe he see from ieopardy.

LIV

Ne stayd he, till he came vnto 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 himselfe away:
That who so straungely had him seene bestad,
With vpstart haire, and staring eyes dismay,
From Limbo lake him late escaped sure would say.

LV

High ouer hilles and ouer dales he fled,
As if the wind him on his winges had borne,
Ne banck nor bush could stay him, when he sped
His nimble feet, as treading still on thorne:
Griefe, and despight, and gealousie, and scorne
Did all the way him follow hard behind,
And he himselfe himselfe loath’d so forlorn,
So shamefully forlorn of womankind;
That as a Snake, still lurked in his wounded mind.

LVI

Still fled he forward, looking backward still,
Ne stayd his flight, nor fearefull agony,
Till that he came vnto a rockie hill,
Ouer the sea, suspended dreadfully,
That liiving creature it would terrify,
To looke adowne, or vpward to the hight:
From thence he threw himselfe dispiteously,
All desperate of his fore-damned spright,
That seem’d no helpe for him was left in liuing sight.

LVII

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 receiu’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 caue with entrance small.

LVIII

Into the same he creepes, and thenceforth there

resolu’d to build his balefull mansion,

in drery darkenesse, and continuall feare

of that rockes fall, which euer and anon

Threates with huge ruine him to fall vpon,

That he dare neuer sleepe, but that one eye

Still ope he keepes for that occasion;

Ne euer rests he in tranquillity,

The roring billowes beat his bowre so boystrously.

LIX

Ne euer is he wont on ought to feed,

But toades and frogs, his pasture poysnous,

Which in his cold complexion do breed

A filthy bloud, or humour rancorous,

Matter of doubt and dread suspitious,

That doth with curelesse care consume the hart,

Corrupts the stomacke with gall vitious,

Croscuts the liuer with internall smart,

And doth transfixe the soule with deathes eternall dart.

LX

Yet can he neuer dye, but dying liues,

And doth himselfe with sorrow new sustaine,

That death and life attonce vnto him giues.
And painefull pleasure turnes to pleasing paine.

There dwels he euer, miserable swaine,
Hatefull both to him selfe, and euery wight;
Where he through priuy griefe, and horrour vaine,
Is woxen so deform'd, that he has quight
Forgot he was a man, and Gealosie is hight.

Canto XI

Britomart chaceth Ollyphant,
findes Scudamour distrest:
Assayes the house of Busyrane,
where Loues spoyles are exprest.

I

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 vp with bitter milke of tine,
Fowle Gealosie, that turnest loue diuine
To ioylesse dread, and mak'st the louing 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.

II

O let him far be banished away,
And in his stead let Loue for euer dwell,
Sweet Loue, that doth his golden wings embay
In blessed Nectar, and pure Pleasures well,
Vntroubled of vile feare, or bitter fell.
And ye faire Ladies, that your kingdomes make
In th’harts of men, them gourener wisely well,
And of faire Britomart ensample take,
That was as trew in loue, as Turtle to her make.

III

Who with Sir Satyrane, as earst ye red,
Forth ryding from Malbeccoes hostlesse hous,
Farr 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 Argante vile and vitious,
From whom the Squire of Dames was reft whylere;
This all as bad as she, and worse, if worse ought were.

IV

For as the sister did in feminine
And filthy lust exceede all woman kind,
So he surpassed his sex masculine,
In beastly vse that I did euer find;
Whom when as Britomart beheld behind
The fearefull boy so greedily pursow,
She was emmoued in her noble mind,
T’employ her puissaunce to his reskew,
And pricked fiercely forward, where she him did vew.

V

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 striue the other to out-goe,
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.

VI

It was not Satyrane, whom he did feare,
But Britomart the flowre of chastity;
For he the powre of chast 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 forest neare,
Where he is shrowded in security.
The wood they enter, and search euery where,
They searched diversely, so both diuided were.

VII

Britomart so long him followed,
That she at last came to a fountain sheare,
By which there lay a knight all wallowed
Vpon the grassy ground, and by him neare
His haberieon, 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 euer it in field was showne.

VIII

His face vpon the ground did groueling ly,
As if he had bene slombring in the shade,
That the braue Mayd would not for courtesy,
Out of his quiet slomber him abrade,
Nor seeme too suddeinly him to inuade:
Still as she stood, she heard with grieuous 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.

IX

At last forth breaking into bitter plaintes
He said; O soueraigne Lord that sit’st on hye,
And raignst in blis amongst thy blessed Saintes,
How suffrest thou such shamefull cruelty,
So long vnwreaked of thine enimy?
Or hast thou, Lord, of good mens cause no heed?
Or doth thy iustice sleepe, and silent ly?
What booteth then the good and righteous deed,
If goodnesse find no grace, nor righteousnesse no meed?

X

If good find grace, and righteousnesse reward,

Why then is Amoret in caytiue band,

Sith that more bounteous creature neuer far’d

On foot, vpon the face of liuing land?

Or if that heauenly iustice may withstand

The wrongfull outrage of vnrighteous men,

Why then is Busirane with wicked hand

Suffred, these seuen monethes day in secret den

My Lady and my loue so cruelly to pen?

XI

My Lady and my loue is cruelly pend

In dolefull darkenesse from the vew of day,

Whilest deadly torments do her chast brest rend,

And the sharpe steele doth riue 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;

Vnworthy wretch to tread vpon the ground,

For whom so faire a Lady feeles so sore a wound.

XII

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 plaintive 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 weari soule would flit.

XIII

Tho stooping downe she him amoued light;
Who therewith somewhat starting, vp gan looke,
And seeing him behind a straunger knight,
Whereas no liuing creature he mistooke,
With great indignaunce he that sight forsooke,
And downe againe himselfe disdainefullly
Abiecting, th'earth with his faire forhead strooke:
Which the bold Virgin seeing, gan apply
Fit medcine to his griefe, and spake thus courtefully.

XIV

Ah gentle knight, whose deepe conceiued grieue
Well seemes t'exceede the powre of patience,
Yet if that heauenly grace some good reliefe
You send, submit you to high prouidence,
And euer 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 liue: for life is wretchednesse.

Therefore, faire Sir, do 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 endeuour will apply.
Those feeling wordes so neare the quicke did goe,
That vp his head he reared easily,
And leaning on his elbow, these few wordes let 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 tyraunt, which her hath in ward
By strong enchantments 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 loue she doth deny,
Once to me yold, not to be yold againe:
But yet by torture he would her constraine
Loue to conceiue in her disdainfull brest,
Till so she do, she must in doole remaine,
Ne may by liuing meanes be thence relest:
What boots it then to plaine, that cannot be redrest?

XVIII

With this sad hersall of his heauy stresse,
The warlike Damzell was empassiond sore,
And said; Sir knight, your cause is nothing lesse,
Then is your sorrow, certes if not more;
For nothing so much pitty doth implore,
As gentle Ladies helplesse misery.
But yet, if please ye listen to my lore,
I will with proofe of last extremity,
Deliuer her fro thence, or with her for you dy.

XIX

Ah gentlest knight aliue, (said Scudamore)
What huge heroicke magnanimity
Dwels in thy bounteous brest? what couldst thou more,
If she were thine, and thou as now am I?
O spare thy happy dayes, and them apply
To better boot, but let me dye, that ought;
More is more losse: one is enough to dy.
Life is not lost, (said she) for which is bought
Endlesse renown, that more then death is to be sought.

XX

Thus she at length perswaded him to rise,
And with her wend, to see what new successe
Mote him befall vpon new enterprise;
His armes, which he had vowed to disprofesse,
She gathered vp and did about him dresse,
And his forwandred steed vnto him got:
So forth they both yfere make their progresse,
And march not past the mountenaunce of a shot,
Till they arriu’d, whereas their purpose they did plot.

XXI

There they dismounting, drew their weapons bold
And stoutly came vnto the Castle gate;
Whereas no gate they found, them to withhold,
Nor ward to wait at morne and euening 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 horrour did all entraunce choke,
Enforced them their forward footing to reuoke.

XXII

Greatly thereat was Britomart dismayd,
Ne in that stownd wist, how her selfe to beare;
For daunger vaine it were, to haue 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 prouoke we heare,
Foolhardy as th'Earthes children, the which made
Battell against the Gods? so we a God inuade.

XXIII

Daunger without discretion to attempt,
Inglorious and beastlike is: therefore Sir knight,
Aread 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 wit or might,
Ne yet by any meanes remou'd away,
So mighty be th'enchauntments, which the same do stay.

XXIV

What is there else, but cease these fruitlesse paines,
And leaue me to my former languishing?
Faire Amoret must dwell in wicked chaines,
And Scudamore here dye with sorrowing.
Perdy not so; (said she) for shamefull thing
It were t'abandon noble cheuisaunce,
For shew of perill, without venturing:
Rather let try extremities of chaunce,
Then enterprised prayse for dread to disauaunce.

XXV

Therewith resolu'd to proue her vtmost might,
Her ample shield she threw before her face,
And her swords point directing forward right,
Assayld the flame, the which eftsoones gaue place,
And did it selfe diuide with equall space,
That through she passed; as a thunder bolt
Perceth the yielding ayre, and doth displace
The soring cloudes into sad showres ymolt;
So to her yold the flames, and did their force reuolt.

XXVI

Whom whenas Scudamour saw past the fire,
Safe and vntoucht, he likewise gan assay,
With greedy will, and enuious 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 fiercenesse to relent,
And backe retire, all scorcht and pitifully brent.

XXVII

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 woodnesse he effierced was,
And wilfully him throwing on the gras,
Did beat and bounse his head and brest full sore;
The whiles the Championesse now entred has
The vtmost rowme, and past the formest dore,
The vtmost rowme, abounding with all precious store.

XXVIII

For round about, the wals yclothed were
With goodly arras of great maiesty,
Wouen with gold and silke so close and nere,
That the rich metall lurked priuily,
As faining to be hid from enuious eye;
Yet here, and there, and euery where vnwares
It shewd it selfe, and shone vnwillingly;
Like a discolourd Snake, whose hidden snares
Through the greene gras his long bright burnisht backe declares.

XXIX

And in those Tapets weren fashioned
Many faire pourtraicts, and many a faire feate,
And all of loue, and all of lusty-hed,
As seemed by their semblaunt did entreat;
And eke all Cupids warres they did repeate,
And cruell battels, 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 writ, how often thundring Ioue
Had felt the point of his hart-percing dart,
And leauing heauens kingdome, here did roue
In straunge disguize, to slake his scalding smart;
Now like a Ram, faire Helle to peruart,
Now like a Bull, Europa to withdraw:
Ah, how the fearefull Ladies tender hart
Did liuely seeme to tremble, when she saw
The huge seas vnder her t'obay her seruaunts law.

Soone after that into a golden showre
Him selfe he chaung'd faire Danae to vew,
And through the rooфе of her strong brasen towre
Did raine into her lap an hony dew,
The whiles her foolish garde, that little 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 louely 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 inuade;
She slept, yet twixt her eyelids closely spyde,
How towards her he rusht, and smiled at his pryde.

XXXIII

Then shewed it, how the Thebane Semelee
Deceiued of gealous Iuno, did require
To see him in his soueraigne maiestee,
Armd with his thunderbolts and lightning fire,
Whence dearely she with death bought her desire.
But faire Alcmena better match did make,
Joying his loue in likenesse more entire;
Three nights in one, they say, that for her sake
He then did put, her pleasures lenger to partake.

XXXIV

Twice was he seene in soaring Eagles shape,
And with wide wings to beat the buxome ayre,
Once, when he with Asterie did scape,
Againe, when as the Troiane boy so faire
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.

XXXV

In Satyres shape Antiopa he snatcht:

And like a fire, when he Aegin’ assayd:

A shepheard, when Mnemosyne he catcht:

And like a Serpent to the Thracian mayd.

Whiles thus on earth great loue these pageaunts playd,

The winged boy did thrust into his throne,

And scoffing, thus vnto his mother sayd,

Lo now the heauens obey to me alone,

And take me for their loue, whiles loue to earth is gone.

XXXVI

And thou, faire Phœbus, in thy colours bright

Wast there enwouen, 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 ioyfulnesse:

For thy he thrild thee with a leaden dart,

To loue faire Daphne, which thee loued lesse:

Lesse she thee lou’d, then was thy iust desart,

Yet was thy loue her death, and her death was thy smart.

XXXVII

So louedst thou the lusty Hyacinct,

So louedst thou the faire Coronis deare:

Yet both are of thy haplesse hand extinct,
Yet both in flowres do liue, and loue thee beare,
The one a Paunce, the other a sweet breare:
For grieve whereof, ye mote haue liuely seene
The God himselfe rending his golden heare,
And breaking quite his gyrlond euer greene,
With other signes of sorrow and impatient teene.

XXXVIII

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 fier 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 loue a Shepheards daughter for his dearest Dame.

XXXIX

He loued Isse for his dearest Dame,
And for her sake her cattell fed a while,
And for her sake a cowheard vile became,
The servant of Admetus cowheard vile,
Whiles that from heauen he suffered exile.
Long were to tell each other louely fit,
Now like a Lyon, hunting after spoile,
Now like a Hag, now like a faulcon flit:
All which in that faire arras was most liuely writ.

XL

Next vnto him was Neptune pictured,
In his diuine resemblance wondrous lyke:
His face was rugged, and his hoarie hed
Dropped with brackish deaw; his three-forkt Pyke
He stearnly shooke, and therewith fierce did stryke
The raging billowes, that on euery syde
They trembling stood, and made a long broad dyke,
That his swift charet might haue passage wyde,
Which foure great Hippodames did draw in temewise tyde.

XLI

His sea-horses did seeme to snort amayne,
And from their nosethrilles blow the brynie streame,
That made the sparckling waues to smoke agayne,
And flame with gold, but the white fomy creame,
Did shine with siluer, and shoot forth his beame.
The God himselfe did pensiue seeme and sad,
And hong adowne his head, as he did dreame:
For priuy loue his brest empierced had,
Ne ought but deare Bisaltis ay could make him glad.

XLII

He loued eke Iphimedia deare,
And Aeolus faire daughter Arne hight,
For whom he turnd him selfe into a Steare,
And fed 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 euer weene,
That sullein Saturne euer weend to loue?
Yet loue is sullein, and Saturnlike seene,
As he did for Erigone it proue,)
That to a Centaure did him selfe transmoue.
So proou’d it eke that gracious God of wine,
When for to compasse Philliras hard loue,
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 mighty 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 vnwarlike smarts,
Priuily moystening his horrid cheek.
There was he painted full of burning darts,
And many wide woundes launched through his inner parts.

XLV

Ne did he spare (so cruel was the Elfe)
His owne deare mother, (ah why should he so?)
Ne did he spare sometime to prick himselfe,
That he might tast 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 heauen beholds sad louers nightly theeueryes.

XLVI

Kings Queenes, Lords Ladies,
Knights and Damzels 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 shiuered short,
And a long bloudy riuer through them rayld,
So liuely and so like, that liuing sence it fayld.

XLVII

And at the vpper end of that faire rowme,
There was an Altar built of pretious stone,
Of passing valew, and of great renowne,
On which there stood an Image all alone,
Of massy gold, which with his owne light shone;
And wings it had with sundry colours dight,
More sundry colours, then the proud Pauone
Beares in his boasted fan, or Iris bright,
When her discolourd bow she spreds through heauen bright.

XLVIII

Blindfold 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 darts behold)
A wounded Dragon vnder him did ly,
Whose hideous tayle his left foot did enfold,
And with a shaft was shot through either eye,
That no man forth might draw, ne no man remedye.

XLIX

And vnderneath his feet was written thus,
Vnto the Victor of the Gods this bee:
And all the people in that ample hous
Did to that image bow their humble knee,
And oft committed fowle Idolatree.
That wondrous sight faire Britomart amazed,
Ne seeing could her wonder satisfie,
But euermore and more vpon it gazed,
The whiles the passing brightnes her fraile sences dazed.

Tho as she backward cast her busie eye,
To search each secret of that goodly sted
Ouer the dore thus written she did spye
Be bold: she oft and oft it ouer-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 fairer, 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 ouerlayd,
Wrought with wilde Antickes, which their follies playd,
In the rich metall, as they liuing were:
A thousand monstrous formes therein were made,
Such as false loue doth oft vpon him weare,
For loue in thousand monstrous formes doth oft appeare.

And all about, the glistring walles were hong
With warlike spoiles, and with victorious prayes,
Of mighty Conquerours and Captaines strong,
Which were whilome captiued in their dayes
To cruell loue, and wrought their owne decayes:
Their swerds and speres were broke, and hauberques rent;
And their proud girondes of tryumphant bayes
Troden in dust with fury insolent,
To shew the victors might and mercilesse intent.

LIII

The warlike Mayde beholding earnestly
The goodly ordinance of this rich place,
Did greatly wonder, ne could satisfie
Her greedy eyes with gazing a long space,
But more she meruaild that no footings trace,
Nor wight appear’d, but wastefull emptinesse,
And solemne silence ouer all that place:
Straunge thing it seem’d, that none was to possesse
So rich purueyance, ne them keepe with carefulnesse.

LIV

And as she lookt about, she did behold,
How ouer that same dore was likewise writ,
Be bold, be bold, and euery 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 roomes vpper end,
Another yron dore, on which was writ,
Be not too bold; whereto though she did bend
Her earnest mind, yet wist not what it might intend.

Thus she there waited until euentide,
Yet living creature none she saw appear:
And now sad shadowes gan the world to hide,
From mortal view, and wrap in darkness dreare;
Yet nould she d'off her weary armes, for fear
Of secret danger, ne let sleepe oppresse.
Her heavy eyes with nature's burden deare,
But drew herself aside in sickness,
And her welpointed weapons did about her dresse.

Canto XII

The maske of Cupid, and th'enchanted
Chamber are displayd,
Whence Britomart redeemes faire
Amoret, through charmes decayd.

THo when as cheerlesse Night ycouered had
Faire heauen with an vniuersall cloud,
That every wight dismayd with darkness sad,
In silence and in sleepe themselves did shroud,
She heard a shrilling Trompet sound aloud,
Signe of nigh battell, or got victory;
Nought therewith daunted was her courage proud,
But rather stird to cruel enmity,
Expecting euer, when some foe she might descry.

II

With that, an hideous storme of winde arose,
With dreadfull thunder and lightning atwixt,
And an earth-quake, as if it straignt would lose
The worlds foundations from his centre fixt;
A direfull stench of smoke and sulphure mixt
Ensewd, whose noyance fild the fearefull sted,
From the fourth houre of night vntill the sixt;
Yet the bold Britonesse was nought ydred,
Though much emmou’d, but stedfast still perseuered.

III

All suddenly a stormy whirlwind blew
Throughout the house, that clapped euery dore,
With which that yron wicket open flew,
As it with mightie leuers had bene tore:
And forth issewd, as on the ready flore
Of some Theatre, a graue personage,
That in his hand a branch of laurell bore,
With comely haueour and count’nance sage,
Yclad in costly garments, fit for tragicke Stage.

IV

Proceeding to the midst, he still did stand,
As if in mind he somewhat had to say,
And to the vulgar beckning with his hand,
In signe of silence, as to heare a play,
By liuely actions he gan bewray
Some argument of matter passioned;
Which doen, he backe retyred soft away,
And passing by, his name discouered,
Ease, on his robe in golden letters cyphered.

V

The noble Mayd, still standing all this vewd,
And merueild at his strange intendiment;
With that a ioyous fellowship issewd
Of Minstrals, making goodly meriment,
With wanton Bardes, and Rymers impudent,
All which together sung full chearefully
A lay of loues delight, with sweet concent:
After whom marcht a iolly company,
In manner of a maske, enrangeed orderly.

VI

The whiles a most delitious harmony,
In full straunge notes was sweetly heard to sound,
That the rare sweetnesse of the melody
The feeble senses wholly did confound,
And the fraile soule in deepe delight nigh dround:
And when it ceast, shrill trompets loud did bray,
That their report did farre away rebound,
And when they ceast, it gan againe to play,
The whiles the maskers marched forth in trim aray.

VII

The first was Fancy, like a louely boy,
Of rare aspect, and beautie without peare;
Matchable either to that ympe of Troy,
Whom loue did loue, 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 euery wood, and euery valley wyde
He fild with Hylas name; the Nymphes eke Hylas cryde.

VIII

His garment neither was of silke nor say,
But painted 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 idle aire he mou’d still here and there.

IX

And him beside marcht amorous Desyre,
Who seemd of riper yeares, then th’other Swaine,
Yet was that other swayne this elders syre,  
And gaue him being, commune to them twaine:  
His garment was disguised very vaine,  
And his embrodered Bonet sat awry;  
Twixt both his hands few sparkes he close did straine,  
Which still he blew, and kindled busily,  
That soone they life conceiu’d, and forth in flames did fly.

X

Next after him went Doubt, who was yclad  
In a discoulour’d cote, of straunge disguyse,  
That at his backe a brode Capuccio had,  
And sleeues dependant Albanese-wyse:  
He lookt askew with his mistrustfull eyes,  
And nicely trode, as thornes lay in his way,  
Or that the flore to shrinke he did auyse,  
And on a broken reed he still did stay  
His feeble steps, which shrunke, when hard theron he lay.

XI

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 horour, to deforme his griesly shade;  
A net in th’one hand, and rustie blade  
In th’other was, this Mischiefe, that Mishap;  
With th’one his foes he threatened to inuade,
With th’other he his friends ment to enwrap:
For whom he could not kill, he practizd to entrap.

XII

Next him was Feare, all arm’d from top to toe,
Yet thought himselfe not safe enough thereby,
But feared each shadow moving to and fro,
And his owne armes when glittering he did spy,
Or clashing heard, he fast away did fly,
As ashes pale of hew, and wingyheeld;
And euermore on daunger fixt his eye,
Gainst whom he alwaies bent a brasen shield,
Which his right hand vnarmed fearefully did wield.

XIII

With him went Hope in rancke, a handsome Mayd,
Of chearefull looke and louely to behold;
In silken samite she was light arayd,
And her faire lockes were wouen vp in gold;
She alway smyld, and in her hand did hold
An holy water Sprinckle, dipt in deowe,
With which she sprinckled fauours manifold,
On whom she list, and did great liking sheowe,
Great liking vnto many, but true loue to feowe.

XIV

And after them Dissemblance, and Suspect
Marcht in one rancke, yet an vnequall paire:

https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Literature_and_Literacy/Book%3A_British_Literature_I_-_Middle_Ages_to_the_Eigh…
Updated: Thu, 18 Feb 2021 07:27:55 GMT
Powered by 261
For she was gentle, and of milde aspect,
Courteous to all, and seeming debonaire,
Goodly adorned, and exceeding faire:
Yet was that all but painted, and purloynd,
And her bright browes were deckt with borrowed haire:
Her deedes were forged, and her words false coynd,
And alwaies in her hand two clewes of silke she twynd.

XV

But he was foule, ill fauoured, and grim,
Vnder his eyebrowes looking still askaunce;
And euer as Dissemblance laught on him,
He lowrd on her with daungerous eyeglaunce;
Shewing his nature in his countenance;
His rolling eyes did neuer rest in place,
But walkt each where, for feare of hid mischaunce,
Holding a lattice still before his face,
Through which he still did peepe, as forward he did pace.

XVI

Next him went Griefe, and Fury matched yfere;
Griefe all in sable sorrowfully clad,
Downe hanging his dull head, with heauy 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 lad,
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 lookes and dreadfull dreirehed;
For from her backe her garments she did teare,
And from her head oft rent her snarled heare:
In her right hand a firebrand she 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 Pleasance,
He looking lompish and full sullein sad,
And hanging downe his heauy countenance;
She chearefull fresh and full of ioyance glad,
As if no sorrow she ne felt ne drad;
That euill matched paire they seemd to bee:
An angry Waspe th’one in a viall had
Th’other in hers an hony-lady Bee;
Thus marched these sixe 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 image figurd in her face,
Full of sad signes, fearefull to liuing sight;
Yet in that horror shewd a seemely grace,
And with her feeble feet did moue a comely pace.

XX

Her brest all naked, as net iuory,
Without adorne of gold or siluer bright,
Wherewith the Craftesman wonts it beautify,
Of her dew honour was despoyled quight,
And a wide wound therein (O ruefull sight)
Entrenched deepe with knife accursed keene,
Yet freshely bleeding forth her fainting spright,
(The worke of cruell hand) was to be seene,
That dyde in sanguine red her skin all snowy cleene.

XXI

At that wide orifice her trembling hart
Was drawne forth, and in siluer basin layd,
Quite through transfixed with a deadly dart,
And in her bloud yet steeming fresh embayd:
And those two villeins, which her steps vpstayd,
When her weake feete could scarcely her sustaine,
And fading vitall powers gan to fade,
Her forward still with torture did constraine,
And euermore encreased her consuming paine.

XXII

Next after her the winged God himselfe
Came riding on a Lion rauenous,
Taught to obay the menage of that Elfe,
That man and beast with powre imperious
Subdeweth to his kingdome tyrannous:
His blindfold eyes he bad a while vnbind,
That his proud spoyle of that same dolorous
Faire Dame he might behold in perfect kind;
Which seene, he much reioyced in his cruell mind.

XXIII

Of which full proud, himselfe vp rearing hye,
He looked round about with sterne disdaine;
And did suruay his goodly company:
And marshalling the euill ordered traine,
With that the darts which his right hand did straine,
Full dreadfully he shooke that all did quake,
And clapt on hie his coulourd winges twaine,
That all his many it affraide did make:
Tho blinding him againe, his way he forth did take.

XXIV

Behinde him was Reproch, Repentance, Shame;
Reproch the first, Shame next, Repent behind:
Repentance feeble, sorrowfull, and lame:

Reproch despightfull, carelesse, and vnkind;

Shame most ill fauourd, bestiall, and blind:

Shame lowrd, Repentance sigh’d, Reproch did scould;

Reproch sharpe stings, Repentance whips entwind,

Shame burning brond-yrons in her hand did hold:

All three to each vnlike, yet all made in one mould.

XXV

And after them a rude confused rout

Of persons flockt, whose name is hard to read:

Emongst them was sterne Strife, and Anger stout,

Vnquiet Care, and fond Vnthriftihead,

Lewd Losse of Time, and Sorrow seeming dead,

Inconstant Chaunge, and false Disloyaltie,

Consuming Riotise, and guilty Dread

Of heauenly vengeance, faint Infirmitie,

Vile Pouertie, and lastly Death with infamie.

XXVI

There were full many moe like maladies,

Whose names and natures I note readen well;

So many moe, as there be phantasies

In wauering wemens wit, that none can tell,

Or paines in loue, or punishments in hell;

All which disguizd marcht in masking wise,

About the chamber with that Damozell,
And then returned, having marched thrise,
Into the inner roome, from whence they first did rise.

XXVII

So soone as they were in, the dore streight way
\Fast locked, driuen with that stormy blast,
Which first it opened; and bore all away.
Then the braue Maid, which all this while was plast,
In secret shade, and saw both first and last,
Issewed forth, and went vnto the dore,
To enter in, but found it locked fast:
It vaine she thought with rigorous vprore
For to efforce, when charmes had closed it afore.

XXVIII

Where force might not auaile, there sleights and art
She cast to vse, both fit for hard emprize;
For thy from that same roome not to depart
Till morrow next, she did her selfe auize,
When that same Maske againe should forth arize.
The morrow next appeard with ioyous 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 out weare.

XXIX

All that day she outwore in wandering,
And gazing on that Chambers ornament,
Till that againe the second euening
Her couered 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,
Neither of idle shewes, nor of false charmes aghast.

So soone as she was entred, round about
She 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 liuing wight she saw in all that roome,
Saue that same woefull Ladie, both whose hands
Were bounden fast, that did her ill become,
And her small wast girt round with yron bands,
Vnto a brasen pillour, by the which she stands.

And her before the vile Enchaunter sate,
Figuring straunge characters of his art,
With liuing bloud he those characters wrate,
Dreadfully dropping from her dying hart,
Seeming transfixed with a cruell dart,
And all perforce to make her him to loue.
Ah who can loue the worker of her smart?
A thousand charmes he formerly did proue;
Yet thousand charmes could not her stedfast heart remoue.

XXXII

Soone as that virgin knight he saw in place,
His wicked bookes in hast he ouerthrew,
Not caring his long labours to deface,
And fiercely ronne 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 witheld, and maistered his might.

XXXIII

From her, to whom his fury first he ment,
The wicked weapon rashly he did wrest,
And turning to her selfe his fell intent,
Vnwares it strooke into her snowie chest,
That little 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 giue him the reward for such vile outrage dew.

XXXIV

So mightily she smote him, that to ground
He fell halfe dead; next stroke him should haue slaine,
Had not the Lady, which by him stood bound,
Dernely vnto 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 enuyde, and long’d reuenge to see.

XXXV

And to him said, Thou wicked man, whose meed
For so huge mischiefe, and vile villany
Is death, or if that ought do death exceed,
Be sure, that nought may saue thee from to dy,
But if that thou this Dame doe presently
Restore vnto her health, and former state;
This doe and liue, else die vndoubtedly.
He glad of life, that lookt for death but late,
Did yield himselfe right willing to prolong his date.

XXXVI

And rising vp, gan streight to overlooke
Those cursed leaues, his charmes backe to reuere;
Full dreadfull things out of that balefull booke
He red, and measur’d many a sad verse,
That horror gan the virgins hart to perse,
And her faire lockes vp stared stiffe on end,
Hearing him those same bloudy lines reherse;
And all the while he red, she did extend
Her sword high over him, if ought he did offend.

XXXVII

Anon she gan perceiue the house to quake,
And all the dores to rattle round about;
Yet all that did not her dismaied make,
Nor slacke 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 pieces small.

XXXVIII

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 riuern bowels gor’d,
Was closed vp, as it had not bene bor’d,
And euery part to safety full sound,
As she were neuer hurt, was soone restor’d:
Tho when she felt her selfe to be vnbound,
And perfect hole, prostrate she fell vnto the ground.

XXXIX

Before faire Britomart, she fell prostrate,
Saying, Ah noble knight, what worthy meed
Can wretched Lady, quit from wofull state,
Yield you in lieu of this your gratious deed?

Your vertue selfe her owne reward shall breed,

Euen immortall praise, and glory wyde,

Which I your vassall, by your prowesse freed,

Shall through the world make to be notifysd,

And goodly well advancys, that goodly well was tryde.

But Britomart vpreating her from ground,

Said, Gentle Dame, reward enough I weene

For many labours more, then I haue found,

This, that in safety now I haue you seene,

And meane of your deliuerance haue beene:

Henceforth faire Lady comfort to you take,

And put away remembrance of late teene;

In stead thereof know, that your louing Make,

Hath no lesse griefe endured for your gentle sake.

She was much cheard to heare him mentiond,

Whom of all liuing wights she loued best.

Then laid the noble Championesse strong hond

Vpon th’enchaunter, which had her distrest

So sore, and with foule outrages opprest:

With that great chaine, wherewith not long ygo

He bound that pitteous Lady prisoner, now relest,

Himselfe she bound, more worthy to be so,
And captive with her led to wretchedness and wo.

Returning backe, those goodly rooms, which erst
She saw so rich and royally arrayed,
Now vanisht utterly, and clean subuerst
She found, and all their glory quite decayed,
That sight of such a change her much dismayed.
Thence forth descending to that perilous Porch,
Those dreadful flames she also found stayd,
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 dreadful 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 gaue her leave at pleasure forth to passe.
Th'Enchaunter selfe, which all that fraud did frame,
To haue effort the loue of that faire lasse,
Seeing his worke now wasted deepe engriued was.

But when the victoresse arrived there,
Where late she left the pensive Scudamore,
With her owne trusty Squire, both full of fear,
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
Conceiued had, to see her owne deare knight,
Being thereof beguyld was fild with new affright.

XLV

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 aduize 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, whilst here I doe respire.

XLVI

At last she came vnto the place, where late
She left Sir Scudamour in great distresse,
Twixt dolour and despight halfe desperate,
Of his loues succour, of his owne redresse,
And of the hardie Britomarts successe:
There on the cold earth him now thrown she found,
In wilfull anguish, and dead heauinesse,
And to him cald; whose voices knowen sound
Soone as he heard, himself he reared light from ground.