

The Faerie Queene

Edmund Spenser

Book Five

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The Faerie Queene: Book V.

THE FIFTH BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE

Contayning

THE LEGEND OF
ARTEGALL

OR

OF IVSTICE.

So oft as I with state of present time,
The image of the antique world compare,
When as mans age was in his freshest prime,
And the first blossome of faire vertue bare,
Such oddes I finde twixt those, and these which are,
As that, through long continuance of his course,
Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square,
From the first point of his appointed sourse,
And being once amisse growes daily wourse and wourse.

For from the golden age, that first was named,
It's now at earst become a stonie one;
And men themselues, the which at first were framed
Of earthly mould, and form'd of flesh and bone,
Are now transformed into hardest stone:
Such as behind their backs (so backward bred)
Were throwne by Pyrrha and Deucalione:
And if then those may any worse be red,
They into that ere long will be degendered.

Let none then blame me, if in discipline
Of vertue and of ciuill vses lore,
I doe not forme them to the common line
Of present dayes, which are corrupted sore,
But to the antique vse, which was of yore,
When good was onely for it selfe desyred,
And all men sought their owne, and none no more;
When Iustice was not for most meed outhyred,
But simple Truth did rayne, and was of all admyred.

For that which all men then did vertue call,
Is now cald vice; and that which vice was hight,
Is now hight vertue, and so vs'd of all:
Right now is wrong, and wrong that was is right,
As all things else in time are chaunged quight.
Ne wonder; for the heauens reuolution
Is wandred farre from where it first was pight,
And so doe make contrarie constitution
Of all this lower world, toward his dissolution.

For who so list into the heauens looke,
And search the courses of the rowling spheares,
Shall find that from the point, where they first tooke
Their setting forth, in these few thousand yeares
They all are wandred much; that plaine appears.
For that same golden fleecy Ram, which bore
Phrixus and Helle from their stepdames feares,
Hath now forgot, where he was plast of yore,
And shouldred hath the Bull, which fayre Europa bore.

And eke the Bull hath with his bow-bent horne
So hardly butted those two twinnes of Ioue,
That they haue crusht the Crab, and quite him borne
Into the great Nemoean lions groue.
So now all range, and doe at randon roue
Out of their proper places farre away,
And all this world with them amisse doe moue,
And all his creatures from their course astray,
Till they arriue at their last ruinous decay.

Ne is that same great glorious lampe of light,
That doth enlumine all these lesser fyres,
In better case, ne keepes his course more right,
But is miscaried with the other Spheres.
For since the terme of fourteene hundred fyres,
That learned Ptolomae his hight did take,
He is declyned from that marke of theirs,
Nigh thirtie minutes to the Southerne lake;
That makes me feare in time he will vs quite forsake.

And if to those Ægyptian wisards old,
Which in Star-read were wont haue best insight,
Faith may be giuen, it is by them told,
That since the time they first tooke the Sunnes hight,
Foure times his place he shifted hath in sight,
And twice hath risen, where he now doth West,
And wested twice, where he ought rise aright.
But most is Mars amisse of all the rest,
And next to him old Saturne, that was wont be best.

For during Saturnes ancient raigne it's sayd,
That all the world with goodnesse did abound:
All loued vertue, no man was affrayd
Of force, ne fraud in wight was to be found:
No warre was knowne, no dreadfull trompets sound,
Peace vniuersall rayn'd mongst men and beasts,
And all things freely grew out of the ground:
Iustice sate high ador'd with solemne feasts,
And to all people did diuide her dred beheasts.

Most sacred vertue she of all the rest,
Resembling God in his imperiall might;
Whose soueraine powre is herein most exprest,
That both to good and bad he dealeth right,
And all his workes with Iustice hath bedight.
That powre he also doth to Princes lend,
And makes them like himselfe in glorious sight,
To sit in his owne seate, his cause to end,
And rule his people right, as he doth recommend.

Dread Souerayne Goddess, that doest highest sit
In seate of iudgement, in th'Almighties stead,
And with magnificke might and wondrous wit
Doest to thy people righteous doome aread,
That furthest Nations filles with awfull dread,
Pardon the boldnesse of thy basest thrall,
That dare discourse of so diuine a read,
As thy great iustice prayed ouer all:
The instrument whereof loe here thy Artegall.

Canto I.

Artegall trayn'd in Iustice lore
Irenaes quest pursewed,
He doeth auenge on Sanglier
His Ladies bloud embrewed.

Though vertue then were held in highest price,
In those old times, of which I doe intreat,
Yet then likewise the wicked seede of vice
Began to spring which shortly grew full great,
And with their boughes the gentle plants did beat.
But euermore some of the vertuous race
Rose vp, inspired with heroicke heat,
That cropt the branches of the sient base,
And with strong hand their fruitfull rancknes did
deface.

Such first was Bacchus, that with furious might
All th'East before vntam'd did ouerronne,
And wrong repressed, and establisht right,
Which lawlesse men had formerly fordonne.
There Iustice first her princely rule begonne.
Next Hercules his like ensample shewed,
Who all the West with equall conquest wonne,
And monstrous tyrants with his club subdewed;
The club of Iustice dread, with kingly powre endewed.

And such was he, of whom I haue to tell,
The Champion of true Iustice Artegall.
Whom (as ye lately mote remember well)
An hard aduenture, which did then befall,
Into redoubted perill forth did call;
That was to succour a distressed Dame,
Whom a strong tyrant did vniustly thrall,
And from the heritage, which she did clame,
Did with strong hand withhold: Grantorto was his
name.

Wherefore the Lady, which Eirena hight,
Did to the Faery Queene her way addresse,
To whom complayning her afflicted plight,
She her besought of gracious redresse.
That soueraine Queene, that mightie Emperesse,
Whose glorie is to aide all suppliants pore,
And of weake Princes to be Patronesse,
Chose Artegall to right her to restore;
For that to her he seem'd best skild in righteous lore.

For Artegall in iustice was vpbrought
Euen from the cradle of his infancie,
And all the depth of rightfull doome was taught
By faire Astræa, with great industrie,
Whilest here on earth she liued mortallie.
For till the world from his perfection fell
Into all filth and foule iniquitie,
Astræa here mongst earthly men did dwell,
And in the rules of iustice them instructed well.

Whiles through the world she walked in this sort,
Vpon a day she found this gentle childe,
Amongst his peres playing his childish sport:
Whom seeing fit, and with no crime defilde,
She did allure with gifts and speaches milde,
To wend with her. So thence him farre she brought
Into a caue from companie exilde,
In which she nounsled him, till yeares he raught,
And all the discipline of iustice there him taught.

There she him taught to weigh both right and wrong
In equall ballance with due recompence,
And equitie to measure out along,
According to the line of conscience,
When so it needs with rigour to dispence.
Of all the which, for want there of mankind,
She caused him to make experience
Vpon wyld beasts, which she in woods did find,
With wrongfull powre oppressing others of their kind.

Thus she him trayned, and thus she him taught,
In all the skill of deeming wrong and right,
Vntill the ripenesse of mans yeares he raught;
That euen wilde beasts did feare his awfull sight,
And men admyr'd his ouerruling might;
Ne any liu'd on ground, that durst withstand
His dreadfull heast, much lesse him match in fight,
Or bide the horror of his wreakfull hand,
When so he list in wrath lift vp his steely brand.

Which steely brand, to make him dreaded more,
She gaue vnto him, gotten by her slight
And earnest search, where it was kept in store
In Ioues eternall house, vnwist of wight,
Since he himselfe it vs'd in that great fight
Against the Titans, that whylome rebelled
Gainst highest heauen; Chrysaor it was hight;
Chrysaor that all other swords excelled,
Well prou'd in that same day, when Ioue those Gyants
quelled.

For of most perfect metall it was made,
Tempred with Adamant amongst the same,
And garnisht all with gold vpon the blade
In goodly wise, whereof it tooke his name,
And was of no lesse vertue, then of fame.
For there no substance was so firme and hard,
But it would pierce or cleaue, where so it came;
Ne any armour could his dint out ward,
But wheresoeuer it did light, it throughly shard.

Now when the world with sinne gan to abound,
Astraea loathing lenger here to space
Mongst wicked men, in whom no truth she found,
Return'd to heauen, whence she deriu'd her race;
Where she hath now an euerlasting place,
Mongst those twelue signes, which nightly we doe see
The heauens bright-shining baudricke to enchace;
And is the Virgin, sixt in her degree,
And next her selfe her righteous ballance hanging bee.

But when she parted hence, she left her groome
An yron man, which did on her attend
Alwayes, to execute her stedfast doome,
And willed him with Artegall to wend,
And doe what euer thing he did intend.
His name was Talus, made of yron mould,
Immoueable, resistlesse, without end.
Who in his hand an yron flae did hould,
With which he thresht out falshood, and did truth
vnfould.

He now went with him in this new inquest,
Him for to aide, if aide he chaunst to neede,
Against that cruell Tyrant, which opprest
The faire Irena with his foule misdeede,
And kept the crowne in which she should succeed.
And now together on their way they bin,
When as they saw a Squire in squallid weed,
Lamenting sore his sorrowfull sad tyne,
With many bitter teares shed from his blubbred eyne.

To whom as they approched, they espide
A sorie sight, as euer seene with eye;
An headlesse Ladie lying him beside,
In her owne blood all wallow'd wofully,
That her gay clothes did in discolour die.
Much was he moued at that ruefull sight;
And flam'd with zeale of vengeance inwardly,
He askt, who had that Dame so fouly dight;
Or whether his owne hand, or whether other wight?

Ah woe is me, and well away (quoth hee)
Bursting forth teares, like springs out of a banke,
That euer I this dismall day did see:
Full farre was I from thinking such a pranke;
Yet litle losse it were, and mickle thanke,
If I should graunt that I haue doen the same,
That I mote drinke the cup, whereof she dranke:
But that I should die guiltie of the blame,
The which another did, who now is fled with shame.

Who was it then (sayd Artegall) that wrought?
And why? doe it declare vnto me trew.
A knight (said he) if knight he may be thought,
That did his hand in Ladies bloud embrew,
And for no cause, but as I shall you shew.
This day as I in solace sate hereby
With a fayre loue, whose losse I now do rew,
There came this knight, hauing in companie
This lucklesse Ladie, which now here doth headlesse
lie.

He, whether mine seem'd fayrer in his eye,
Or that he waxed weary of his owne,
Would change with me; but I did it denye;
So did the Ladies both, as may be knowne,
But he, whose spirit was with pride vpbloowne,
Would not so rest contented with his right,
But hauing from his courser her downe throwne,
Fro me reft mine away by lawlesse might,
And on his steed her set, to beare her out of sight.

Which when his Ladie saw, she follow'd fast,
And on him catching hold, gan loud to crie
Not so leaue her, nor away to cast,
But rather of his hand besought to die.
With that his sword he drew all wrathfully,
And at one stroke cropt off her head with scorne,
In that same place, whereas it now doth lie.
So he my loue away with him hath borne,
And left me here, both his & mine owne loue to
morne.

Aread (sayd he) which way then did he make?
And by what markes may he be knowne againe?
To hope (quoth he) him soone to ouertake,
That hence so long departed, is but vaine:
But yet he pricked ouer yonder plaine,
And as I marked, bore vpon his shield,
By which it's easie him to know againe,
A broken sword within a bloodie field;
Expressing well his nature, which the same did wield.

No sooner sayd, but streight he after sent
His yron page, who him pursew'd so light,
As that it seem'd about the ground he went:
For he was swift as swallow in her flight,
And strong as Lyon in his Lordly might.
It was not long, before he ouertooke
Sir Sanglier; (so cleeped was that Knight)
Whom at the first he ghesped by his looke,
And by the other markes, which of his shield he tooke.

He bad him stay, and backe with him retire;
Who full of scorne to be commaunded so,
The Lady to alight did eft require,
Whilest he reformed that vnciuill fo:
And streight at him with all his force did go.
Who mou'd no more therewith, then when a rocke
Is lightly stricken with some stones throw;
But tlo him leaping, len him such a knocke,
That on the ground he layd him like a sencelesse
blocke.

But ere he could him selfe recure againe,
Him in his iron paw he seized had;
That when he wak't out of his warelesse paine,
He found him selfe, vnwist, so ill bestad,
That lim he could not wag. Thence he him lad,
Bound like a beast appointed to the stall:
The sight whereof the Lady sore adrad,
And fain'd to fly for feare of being thrall;
But he her quickly stayd, and forst to wend withall.

When to the place they came, where Artegall
By that same carefull Squire did then abide,
He gently gan him to demaund of all,
That did betwixt him and that Squire betide.
Who with sterne countenance and indignat pride
Did aunswere, that of all he guiltlesse stood,
And his accuser thereupon defide:
For neither he did shed that Ladies bloud,
Nor tooke away his loue, but his owne proper good.

Well did the Squire perceiue him selfe too weake,
To aunswere his defiaunce in the field,
And rather chose his challenge off to breake,
Then to approue his right with speare and shield.
And rather guilty chose him selfe to yield.
But Artegall by signes perceiuing plaine,
That he it was not, which that Lady kild,
But that strange Knight, the fairer loue to gaine,
Did cast about by sleight the truth thereout to straine.

And sayd, Now sure this doubtfull causes right
Can hardly but by Sacrament be tride,
Or else by ordele, or by bloody fight;
That ill perhaps mote fall to either side.
But if ye please, that I your cause decide,
Perhaps I may all further quarrell end,
So ye will sweare my iudgement to abide.
Thereto they both did franckly condescend,
And to his doome with listfull eares did both attend.

Sith then (sayd he) ye both the dead deny,
And both the liuing Lady claime your right,
Let both the dead and liuing equally
Deuided be betwixt you here in sight,
And each of either take his share aright.
But looke who does dissent from this my read,
He for a twelue moneths day shall in despight
Beare for his penaunce that same Ladies head;
To witsse to the world, that she by him is dead.

Well pleased with that doome was Sangliere,
And offred streight the Lady to be slaine.
But that same Squire, to whom she was more dere,
When as he saw she should be cut in twaine,
Did yield, she rather should with him remaine
Aliue, then to him selfe be shared dead;
And rather then his loue should suffer paine,
He chose with shame to beare that Ladies head
True loue despiseth shame, when life is cald in dread.

Whom when so willing Artegall perceaued;
Not so thou Squire, (he sayd) but thine I deeme
The liuing Lady, which from thee he reaued:
For worthy thou of her doest rightly seeme.
And you, Sir Knight, that loue so light esteeme,
As that ye would for little leaue the same,
Take here your owne, that doth you best beseeme,
And with it beare the burden of defame;
Your owne dead Ladies head, to tell abroad your
shame.

But Sangliere disdained much his doome,
And sternly gan repine at his beheast;
Ne would for ought obey, as did become,
To beare that Ladies head before his breast.
Vntill that Talus had his pride represt,
And forced him, maulgre, it vp to reare.
Who when he saw it bootelesse to resist,
He tooke it vp, and thence with him did beare,
As rated Spaniell takes his burden vp for feare.

Canto II.

Much did that Squire Sir Artegall adore,
For his great iustice, held in high regard;
And as his Squire him offred euermore
To serue, for want of other meete reward,
And wend with him on his aduventure hard.
But he thereto would by no meanes consent;
But leauing him forth on his iourney far'd:
Ne wight with him but onely Talus went.
They two enough t'encounter an whole Regiment.

Artegall heares of Florimell,
Does with the Pagan fight:
Him slaies, drownes Lady Munera
Does race her castle quight.

N Ought is more honorable to a knight,
Ne better doth beseeme braue cheualry,
Then to defend the feeble in their right,
And wrong redresse in such as wend awry.
Whilome those great Heroes got thereby
Their greatest glory, for their rightfull deedes,
And place deserued with the Gods on hy.
Herein the noblesse of this knight exceedes,
Who now to perils great for iustice sake proceedes.

To which as he now was vpon the way,
He chaunst to meet a Dwarfe in hasty course;
Whom he requir'd his forward hast to stay,
Till he of tidings mote with him discourse.
Loth was the Dwarfe, yet did he stay perforce,
And gan of sundry newes his store to tell,
As to his memory they had recourse:
But chiefly of the fairest Florimell,
How she was found againe, and spousde to Marinell.

For this was Dony, Florimels owne Dwarfe,
Whom hauing lost (as ye haue heard whyleare)
And finding in the way the scattred scarfe,
The fortune of her life long time did feare.
But of her health when Arte gall did heare,
And safe returne, he was full inly glad,
And askt him where, and when her bridale cheare
Should be solemniz'd: for if time he had,
He would be there, and honor to her spousall ad.

Within three daies (quoth hee) as I do here,
It will be at the Castle of the strond;
What time if naught me let, I will be there
To doe her seruice, so as I am bond.
But in my way a little here beyond
A cursed cruell Sarazin doth wonne,
That keeps a Bridges passage by strong hond,
And many errant Knights hath there fordonne;
That makes all men for feare that passage for to shonne.

What mister wight (quoth he) and how far hence
Is he, that doth to trauellers such harmes?
He is (said he) a man of great defence;
Expert in battell and in deedes of armes;
And more emboldned by the wicked charmes,
With which his daughter doth him still support;
Hauing great Lordships got and goodly farmes,
Through strong oppression of his powre extort;
By which he stil them holds, & keepes with strong
effort.

And dayly he his wrongs encreaseth more,
For neuer wight he lets to passe that way,
Ouer his Bridge, albee he rich or poore,
But he him makes his passage-penny pay:
Else he doth hold him backe or beat away.
Thereto he hath a grome of euill guize,
Whose scalp is bare, that bondage doth bewray,
Which pols and pils the poore in piteous wize;
But he him selfe vpon th rich doth tyrannize.

His name is hight Pollente, rightly so
For that he is so puissant and strong,
That with his powre he all doth ouergo,
And makes them subiect to his mighty wrong;
And some by sleight he eke doth vnderfong.
For on a Bridge he custometh to fight,
Which is but narrow, but exceeding long;
And in the same are many trap fals pight,
Through which the rider downe doth fall through
ouersight.

And vnderneath the same a riuer flowes,
That is both swift and dangerous deepe withall;
Into the which whomso he ouerthrowes,
All destitute of helpe doth headlong fall,
But he him selfe, through practise vsuall,
Leapes forth into the floud, and there assaies
His foe confused through his sodaine fall,
That horse and man he equally dismaies,
And either both them drownes, or trayterously slaies.

Then doth he take the spoile of them at will,
And to his daughter brings, that dwels thereby:
Who all that comes doth take, and therewith fill
The coffers of her wicked threasury;
Which she with wrongs hath heaped vp so hy,
That many Princes she in wealth exceeds,
And purchast all the countrey lying ny
With the reueneue of her plenteous meedes:
Her name is Munera, agreeing with her deedes.

Thereto she is full faire, and rich attired,
With golden hands and siluer feete beside,
That many Lords haue her to wife desired:
But she them all despiseth for great pride.
Now by my life (sayd he) and God to guide,
None other way will I this day betake,
But by that Bridge, whereas he doth abide:
Therefore me thither lead. No more he spake,
But thitherward forthright his ready way did make.

Vnto the place he came within a while,
Where on the Bridge he ready armed saw
The Sarazin, awayting for some spoile.
Who as they to the passage gan to draw,
A villaine to them came with scull all raw,
That passage money did of them require,
According to the custome of their law.
To whom he aunswerd wroth, Loe there thy hire;
And with that word him strooke, that streight he did
expire.

Which when the Pagan saw, he wexed wroth,
And streight him selfe vnto the fight address,
Ne was Sir Artegall behinde: so both
Together ran with ready speares in rest.
Right in the midst, whereas they brest to brest
Should meete, a trap was letten downe to fall
Into the flood: streight leapt the Carle vnblest,
Well weening that his foe was falne withall:
But he was well aware, and leapt before his fall.

There being both together in the flood,
They each at other tyrannously flew;
Ne ought the water cooled their whot blood,
But rather in them kindled choler new.
But there the Paynim, who that vse well knew
To fight in water, great aduantage had,
That oftentimes him nigh he ouerthrew:
And eke the courser, whereuppon he rad,
Could swim like to a fish, whiles he his backe bestrad.

Which oddes when as Sir Artegall espide,
He saw no way, but close with him in hast;
And to him driuing strongly downe the tide,
Vppon his iron coller griped fast,
That with the straint his wesand nigh he brast.
There they together stroue and struggled long,
Either the other from his steede to cast;
Ne euer Artegall his griples strong
For any thing wold slacke, but still vppon him hong.

As when a Dolphin and a Sele are met,
In the wide champian of the Ocean plaine:
With cruell chaufe their courages they whet,
The maysterdome of each by force to gaine,
And dreadfull battaile twixt them do darraine:
They snuf, they snort, they bounce, they rage, they rore,
That all the sea disturbed with their traine,
Doth frie with fome aboute the surges hore.
Such was betwixt these two the troublesome vprore.

So Artegall at length him forst forsake
His horses backe, for dread of being drownd,
And to his handy swimming him betake.
Eftsoones him selfe he from his hold vnbound,
And then no ods at all in him he fownd:
For Artegall in swimming skilfull was,
And durst the depth of any water sownd.
So ought each Knight, that vse of perill has,
In swimming be expert through waters force to pas.

Then very doubtfull was the warres euent,
Vncertaine whether had the better side:
For both were skild in that experiment,
And both in armes well traird and throughly tride.
But Artegall was better breath'd beside,
And towards th'end, grew greater in his might,
That his faint foe no longer could abide
His puissance, ne beare him selfe vpriight,
But from the water to the land betooke his flight.

But Artegall pursewd him still so neare,
With bright Chrysaor in his cruell hand,
That as his head he gan a litle reare
Aboue the brincke, to tread vpon the land,
He smote it off, that tumbling on the strand
It bit the earth for very fell despight,
And gnashed with his teeth, as if he band
High God, whose goodnesse he despaired quight,
Or curst the hand, which did that vengance on him
dight.

His corps was carried downe along the Lee,
Whose waters with his filthy bloud it stayned:
But his blasphemous head, that all might see,
He pitcht vpon a pole on high ordayned;
Where many years it afterwards remayned,
To be a mirrour to all mighty men,
In whose right hands great power is containd,
That none of them the feeble ouerren,
But alwaies doe their powre within iust compasse pen.

That done, vnto the Castle he did wend,
In which the Paynims daughter did abide,
Guarded of many which did her defend:
Of whom he entrance sought, but was denide,
And with reprochfull blasphemy defide,
Beaten with stones downe from the battilment,
That he was forced to withdraw aside;
And bad his seruant Talus to inuent
Which way he enter might, without endangerment.

Eftsoones his Page drew to the Castle gate,
And with his iron flae at it let flie,
That all the warders it did sore amate,
The which erewhile spake so reprochfully,
And made them stoupe, that looked earst so hie.
Yet still he bet, and bounst vppon the dore,
And thundred strokes thereon so hideouslie,
That all the peece he shaked from the flore,
And filled all the house with feare and great vprore.

With noise whereof the Lady forth appeared
Vppon the Castle wall, and when she saw
The daungerous state, in which she stood, she feared
The sad effect of her neare ouerthrow;
And gan entreat that iron man below,
To cease his outrage, and him faire besought,
Sith neither force of stones which they did throw,
Nor powr of charms, which she against him wrought,
Might otherwise preuaile, or make him cease for
ought.

But when as yet she saw him to proceede,
Vnmou'd with praiers, or with piteous thought,
She ment him to corrupt with goodly meede;
And causede great sackes with endlesse riches fraught,
Vnto the battilment to be vpbrought,
And powred forth ouer the Castle wall,
That she might win some time, though dearly bought
Whilest he to gathering of the gold did fall.
But he was nothing mou'd, nor tempted therewithall.

But still continu'd his assault the more,
And layd on load with his huge yron flaile,
That at the length he has yrent the dore,
And made way for his maister to assaile.
Who being entred, nought did then auaille
For wight, against his powre them selues to reare:
Each one did flie; their hearts began to faile,
And hid them selues in corners here and there;
And eke their dame halfe dead did hide her self for feare.

Long they her sought, yet no where could they finde her,
That sure they ween'd she was escapt away:
But Talus, that could like a limehound winde her,
And all things secrete wisely could bewray,
At length found out, whereas she hidden lay
Vnder an heape of gold. Thence he her drew
By the faire lockes, and fowly did array,
Withouten pittie of her goodly hew,
That Artegal him selfe her seemelesse plight did rew.

Yet for no pittie would he change the course
Of Iustice, which in Talus hand did lye;
Who rudely hayld her forth without remorse,
Still holding vp her suppliant hands on hye,
And kneeling at his feete submissiuely.
But he her suppliant hands, those hands of gold,
And eke her feete, those feete of siluer trye,
Which sought vnrighteousnesse, and iustice sold,
Chopt off, and nayld on high, that all might th' behold.

Her selfe then tooke he by the sclender wast,
In vaine loud crying, and into the flood
Ouer the Castle wall adowne her cast,
And there her drowned in the durty mud:
But the streame washt away her guilty blood.
Thereafter all that mucky pelfe he tooke,
The spoile of peoples euill gotten good,
The which her sire had scrap't by hooke and crooke;
And burning all to ashes, powr'd it downe the brooke.

And lastly all that Castle quite he raced,
Euen from the sole of his foundation,
And all the hewen stones thereof defaced,
That there mote be no hope of reparation,
Nor memory thereof to any nation.
All which when Talus throughly had perfourmed,
Sir Arte gall vndid the euill fashion,
And wicked customes of that Bridge reformed.
Which done, vnto his former iourney he returned.

In which they measur'd mickle weary way,
Till that at length nigh to the sea they drew;
By which as they did trauell on a day,
They saw before them, far as they could vew,
Full many people gathered in a crew:
Whose great assembly they did much admire,
For neuer there the like resort they knew.
So towards them they coasted, to enquire
What thing so many nations met, did there desire.

There they beheld a mighty Gyant stand
Vpon a rocke, and holding forth on hie
An huge great paire of ballance in his hand,
With which he boasted in his surquedrie,
That all the world he would weigh equallie,
If ought he had the same to counterpoys.
For want whereof he weighed vanity,
And fild his ballaunce full of idle toys:
Yet was admired much of fooles, women, and boys.

He sayd that he would all the earth vptake,
And all the sea, deuided each from either:
So would he of the fire one ballaunce make,
And one of th'ayre, without or wind, or wether:
Then would he ballaunce heauen and hell together,
And all that did within them all containe;
Of all whose weight, he would not misse a fether.
And looke what surplus did of each remaine,
He would to his owne part restore the same againe.

For why, he sayd they all vnequall were,
And had encroched vppon others share,
Like as the sea (which plaine he shewed there)
Had worne the earth, so did the fire the aire;
So all the rest did others parts empaire.
And so were realmes and nations run awry.
All which he vndertooke for to repaire,
In sort as they were formed aunciently;
And all things would reduce vnto equality.

Therefore the vulgar did about him flocke,
And cluster thicke vnto his leasings vaine,
Like foolish flies about an hony crocke,
In hope by him great benefite to gaine,
And vncontrolled freedome to obtaine.
All which when Artegall did see, and heare,
How he mis-led the simple peoples traine,
In sdeignfull wize he drew vnto him neare,
And thus vnto him spake, without regard or feare;

Thou that presum'st to weigh the world anew,
And all things to an equall to restore,
In stead of right me seemes great wrong dost shew,
And far about thy forces pitch to sore.
For ere thou limit what is lesse or more
In euery thing, thou oughtest first to know,
What was the poyse of euery part of yore:
And looke then how much it doth ouerflow,
Or faile thereof, so much is more then iust to trow.

For at the first they all created were
In goodly measure, by their Makers might,
And weighed out in ballaunces so nere,
That not a dram was missing of their right,
The earth was in the middle centre pight,
In which it doth immoueable abide,
Hemd in with waters like a wall in sight;
And they with aire, that not a drop can slide:
Al which the heuens containe, & in their courses guide.

Such heauenly iustice doth among them raine,
That euery one doe know their certaine bound,
In which they doe these many yeares remaine,
And mongst them al no change hath yet beene found.
But if thou now shouldst weigh them new in pound,
We are not sure they would so long remaine:
All change is perillous, and all chaunce vnsound.
Therefore leaue off to weigh them all againe,
Till we may be assur'd they shall their course retaine.

Thou foolishe Elfe (said then the Gyant wroth)
Seest not, how badly all things present bee,
And each estate quite out of order go'th?
The sea it selfe doest thou not plainly see
Encroch vppon the land there vnder thee;
And th'earth it selfe how daily its increast,
By all that dying to it turned be?
Were it not good that wrong were then surceast,
And from the most, that some were giuen to the least?

Therefore I will throw downe these mountaines hie,
And make them leuell with the lowly plaine:
These towring rocks, which reach vnto the skie,
I will thrust downe into the deepest maine,
And as they were, them equalize againe.
Tyrants that make men subiect to their law,
I will suppress, that they no more may raine;
And Lordings curbe, that commons ouer-aw;
And all the wealth of rich men to the poore will draw.

Of things vnseene how canst thou deeme aright,
Then answered the righteous Artegall,
Sith thou misdeem'st so much of things in sight?
What though the sea with waues continuall
Doe eate the earth, it is no more at all:
Ne is the earth the lesse, or loseth ought,
For whatsoever from one place doth fall,
Is with the tide vnto an other brought:
For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought.

Likewise the earth is not augmented more,
By all that dying into it doe fade.
For of the earth they formed were of yore;
How euer gay their blossome or their blade
Doe flourish now, they into dust shall vade.
What wrong then is it, if that when they die,
They turne to that, whereof they first were made?
All in the powre of their great Maker lie:
All creatures must obey the voice of the most hie.

They liue, they die, like as he doth ordaine,
Ne euer any asketh reason why.
The hils doe not the lowly dales disdain;
The dales doe not the lofty hils enuy.
He maketh Kings to sit in souerainty;
He maketh subiects to their powre obay;
He pulleth downe, he setteth vp on hy;
He giues to this, from that he takes away.
For all we haue is his: what he list doe, he may.

What euer thing is done, by him is donne,
Ne any may his mighty will withstand;
Ne any may his soueraine power shonne,
Ne loose that he hath bound with stedfast band.
In vaine therefore doest thou now take in hand,
To call to count, or weigh his workes anew,
Whose counsels depth thou canst not vnderstand,
Sith of things subiect to thy daily vew
Thou doest not know the causes, nor their courses dew.

For take thy ballaunce, if thou be so wise,
And weigh the winde, that vnder heauen doth blow;
Or weigh the light, that in the East doth rise;
Or weigh the thought, that frō mans mind doth flow.
But if the weight of these thou canst not show,
Weigh but one word which from thy lips doth fall.
For how canst thou those greater secrets know,
That doest not know the least thing of them all?
Ill can he rule the great, that cannot reach the small.

Therewith the Gyant much abashed sayd;
That he of little things made reckoning light,
Yet the least word that euer could be layd
Within his ballaunce, he could way aright.
Which is (sayd he) more heauy then in weight,
The right or wrong, the false or else the trew?
He answered, that he would try it streight,
So he the words into his ballaunce threw,
But streight the winged words out of his ballaunce flew.

Wroth wext he then, and sayd, that words were light,
Ne would within his ballaunce well abide.
But he could iustly weigh the wrong or right.
Well then, sayd Artegall, let it be tride.
First in one ballance set the true aside.
He did so first; and then the false he layd
In th'other scale; but still it downe did slide,
And by no meane could in the weight be stayd.
For by no meanes the false will with the truth be wayd.

Now take the right likewise, sayd Artegale,
And counterpeise the same with so much wrong.
So first the right he put into one scale;
And then the Gyant stroue with puissance strong
To fill the other scale with so much wrong.
But all the wrongs that he therein could lay,
Might not it peise; yet did he labour long,
And swat, and chauf'd, and proued euer way:
Yet all the wrongs could not a litle right downe lay.

Which when he saw, he greatly grew in rage,
And almost would his balances haue broken:
But Artegal him fairely gan asswage,
And said; Be not vpon thy balance wroken:
For they doe nought but right or wrong betoken;
But in the mind the doome of right must bee;
And so likewise of words, the which be spoken,
The eare must be the ballance, to decree
And iudge, whether with truth or falshood they agree.

But set the truth and set the right aside,
For they with wrong or falshood will not fare;
And put two wrongs together to be tride,
Or else two falses, of each equall share;
And then together doe them both compare.
For truth is one, and right is euer one.
So did he, and then plaine it did appeare,
Whether of them the greater were attone.
But right sate in the middest of the beame alone.

But he the right from thence did thrust away,
For it was not the right, which he did seeke;
But rather stroue extremities to way,
Th'one to diminish, th'other for to eeke.
For of the meane he greatly did misleeke.
Whom when so lewdly minded Talus found,
Approching nigh vnto him cheeke by cheeke,
He shouldered him from off the higher ground,
And down the rock him throwing, in the sea him
dround.

Like as a ship, whom cruell tempest driues
Vpon a rocke with horrible dismay,
Her shattered ribs in thousand peeces riuies,
And spoyling all her geares and goodly ray,
Does make her selfe misfortunes piteous pray.
So downe the cliffe the wretched Gyant tumbled;
His battred ballances in peeces lay,
His timbered bones all broken rudely rumbled:
So was the high aspyring with huge ruine humbled.

That when the people, which had there about
Long wayted, saw his sudden desolation,
They gan to gather in tumultuous rout,
And mutining, to stirre vp ciuill faction,
For certaine losse of so great expectation.
For well they hoped to haue got great good,
And wondrous riches by his innouation.
Therefore resolving to reuenge his blood,
They rose in armes, and all in battell order stood.

Which lawlesse multitude him comming too
In warlike wise, when Artegall did vew,
He much was troubled, ne wist what to doo.
For loth he was his noble hands t'embrew
In the base blood of such a rascall crew;
And otherwise, if that he should retire,
He fear'd least they with shame would him pursew.
Therefore he Talus to them sent, t'inquire
The cause of their array, and truce for to desire.

But soone as they him nigh approaching spide,
They gan with all their weapons him assay,
And rudely stroke at him on euery side:
Yet nought they could him hurt, ne ought dismay.
But when at them he with his flaile gan lay,
He like a swarme of flyes them ouerthrew;
Ne any of them durst come in his way,
But here and there before his presence flew,
And hid themselues in holes and bushes from his vew.

Canto III.

As when a Faulcon hath with nimble flight
Flowne at a flush of Ducks, foreby the brooke,
The trembling foule dismayd with dreadfull sight
Of death, the which them almost ouertooke,
Doe hide themselues from her astonying looke,
Amongst the flags and couert round about.
When Talus saw they all the field forsooke
And none appear'd of all that raskall rout,
To Artegall he turn'd, and went with him throughout.

The spousals of faire Florimell,
where turney many knights:
There Braggadochio is vncas'd
in all the Ladies sights.

A Fter long stormes and tempests ouerblowne,
The sunne at length his ioyous face doth cleare:
So when as fortune all her spight hath showne,
Some blisfull houres at last must needes appeare;
Else should afflicted wights oftimes despeire.
So comes it now to Florimell by tourne,
After long sorrowes suffered whyleare,
In which captiu'd she many moneths did mourne,
To tast of ioy, and to wont pleasures to retourne.

Who being freed from Proteus cruell band
By Marinell, was vnto him affide,
And by him brought againe to Faerie land;
Where he her spous'd, and made his ioyous bride.
The time and place was blazed farre and wide;
And solemne feasts and giusts ordain'd therefore.
To which there did resort from euery side
Of Lords and Ladies infinite great store;
Ne any Knight was absent, that braue courage bore.

To tell the glorie of the feast that day,
The goodly seruice, the deuicefull sights,
The bridegromes state, the brides most rich array,
The pride of Ladies, and the worth of knights,
The royall banquets, and the rare delights,
Were worke fit for an Herauld, not for me:
But for so much as to my lot here lights,
That with this present treatise doth agree,
True vertue to aduance, shall here recounted bee.

When all men had with full satietie
Of meates and drinckes their appetites suffiz'd,
To deedes of armes and prooffe of cheualrie
They gan themselues addresse, full rich aguiz'd,
As each one had his furnitures deuiz'd.
And first of all issu'd Sir Marinell,
And with him sixe knights more, which enterpriz'd
To chalenge all in right of Florimell,
And to maintaine, that she all others did excell.

The first of them was hight Sir Orimont,
A noble Knight, and tride in hard assayes:
The second had to name Sir Bellisont,
But second vnto none in prowesse prayse;
The third was Brunell, famous in his dayes;
The fourth Ecastor, of exceeding might;
The fift Armeddan, skild in louely layes;
The sixt was Lansack, a redoubted Knight:
All sixe well seene in armes, and prou'd in many a fight.

And them against came all that list to giust,
From euery coast and cuntry vnder sunne:
None was debard, but all had leaue that lust.
The trumpets sound; then all together ronne.
Full many deedes of armes that day were donne,
And many knights vnhorst, and many wounded,
As fortune fell; yet litle lost or wonne:
But all that day the greatest prayse redounded
To Marinell, whose name the Heralds loud resounded.

The second day, so soone as morrow light
Appear'd in heauen, into the field they came,
And there all day continew'd cruell fight,
With diuers fortune fit for such a game,
In which all stroue with perill to winne fame.
Yet whether side was victor, note be ghest:
But at the last the trumpets did proclame
That Marinell that day deserued best.
So they disparted were, and all men went to rest.

The third day came, that should due tryall lend
Of all the rest, and then this warlike crew
Together met, of all to make an end.
There Marinell great deedes of armes did shew;
And through the thickest like a Lyon flew,
Rashing off helmes, and ruying plates a sonder,
That euery one his daunger did eschew.
So terribly his dreadfull strokes did thonder,
That all men stood amaz'd, & at his might did wonder.

But what on earth can alwayes happie stand?
The greater prowesse greater perils find.
So farre he past amongst his enemies band,
That they haue him enclosed so behind,
As by no meanes he can himselfe outwind.
And now perforce they haue him prisoner taken;
And now they doe with captiue bands him bind;
And now they lead him thence, of all forsaken,
Vnlesse some succour had in time him ouertaken.

It fortun'd whylest they were thus ill beset,
Sir Artegall into the Tilt-yard came,
With Braggadochio, whom he lately met
Vpon the way, with that his snowy Dame.
Where when he vnderstood by common fame,
What euill hap to Marinell betid,
He much was mou'd at so vnworthie shame,
And streight that boaster prayd, with whom he rid,
To change his shield with him, to be better hid.

So forth he went, and soone them ouer hent,
Where they were leading Marinell away,
Whom he assayld with dreadlesse hardiment,
And forst the burden of their prize to stay.
They were an hundred knights of that array;
Of which th'one halfe vpon himselfe did set,
The other stayd behind to gard the pray.
But he ere long the former fiftie bet;
And from the other fiftie soone the prisoner fet.

So backe he brought Sir Marinell againe;
Whom hauing quickly arm'd againe anew,
They both together ioyned might and maine,
To set afresh on all the other crew.
Whom with sore hauocke soone they ouerthrew,
And chaced quite out of the field, that none
Against them durst his head to perill shew.
So were they left Lords of the field alone:
So Marinell by him was rescu'd from his fone.

Which when he had perform'd, then backe againe
To Braggadochio did his shield restore:
Who all this while behind him did remaine,
Keeping there close with him in pretious store
That his false Ladie, as ye heard afore.
Then did the trompets sound, and Iudges rose,
And all these knights, which that day armour bore,
Came to the open hall, to listen whose
The honour of the prize should be adiudg'd by those.

And thether also came in open sight
Fayre Florimell, into the common hall,
To greet his guerdon vnto euery knight,
And best to him, to whom the best should fall.
Then for that stranger knight they loud did call,
To whom that day they should the girlond yield.
Who came not forth, but for Sir Artegall
Came Braggadochio, and did shew his shield,
Which bore the Sunne brode blazed in a golden field.

The sight whereof did all with gladnesse fill:
So vnto him they did addeeme the prise
Of all that Tryumph. Then the trompets shrill
Don Braggadochios name resounded thrise:
So courage lent a cloke to cowardise.
And then to him came fayrest Florimell,
And goodly gan to greet his braue emprise,
And thousand thankes him yeeld, that had so well
Approu'd that day, that she all others did excell.

To whom the boaster, that all knights did blot,
With proud disdaine did scornfull answere make;
That what he did that day, he did it not
For her, but for his owne deare Ladies sake,
Whom on his perill he did vndertake,
Both her and eke all others to excell:
And further did vncomely speaches crake.
Much did his words the gentle Ladie quell,
And turn'd aside for shame to heare, what he did tell.

Then forth he brought his snowy Florimele,
Whom Trompart had in keeping there beside,
Couered from peoples gazement with a vele.
Whom when discouered they had throughly eide,
With great amazement they were stupefide;
And said, that surely Florimell it was,
Or if it were not Florimell so tride,
That Florimell her selfe she then did pas.
So feeble skill of perfect things the vulgar has.

Which when as Marinell beheld likewise,
He was therewith exceedingly dismayd;
Ne wist he what to thinke, or to deuise,
But like as one, whom feends had made affrayd,
He long astonisht stood, ne ought he sayd,
Ne ought he did, but with fast fixed eies
He gazed still vpon that snowy mayd;
Whom euer as he did the more auize,
The more to be true Florimell he did surmize.

As when two sunnes appeare in the azure skye,
Mounted in Phoebus charet fierie bright,
Both darting forth faire beames to each mans eye,
And both adorn'd with lampes of flaming light,
All that behold so strange prodigious sight,
Not knowing natures worke, nor what to weene,
Are rapt with wonder, and with rare affright.
So stood Sir Marinell, when he had seene
The semblant of this false by his faire beauties Queene.

All which when Artegal, who all this while
Stood in the preasse close couered, well aduewed,
And saw that boasters pride and gracelesse guile,
He could no longer beare, but forth issewed,
And vnto all himselfe there open shewed,
And to the boaster said; Thou losell base,
That hast with borrowed plumes thy selfe endewed,
And others worth with leasings doest deface,
When they are all restor'd, thou shalt rest in disgrace.

That shield, which thou doest beare, was it indeed,
Which this dayes honour sau'd to Marinell;
But not that arme, nor thou the man I reed,
Which didst that seruice vnto Florimell.
For prooffe shew forth thy sword, and let it tell,
What strokes, what dreadfull stoure it stird this day:
Or shew the wounds, which vnto thee befell;
Or shew the sweat, with which thou diddest sway
So sharpe a battell, that so many did dismay.

But this the sword, which wrought those cruell stounds,
And this the arme, the which that shield did beare,
And these the signes, (so shewed forth his wounds)
By which that glorie gotten doth appeare.
As for this Ladie, which he sheweth here,
Is not (I wager) Florimell at all;
But some fayre Franion, fit for such a fere,
That by misfortune in his hand did fall.
For prooffe whereof, he bad them Florimell forth call.

So forth the noble Ladie was ybrought,
Adorn'd with honor and all comely grace:
Whereto her bashfull shamefastnesse ywrought
A great increase in her faire blushing face;
As roses did with lillies interlace.
For of those words, the which that boaster threw,
She inly yet conceiued great disgrace.
Whom when as all the people such did vew,
They shouted loud, and signes of gladnesse all did shew.

Then did he set her by that snowy one,
Like the true saint beside the image set,
Of both their beauties to make paragone,
And triall, whether should the honor get.
Streight way so soone as both together met,
Th'enchanted Damzell vanisht into nought:
Her snowy substance melted as with heat,
Ne of that goodly hew remaind ought,
But th'emptie girdle, which about her wast was wrought.

As when the daughter of Thaumantes faire,
Hath in a watry cloud displayed wide
Her goodly bow, which paints the liquid ayre;
That all men wonder at her colours pride;
All suddenly, ere one can looke aside,
The glorious picture vanisheth away,
Ne any token doth thereof abide:
So did this Ladies goodly forme decay,
And into nothing goe, ere one could it bewray.

Which when as all that present were, beheld,
They stricken were with great astonishment,
And their faint harts with senselesse horror queld,
To see the thing, that seem'd so excellent,
So stolen from their fancies wonderment;
That what of it became, none vnderstood.
And Braggadochio selfe with dremment
So daunted was in his despyring mood,
That like a lifelesse corse immouable he stood.

But Artegall that golden belt vptooke,
The which of all her spoyle was onely left;
Which was not hers, as many it mistooke,
But Florimells owne girdle, from her reft,
While she was flying, like a weary weft,
From that foule monster, which did her compell
To perils great; which he vnbuckling eft,
Presented to the fayrest Florimell;
Who round about her tender wast it fitted well.

Full many Ladies often had assayd,
About their middles that faire belt to knit;
And many a one suppos'd to be a mayd:
Yet it to none of all their loynes would fit,
Till Florimell about her fastned it.
Such power it had, that to no womans wast
By any skill or labour it would sit,
Vnlesse that she were continent and chast,
But it would lose or breake, that many had disgrast.

Whilest thus they busied were bout Florimell,
And boastfull Braggadochio to defame,
Sir Guyon as by fortune then befell,
Forth from the thickest preasse of people came,
His owne good steed, which he had stolne, to clame;
And th'one hand seizing on his golden bit,
With th'other drew his sword: for with the same
He ment the thiefe there deadly to haue smit:
And had he not bene held, he nought had fayld of it.

Thereof great hurly burly moued was
Throughout the hall, for that same warlike horse.
For Braggadochio would not let him pas;
And Guyon would him algates haue perforce,
Or it approue vpon his carrion corse.
Which troublous stirre when Artegall perceiued,
He nigh them drew to stay th'auengers forse,
And gan inquire, how was that steed bereaued,
Whether by might extort, or else by slight deceaued.

Who all that piteous storie, which befell
About that wofull couple, which were slaine,
And their young bloodie babe to him gan tell;
With whom whiles he did in the wood remaine,
His horse purloyned was by subtyll traine:
For which he chalenged the thiefe to fight.
But he for nought could him thereto constraîne.
For as the death he hated such despight,
And rather had to lose, then trie in armes his right.

Which Artegall well hearing, though no more
By law of armes there neede ones right to trie,
As was the wont of warlike knights of yore,
Then that his foe should him the field denie,
Yet further right by tokens to descrie,
He askt, what priuie tokens he did beare.
If that (said Guyon) may you satisfie,
Within his mouth a blacke spot doth appeare,
Shapt like a horses shoe, who list to seeke it there.

Whereof to make due tryall, one did take
The horse in hand, within his mouth to looke:
But with his heeles so sorely he him strake,
That all his ribs he quite in peeces broke,
That neuer word from that day forth he spoke.
Another that would seeme to haue more wit,
Him by the bright embrodered hedstall tooke:
But by the shoulder him so sore he bit,
That he him maymed quite, and all his shoulder split.

Ne he his mouth would open vnto wight,
Vntill that Guyon selfe vnto him spake,
And called Brigadore (so was he hight)
Whose voice so soone as he did vndertake,
Eftsoones he stood as still as any stake,
And suffred all his secret marke to see:
And when as he him nam'd, for ioy he brake
His bands, and follow'd him with gladfull glee,
And friskt, and flong aloft, and louted low on knee.

Thereby Sir Artegall did plaine areed,
That vnto him the horse belong'd, and sayd;
Lo there Sir Guyon, take to you the steed,
As he with golden saddle is arayd;
And let that losell, plainly now displayd,
Hence fare on foot, till he an horse haue gayned.
But the proud boaster gan his doome vpbraid,
And him reuil'd, and rated, and disdayned,
That iudgement so vniust against him had ordayned.

Much was the knight incenst with his lewd word,
To haue reuenged that his villeny;
And thrise did lay his hand vpon his sword,
To haue him slaine, or dearely doen aby.
But Guyon did his choler pacify,
Saying, Sir knight, it would dishonour bee
To you, that are our iudge of equity,
To wreake your wrath on such a carle as hee:
It's punishment enough, that all his shame doe see.

So did he mitigate Sir Artegall;
But Talus by the backe the boaster hent,
And drawing him out of the open hall,
Vpon him did inflict this punishment.
First he his beard did shaue, and fowly shent:
Then from him reft his shield, and it renuerst,
And blotted out his armes with falshood blent,
And himselfe baffuld, and his armes vnherst,
And broke his sword in twaine, and all his armour sperst.

The whiles his guilefull groome was fled away:
But vaine it was to thinke from him to flie.
Who ouertaking him did disaray,
And all his face deform'd with infamie,
And out of court him scourged openly.
So ought all faytours, that true knight hood shame,
And armes dishonour with base villanie,
From all braue knights be banisht with defame:
For oft their lewdnes blotteth good deserts with blame.

Now when these counterfeits were thus vncased
Out of the foreside of their forgerie,
And in the sight of all men cleane disgraced,
All gan to iest and gibe full merilie
At the remembrance of their knauerie.
Ladies can laugh at Ladies, Knights at Knights,
To thinke with how great vaunt of brauerie
He them abused, through his subtill slights,
And what a glorious shew he made in all their sights.

There leaue we them in pleasure and repast,
Spending their ioyous dayes and gladfull nights,
And taking vsurie of time forepast,
With all deare delices and rare delights,
Fit for such Ladies and such louely knights:
And turne we here to this faire furrowes end
Our wearie yokes, to gather fresher sprights,
That when as time to Arte gall shall tend,
We on his first aduenture may him forward send.

Canto IIII.

Artegall dealeth right betwixt
two brethren that doe strive,
Saues Terpine from the gallow tree,
and doth from death repriue.

VVho so vpon him selfe will take the skill
True Iustice vnto people to diuide,
Had neede haue mightie hands, for to fulfill
That, which he doth with righteous doome decide,
And for to maister wrong and puissant pride,
For vaine it is to deeme of things aright,
And makes wrong doers iustice to deride,
Vnlesse it be perform'd with dreadlesse might.
For powre is the right hand of Iustice truely hight.

Therefore whylome to knights of great emprise
The charge of Iustice giuen was in trust,
That they might execute her iudgements wise,
And with their might beat downe licentious lust,
Which proudly did impugne her sentence iust.
Whereof no brauer president this day
Remaines on earth, preseru'd from yron rust
Of rude obliuion, and long times decay,
Then this of Artégall, which here we haue to say.

Who hauing lately left that louely payre,
Enlincked fast in wedlockes loyall bond,
Bold Marinell with Florimell the fayre,
With whom great feast and goodly glee he fond,
Departed from the Castle of the strond,
To follow his aduentures first intent,
Which long agoe he taken had in hond:
Ne wight with him for his assistance went,
But that great yron groome, his gard and gouernment.

With whom as he did passe by the sea shore,
He chaunst to come, whereas two comely Squires,
Both brethren, whom one wombe together bore,
But stirred vp with different desires,
Together stroue, and kindled wrathfull fires:
And them beside two seemely damzels stood,
By all meanes seeking to asswage their ires,
Now with faire words; but words did little good,
Now with sharpe threats; but threats the more increast
their mood.

And there before them stood a Coffe strong,
Fast bound on euery side with iron bands,
But seeming to haue suffred mickle wrong,
Either by being wreckt vppon the sands,
Or being carried farre from forraine lands.
Seem'd that for it these Squires at ods did fall,
And bent against them selues their cruell hands.
But euermore, those Damzels did forestall
Their furious encounter, and their fiercenesse pall.

But firmly fixt they were, with dint of sword,
And battailes doubtfull prooffe their rights to try,
Ne other end their fury would afford,
But what to them Fortune would iustify.
So stood they both in readinesse thereby,
To ioyne the combate with cruell intent;
When Artegall arriuing happily,
Did stay a while their greedy bickerment,
Till he had questioned the cause of their dissent.

To whom the elder did this aunswere frame;
Then weete ye Sir, that we two brethren be,
To whom our sire, Milesio by name,
Did equally bequeath his lands in fee,
Two llands, which ye there before you see
Not farre in sea; of which the one appears
But like a little Mount of small degree;
Yet was as great and wide ere many yeares,
As that same other Isle, that greater bredth now beares.

But tract of time, that all things doth decay,
And this deuouring Sea, that naught doth spare,
The most part of my land hath washt away,
And throwne it vp vnto my brothers share:
So his encreased, but mine did empaire.
Before which time I lou'd, as was my lot,
That further mayd, hight Philtera the faire,
With whom a goodly doure I should haue got,
And should haue ioyned bene to her in wedlocks knot.

Then did my younger brother Amidas
Loue that same other Damzell, Lucy bright,
To whom but little dowre allotted was;
Her vertue was the dowre, that did delight.
What better dowre can to a dame be hight?
But now when Philtra saw my lands decay,
And former liuelod fayle, she left me quight,
And to my brother did ellope streight way:
Who taking her from me, his owne loue left astray.

She seeing then her selfe forsaken so,
Through dolorous despaire, which she conceyued,
Into the Sea her selfe did headlong throw,
Thinking to haue her griebe by death bereaued.
But see how much her purpose was deceaued.
Whilest thus amidst the billowes beating of her
Twixt life and death, long to and fro she weaued,
She chaunst vnwares to light vppon this coffer,
Which to her in that daunger hope of life did offer.

The wretched mayd that earst desir'd to die,
When as the paine of death she tasted had,
And but halfe seene his vgly visnomie,
Gan to repent, that she had beene so mad,
For any death to chaunge life though most bad:
And catching hold of this Sea-beaten chest,
The lucky Pylot of her passage sad,
After long tossing in the seas distrest,
Her weary barke at last vppon mine Isle did rest.

Where I by chaunce then wandering on the shore,
Did her espy, and through my good endeuour
From dreadfull mouth of death, which threatned sore
Her to haue swallow'd vp, did helpe to saue her.
She then in recompence of that great fauour,
Which I on her bestowed, bestowed on me
The portion of that good, which Fortune gaue her,
Together with her selfe in dowry free;
Both goodly portions, but of both the better she.

Yet in this coffer, which she with her brought,
Great threasure sithence we did finde contained;
Which as our owne we tooke, and so it thought.
But this same other Damzell since hath fained,
That to her selfe that threasure appertained;
And that she did transport the same by sea,
To bring it to her husband new ordained,
But suffred cruell shipwracke by the way.
But whether it be so or no, I can not say.

But whether it indeede be so or no,
This doe I say, that what so good or ill
Or God or Fortune vnto me did throw,
Not wronging any other by my will,
I hold mine owne, and so will hold it still.
And though my land he first did winne away,
And then my loue (though now it little skill),
Yet my good lucke he shall not likewise pray;
But I will it defend, whilst euer that I may.

So hauing sayd, the younger did ensew;
Full true it is, what so about our land
My brother here declared hath to you:
But not for it this ods twixt vs doth stand,
But for this threasure throwne vppon his strand;
Which well I proue, as shall appeare by triall,
To be this maides, with whom I fastned hand,
Known by good markes, and perfect good espiall,
Therefore it ought be rendred her without deniall.

When they thus ended had, the Knight began;
Certes your strife were easie to accord,
Would ye remit it to some righteous man.
Vnto your selfe, said they, we giue our word,
To bide what iudgement ye shall vs afford.
Then for assuraunce to my doome to stand,
Vnder my foote let each lay downe his sword,
And then you shall my sentence vnderstand.
So each of them layd downe his sword out of his hand.

Then Artegall thus to the younger sayd;
Now tell me Amidas, if that ye may,
Your brothers land the which the sea hath layd
Vnto your part, and pluckt from his away,
By what good right doe you withhold this day?
What other right (quoth he) should you esteeme,
But that the sea it to my share did lay?
Your right is good (sayd he) and so I deeme,
That what the sea vnto you sent, your own should
seeme.

Then turning to the elder thus he sayd;
Now Bracidas let this likewise be showne.
Your brothers treasure, which from him is strayd,
Being the dowry of his wife well knowne,
By what right doe you claime to be your owne?
What other right (quoth he) should you esteeme,
But that the sea hath it vnto me throwne?
Your right is good (sayd he) and so I deeme,
That what the sea vnto you sent, your own should
seeme.

For equall right in equall things doth stand,
For what the mighty Sea hath once possest,
And plucked quite from all possessors hand,
Whether by rage of waues, that neuer rest,
Or else by wracke, that wretches hath distrest,
He may dispose by his imperiall might,
As thing at randon left, to whom he list.
So Amidas, the land was yours first hight,
And so the treasure yours is Bracidas by right.

When he his sentence thus pronounced had,
Both Amidas and Philtra were displeas'd:
But Bracidas and Lucy were right glad,
And on the threasure by that iudgement seas'd.
So was their discord by this doome appeas'd,
And each one had his right. Then Artegall
When as their sharpe contention he had ceased,
Departed on his way, as did befall,
To follow his old quest, the which him forth did call.

So as he trauelled vppon the way,
He chaunst to come, where happily he spide
A rout of many people farre away;
To whom his course he hastily applide,
To weete the cause of their assemblaunce wide.
To whom when he approached neare in sight,
(An vncouth sight) he plainely then descride
To be a troupe of women warlike dight,
With weapons in their hands, as ready for to fight.

And in the midst of them he saw a Knight,
With both his hands behinde him pinnoed hard,
And round about his necke an halter tight,
As ready for the gallow tree prepar'd:
His face was couered, and his head was bar'd,
That who he was, vneath was to descry;
And with full heauy heart with them he far'd,
Grieu'd to the soule, and groning inwardly,
That he of womens hands so base a death should dy.

But they like tyrants, mercilesse the more,
Reioyced at his miserable case,
And him reuiled, and reproched sore
With bitter taunts, and termes of vile disgrace.
Now when as Artegall arriu'd in place,
Did aske, what cause brought that man to decay,
They round about him gan to swarme apace,
Meaning on him their cruell hands to lay,
And to haue wrought vnwares some villanous assay.

But he was soone aware of their ill minde,
And drawing backe deceiued their intent;
Yet though him selfe did shame on womankinde
His mighty hand to shend, he Talus sent
To wrecke on them their follies hardiment:
Who with few sowces of his yron flale,
Dispersed all their troupe incontinent,
And sent them home to tell a piteous tale,
Of their vaine prowesse, turned to their proper bale.

But that same wretched man, ordaynd to die,
They left behind them, glad to be so quit:
Him Talus tooke out of perplexitie,
And horreur of fowle death for Knight vnfit,
Who more then losse of life ydreaded it;
And him restoring vnto liuing light,
So brought vnto his Lord, where he did sit,
Beholding all that womanish weake fight;
Whom soone as he beheld, he knew, and thus behight.

Sir Terpine, haplesse man, what make you here?
Or haue you lost your selfe, and your discretion,
That euer in this wretched case ye were?
Or haue ye yeilded you to proude oppression
Of womens powre, that boast of mens subiection?
Or else what other deadly dismall day
Is falne on you, by heauens hard direction,
That ye were runne so fondly far astray,
As for to lead your selfe vnto your owne decay?

Much was the man confounded in his mind,
Partly with shame, and partly with dismay,
That all astonisht he him selfe did find,
And little had for his excuse to say,
But onely thus; Most haplesse well ye may
Me iustly terme, that to this shame am brought,
And made the scorne of Knighthod this same day.
But who can scape, what his owne fate hath wrought?
The worke of heauens will surpasseth humaine
thought.

Right true: but faulty men vse oftentimes
To attribute their folly vnto fate,
And lay on heauen the guilt of their owne crimes.
But tell, Sir Terpin, ne let you amate
Your misery, how fell ye in this state.
Then sith ye needs (quoth he) will know my shame,
And all the ill, which chaunst to me of late,
I shortly will to you rehearse the same,
In hope ye will not turne misfortune to my blame

Being desirous (as all Knights are woont)
Through hard aduentures deedes of armes to try,
And after fame and honour for to hunt,
I heard report that farre abrode did fly,
That a proud Amazon did late defy
All the braue Knights, that hold of Maidenhead,
And vnto them wrought all the villany,
That she could forge in her malicious head,
Which some hath put to shame, and many done be
dead.

The cause, they say, of this her cruell hate,
Is for the sake of Bellodant the bold,
To whom she bore most feruent loue of late,
And wooed him by all the waies she could:
But when she saw at last, that he ne would
For ought or nought be wonne vnto her will,
She turn'd her loue to hatred manifold,
And for his sake vow'd to doe all the ill
Which she could doe to Knights, which now she doth
fulfill.

For all those Knights, the which by force or guile
She doth subdue, she fowly doth entreate.
First she doth them of warlike armes despoile,
And cloth in womens weedes: And then with threat
Doth them compell to worke, to earne their meat,
To spin, to card, to sew, to wash, to wring;
Ne doth she giue them other thing to eat,
But bread and water, or like feeble thing,
Them to disable from reuenge aduenturing.

But if through stout disdain of manly mind,
Any her proud obseruance will withstand,
Vppon that gibbet, which is there behind,
She causeth them be hang'd vp out of hand;
In which condition I right now did stand.
For being ouercome by her in fight,
And put to that base seruice of her band,
I rather chose to die in liues despight,
Then lead that shamefull life, vnworthy of a Knight.

How hight that Amazon (sayd Artegall?)
And where, and how far hence does she abide?
Her name (quoth he) they Radigund doe call,
A Princesse of great powre, and greater pride,
And Queene of Amazons, in armes well tride,
And sundry battels, which she hath atchieued
With great successe, that her hath glorifide,
And made her famous, more then is believed;
Ne would I it haue ween'd, had I not late it priued.

Now sure (said he) and by the faith that I
To Maydenhead and noble knighthood owe,
I will not rest, till I her might doe trie,
And venge the shame, that she to Knights doth show.
Therefore Sir Terpin from you lightly throw
This squalid weede, the patterne of dispaire,
And wend with me, that ye may see and know,
How Fortune will your ruin'd name repaire,
And knights of Maidenhead, whose praise she would
empaire.

With that, like one that hopelesse was repyru'd
From deathes dore, at which he lately lay,
Those yron fetters, wherewith he was gyu'd,
The badges of reproch, he threw away,
And nimble did him dight to guide the way
Vnto the dwelling of that Amazone.
Which was from thence not past a mile or tway:
A goodly citty and a mighty one,
The which of her owne name she called Radigone.

Where they arriuing, by the watchmen were
Descried streight; who all the citty warned,
How that three warlike persons did appeare,
Of which the one him seem'd a Knight all armed,
And th'other two well likely to haue harmed.
Eftsoones the people all to harnesse ran,
And like a sort of Bees in clusters swarmed:
Ere long their Queene her selfe, halfe like a man
Came forth into the rout, and them t'array began.

And now the Knights being arriued neare,
Did beat vppon the gates to enter in,
And at the Porter, skorning them so few,
Threw many threats, if they the towne did win,
To teare his flesh in peeces for his sin.
Which when as Radigund there comming heard,
Her heart for rage did grate, and teeth did grin:
She bad that streight the gates should be vnbarred,
And to them way to make, with weapons well prepard.

Soone as the gates were open to them set,
They pressed forward, entraunce to haue made.
But in the middle way they were ymet
With a sharpe showre of arrowes, which them staid,
And better bad aduise, ere they assaid
Vnknowen perill of bold womens pride.
Then all that rout vppon them rudely laid,
And heaped strokes so fast on euery side,
And arrowes haild so thicke, that they could not abide.

But Radigund her selfe, when she espide
Sir Terpin, from her direfull doome acquit,
So cruell doale amongst her maides dauide,
T'auenge that shame, they did on him commit;
All sodainely enflam'd with furious fit,
Like a fell Lionesse at him she flew,
And on his head-peece him so fiercely smit,
That to the ground him quite she ouerthrew,
Dismayd so with the stroke, that he no colours knew.

Soone as she saw him on the ground to grouell,
She lightly to him leapt, and in his necke
Her proud foote setting, at his head did leuell,
Weening at once her wrath on him to wreake,
And his contempt, that did her iudg'ment breake.
As when a Beare hath seiz'd her cruell clawes
Vppon the carkasse of some beast too weake,
Proudly stands ouer, and a while doth pause,
To heare the piteous beast pleading her plaintiffe cause.

Whom when as Artegall in that distresse
By chaunce beheld, he left the bloody slaughter,
In which he swam, and ranne to his redresse.
There her assayling fiercely fresh, he raught her
Such an huge stroke, that it of sence distraught her:
And had she not it warded warily,
It had depriu'd her mother of a daughter.
Nathlesse for all the powre she did apply,
It made her stagger oft, and stare with ghastly eye.

Like to an Eagle in his kingly pride,
Soring through his wide Empire of the aire,
To weather his brode sailes, by chaunce hath spide
A Goshauke, which hath seized for her share
Vppon some fowle, that should her feast prepare;
With dreadfull force he flies at her byliue,
That with his souce, which none endure dare,
Her from the quarrey he away doth driue,
And from her griping pounce the greedy prey doth
riue.

But soone as she her sence recouer'd had,
She fiercely towards him her selfe gan dight,
Through vengeful wrath & sdeignfull pride half mad:
For neuer had she suffred such despight.
But ere she could ioyn hand with him to fight,
Her warlike maides about her flockt so fast,
That they disparted them, maugre their might,
And with their troupes did far a sunder cast:
But mongst the rest the fight did vntill euening last.

And euery while that mighty yron man,
With his strange weapon, neuer wont in warre,
Them sorely vext, and courst, and ouerran,
And broke their bowes, and did their shooting marre,
That none of all the many once did darre
Him to assault, nor once approach him nie,
But like a sort of sheepe dispersed farre
For dread of their deuouringemie,
Through all the fields and vallies did before him flie.

But when as daies faire shinie-beame, yclouded
With fearefull shadowes of deformed night,
Warn'd man and beast in quiet rest be shrowded,
Bold Radigund with sound of trumpe on hight,
Causd all her people to surcease from fight,
And gathering them vnto her citties gate,
Made them all enter in before her sight,
And all the wounded, and the weake in state,
To be conuayed in, ere she would once retrate.

When thus the field was voided all away,
And all things quieted, the Elfin Knight
Weary of toile and trauell of that day,
Causd his pauilion to be richly pight
Before the city gate, in open sight;
Where he him selfe did rest in safety,
Together with sir Terpin all that night:
But Talus vsde in times of ieopardy
To keepe a nightly watch, for dread of treachery.

But Radigund full of heart-gnawing grieffe,
For the rebuke, which she sustain'd that day,
Could take no rest, ne would receiue relieffe,
But tossed in her troublous minde, what way
She mote reuenge that blot, which on her lay.
There she resolu'd her selfe in single fight
To try her Fortune, and his force assay,
Rather then see her people spoiled quight,
As she had seene that day a disauenterous sight.

She called forth to her a trusty mayd,
Whom she thought fittest for that businesse,
Her name was Clarin, and thus to her sayd;
Goe damzell quickly, doe thy selfe addresse,
To doe the message, which I shall expresse.
Goe thou vnto that stranger Faery Knight,
Who yesterday droue vs to such distresse,
Tell, that to morrow I with him will fight,
And try in equall field, whether hath greater might.

But these conditions doe to him propound,
That if I vanquishe him, he shall obay
My law, and euer to my lore be bound;
And so will I, if me he vanquish may,
What euer he shall like to doe or say.
Goe streight, and take with thee, to witnesse it,
Sixe of thy fellowes of the best array,
And beare with you both wine and iuncates fit,
And bid him eate, henceforth he oft shall hungry sit.

The Damzell streight obeyd, and putting all
In readinesse, forth to the Towne-gate went;
Where sounding loud a Trumpet from the wall,
Vnto those warlike Knights she warning sent.
Then Talus forth issuing from the tent,
Vnto the wall his way did fearelesse take,
To weeten what that trumpets sounding ment:
Where that same Damzell lowdly him bespake,
And shew'd, that with his Lord she would emparlaunce
make.

So he them streight conducted to his Lord,
Who, as he could, them goodly well did greete,
Till they had told their message word by word:
Which he accepting well, as he could weete,
Them fairely entertaynd with curt'sies meete,
And gaue them gifts and things of deare delight.
So backe againe they homeward turnd their feete.
But Artegall him selfe to rest did dight,
That he mote fresher be against the next daies fight.

Canto V.

Artegall fights with Radigund
And is subdewd by guile:
He is by her emprisoned,
But wrought by Clarins wile.

So soone as day forth dawning from the East,
Nights humid curtaine from the heauens withdrew,
And earely calling forth both man and beast,
Comaunded them their daily workes renew,
These noble warriors, mindefull to pursew
The last daies purpose of their vowed fight,
Them selues thereto preparede in order dew;
The Knight, as best was seeming for a Knight,
And th'Amazon, as best it likt her selfe to dight.

All in a Camis light of purple silke
Wouen vppon with siluer, subtly wrought,
And quilted vppon sattin white as milke,
Trayled with ribbands diuersly distraught
Like as the workeman had their courses taught;
Which was short tucked for light motion
Vp to her ham, but when she list, it raught
Downe to her lowest heele, and thereuppon
She wore for her defence a mayled habergeon.

And on her legs she painted buskins wore,
Basted with bends of gold on euery side,
And mailes betweene, and laced close afore:
Vppon her thigh her Cemitare was tide,
With an embrodered belt of mickell pride;
And on her shoulder hung her shield, bedeckt
Vppon the bosse with stones, that shined wide,
As the faire Moone in her most full aspect,
That to the Moone it mote be like in each respect.

So forth she came out of the citty gate,
With stately port and proud magnificence,
Guarded with many damzels, that did waite
Vppon her person for her sure defence,
Playing on shaumes and trumpets, that from hence
Their sound did reach vnto the heauens hight.
So forth into the field she marched thence,
Where was a rich Pauillion ready pight,
Her to receiue, till time they should begin the fight.

Then forth came Artegall out of his tent,
All arm'd to point, and first the Lists did enter:
Soone after eke came she, with fell intent,
And countenance fierce, as hauing fully bent her,
That battels vtmost triall to aduenter.
The Lists were closed fast, to barre the rout
From rudely pressing to the middle center;
Which in great heapes them circled all about,
Wayting, how Fortune would resolue that dangerous
dout.

The Trumpets sounded, and the field began;
With bitter strokes it both began, and ended.
She at the first encounter on him ran
With furious rage, as if she had intended
Out of his breast the very heart haue rended:
But he that had like tempests often tride,
From that first flaw him selfe right well defended.
The more she rag'd, the more he did abide;
She hewd, she foyn'd, she lasht, she laid on euery side.

Yet still her blowes he bore, and her forbore,
Weening at last to win aduantage new;
Yet still her crueltie increased more,
And though powre faild, her courage did accrew:
Which fayling he gan fiercely her pursew.
Like as a Smith that to his cunning feat
The stubborne mettall seeketh to subdew,
Soone as he feeles it mollifide with heat,
With his great yron sledge doth strongly on it beat.

So did Sir Artegall vpon her lay,
As if she had an yron anduile beene,
That flakes of fire, bright as the sunny ray,
Out of her steely armes were flashing seene,
That all on fire ye would her surely weene.
But with her shield so well her selfe she warded,
From the dread daunger of his weapon keene,
That all that while her life she safely garded:
But he that helpe from her against her will discarded.

For with his trenchant blade at the next blow
Halfe of her shield he shared quite away,
That halfe her side it selfe did naked show,
And thenceforth vnto daunger opened way.
Much was she moued with the mightie sway
Of that sad stroke, that halfe enrag'd she grew,
And like a greedie Beare vnto her pray,
With her sharpe Cemitare at him she flew,
That glauncing downe his thigh, the purple bloud
forth drew.

Thereat she gan to triumph with great boast,
And to vpbraid that chaunce, which him misfell,
As if the prize she gotten had almost,
With spightfull speaches, fitting with her well;
That his great hart gan inwardly to swell
With indignation, at her vaunting vaine,
And at her strooke with puissance fearefull fell;
Yet with her shield she warded it againe,
That shattered all to peeces round about the plaine.

Hauing her thus disarmed of her shield,
Vpon her helmet he againe her strooke,
That downe she fell vpon the grassie field,
In sencelesse swoune, as if her life forsooke,
And pangs of death her spirit ouertooke.
Whom when he saw before his foote prostrated,
He to her lept with deadly dreadfull looke,
And her sunshynie helmet soone vnaced,
Thinking at once both head and helmet to haue raced.

But when as he discovered had her face,
He saw his senses straunge astonishment,
A miracle of natures goodly grace,
In her faire visage voide of ornament,
But bath'd in bloud and sweat together ment;
Which in the rudenesse of that euill plight,
Bewrayd the signes of feature excellent:
Like as the Moone in foggie winters night,
Doth seeme to be her selfe, though darkned be her
light.

At sight thereof his cruell minded hart
Empierced was with pittifull regard,
That his sharpe sword he threw from him apart,
Cursing his hand that had that visage mard:
No hand so cruell, nor no hart so hard,
But ruth of beautie will it mollifie.
By this vpstarting from her swoune, she star'd
A while about her with confused eye;
Like one that from his dreame is waked suddenlye.

Soone as the knight she there by her did spy,
Standing with emptie hands all weaponlesse,
With fresh assault vpon him she did fly,
And gan renew her former cruelnesse:
And though he still retyr'd, yet nathesle
With huge redoubled strokes she on him layd;
And more increast her outrage mercilesse,
The more that he with meeke intreatie prayd,
Her wrathful hand from greedy vengeance to haue
stayd.

Like as a Puttocke hauing spyde in sight
A gentle Faulcon sitting on an hill,
Whose other wing, now made vnmeete for flight,
Was lately broken by some fortune ill;
The foolish Kyte, led with licentious will,
Doth beat vpon the gentle bird in vaine,
With many idle stoups her troubling still:
Euen so did Radigund with bootlesse paine
Annoy this noble Knight, and sorely him constraine.

Nought could he do, but shun the dred despight
Of her fierce wrath, and backward still retyre,
And with his single shield, well as he might,
Beare off the burden of her raging yre;
And euermore he gently did desyre,
To stay her stroks, and he himselfe would yield:
Yet nould she hearke, ne let him once respyre,
Till he to her deliuered had his shield,
And to her mercie him submitted in plaine field.

So was he ouercome, not ouercome,
But to her yeilded of his owne accord;
Yet was he iustly damned by the doome
Of his owne mouth, that spake so warelesse word,
To be her thrall, and seruice her afford.
For though that he first victorie obtayned,
Yet after by abandoning his sword,
He wilfull lost, that he before attayned.
No fayrer conquest, then that with goodwill is gayned.

Tho with her sword on him she flatling strooke,
In signe of true subiection to her powre,
And as her vassall him to thraldome tooke.
But Terpine borne to'a more vnhappy howre,
As he, on whom the lucklesse starres did lowre,
She causd to be attacht, and forthwith led
Vnto the crooke t'abide the balefull stowre,
From which he lately had through reskew fled:
Where he full shamefully was hanged by the hed.

But when they thought on Talus hands to lay,
He with his yron flaile amongst them thondred,
That they were fayne to let him scape away,
Glad from his companie to be so sondred;
Whose presence all their troups so much encombred
That th'heapes of those, which he did wound and slay,
Besides the rest dismayd, might not be nombred:
Yet all that while he would not once assay,
To reskew his owne Lord, but thought it iust t'obay.

Then tooke the Amazon this noble knight,
Left to her will by his owne wilfull blame,
And caused him to be disarmed quight,
Of all the ornaments of knightly name,
With which whylome he gotten had great fame:
In stead whereof she made him to be dight
In womans weedes, that is to manhood shame,
And put before his lap a napron white,
In stead of Curiets and bases fit for fight.

So being clad, she brought him from the field,
In which he had bene trayned many a day,
Into a long large chamber, which was sield
With moniments of many knights decay,
By her subdewed in victorious fray:
Amongst the which she causd his warlike armes
Be hang'd on high, that mote his shame bewray;
And broke his sword, for feare of further harmes,
With which he wont to stirre vp battailous alarmes.

There entred in, he round about him saw
Many braue knights, whose names right well he knew,
There bound t'obay that Amazons proud law,
Spinning and carding all in comely rew,
That his bigge hart loth'd so vncomely vew.
But they were forst through penurie and pyne,
To doe those workes, to them appointed dew:
For nought was giuen them to sup or dyne,
But what their hands could earne by twisting linnen
twyne.

Amongst them all she placed him most low,
And in his hand a distaffe to him gaue,
That he thereon should spin both flax and tow;
A sordid office for a mind so braue.
So hard it is to be a womans slaue.
Yet he it tooke in his owne selves despight,
And thereto did himselfe right well behaue,
Her to obay, sith he his faith had plight,
Her vassall to become, if she him wonne in fight.

Who had him seene, imagine mote thereby,
That whylome hath of Hercules bene told,
How for Iolas sake he did apply
His mightie hands, the distaffe vile to hold,
For his huge club, which had subdew'd of old
So many monsters, which the world annoyed;
His Lyons skin chaungd to a pall of gold,
In which forgetting warres, he onely ioyed
In combats of sweet loue, and with his mistresse toyed.

Such is the crueltie of womenkynd,
When they haue shaken off the shamefast band,
With which wise Nature did them strongly bynd,
T'obay the heasts of mans well ruling hand,
That then all rule and reason they withstand,
To purchase a licentious libertie.
But vertuous women wisely vnderstand,
That they were borne to base humilitie,
Vnlesse the heauens them lift to lawfull soueraintie.

Thus there long while continu'd Artegall,
Seruing proud Radigund with true subiection;
How euer it his noble heart did gall,
T'obay a womans tyrannous direction,
That might haue had of life or death election:
But hauing chosen, now he might not chaunge.
During which time, the warlike Amazon,
Whose wandring fancie after lust did raunge,
Gan cast a secret liking to this captiue straunge.

Which long concealing in her couert brest,
She chaw'd the cud of louers carefull plight;
Yet could it not so thoroughly digest,
Being fast fixed in her wounded spright,
But it tormented her both day and night:
Yet would she not thereto yeeld free accord,
To serue the lowly vassall of her might,
And of her seruant make her souerayne Lord:
So great her pride, that she such basenesse much
abhord.

So much the greater still her anguish grew,
Through stubborne handling of her loue-sicke hart;
And still the more she stroue it to subdew,
The more she still augmented her owne smart,
And wyder made the wound of th'hidden dart.
At last when long she struggled had in vaine,
She gan to stoupe, and her proud mind conuert
To meeke obeysance of loues mightie raine,
And him entreat for grace, that had procur'd her paine.

Vnto her selfe in secret she did call
Her nearest handmayd, whom she most did trust,
And to her said; Clarinda whom of all
I trust a liue, sith I thee fostred first;
Now is the time, that I vntimely must
Thereof make tryall, in my greatest need:
It is so hapned, that the heauens vniust,
Spighting my happie freedome, haue agreed,
To thrall my looser life, or my last bale to breed.

With that she turn'd her head, as halfe abashed,
To hide the blush which in her visage rose,
And through her eyes like sudden lightning flashed,
Decking her cheeke with a vermilion rose:
But soone she did her countenance compose,
And to her turning, thus began againe;
This griefes deepe wound I would to thee disclose,
Thereto compelled through hart-murdring paine,
But dread of shame my doubtfull lips doth still
restraine.

Ah my deare dread (said then the faithfull Mayd)
Can dread of ought your dreadlesse hart withhold,
That many hath with dread of death dismayd,
And dare euen deathes most dreadfull face behold?
Say on my souerayne Ladie, and be bold;
Doth not your handmayds life at your foot lie?
Therewith much comforted, she gan vnfold
The cause of her conceiued maladie,
As one that would confesse, yet faine would it denie.

Clarín (sayd she) thou seest yond Fayry Knight,
Whom not my valour, but his owne braue mind
Subiected hath to my vnequall might;
What right is it, that he should thraldome find,
For lending life to me a wretch vnkind;
That for such good him recompence with ill?
Therefore I cast, how I may him vnbind,
And by his freedome get his free goodwill;
Yet so, as bound to me he may continue still.

Bound vnto me, but not with such hard bands
Of strong compulsion, and streight violence,
As now in miserable state he stands;
But with sweet loue and sure beneuolence,
Voide of malitious mind, or foule offence.
To which if thou canst win him any way,
Without discoverie of my thoughts pretence,
Both goodly meede of him it purchase may,
And eke with gratefull seruice me right well apay.

Which that thou mayst the better bring to pas,
Loe here this ring, which shall thy warrant bee,
And token true to old Eumenias,
From time to time, when thou it best shalt see,
That in and out thou mayst haue passage free.
Goe now, Clarinda, well thy wits aduise,
And all thy forces gather vnto thee;
Armies of louely lookes, and speches wise,
With which thou canst euen loue himselfe to loue entise.

The trustie Mayd, conceiuing her intent,
Did with sure promise of her good indeuour,
Giue her great comfort, and some harts content.
So from her parting, she thenceforth did labour
By all the meanes she might, to curry fauour
With th'Elfin Knight, her Ladies best beloued;
With daily shew of courteous kind behauiour,
Euen at the markewhite of his hart she roued,
And with wide glauncing words, one day she thus him
proued.

Vnhappie Knight, vpon whose hopelesse state
Fortune enuyng good, hath felly frowned,
And cruell heauens haue heapt an heauy fate;
I rew that thus thy better dayes are drowned
In sad despaire, and all thy senses swowned
In stupid sorow, sith thy iuster merit
Might else haue with felicitie bene crowned:
Looke vp at last, and wake thy dulled spirit,
To thinke how this long death thou mightest disinherit.

Much did he maruell at her vncouth speach,
Whose hidden drift he could not well perceiue;
And gan to doubt, least she him sought t'appeach
Of treason, or some guilefull traine did weaue,
Through which she might his wretched life bereaue.
Both which to barre, he with this answere met her;
Faire Damzell, that with ruth (as I perceauē)
Of my mishaps, art mou'd to wish me better,
For such your kind regard, I can but rest your detter.

Yet weet ye well, that to a courage great
It is no lesse beseeming well, to beare
The storme of fortunes frowne, or heauens threat,
Then in the sunshine of her countenance cleare
Timely to ioy, and carrie comely cheare.
For though this cloud haue now me ouercast,
Yet doe I not of better times despeyre;
And, though (vnlike) they should for euer last,
Yet in my truthes assurance I rest fixed fast.

But what so stonie mind (she then replyde)
But if in his owne powre occasion lay,
Would to his hope a windowe open wyde,
And to his fortunes helpe make readie way?
Vnworthy sure (quoth he) of better day,
That will not take the offer of good hope,
And eke pursew, if he attaine it may.
Which speaches she applying to the scope
Of her intent, this further purpose to him shope.

Then why doest not, thou ill aduized man,
Make meanes to win thy libertie forlorne,
And try if thou by faire entreatie, can
Moue Radigund? who though she still haue worne
Her dayes in warre, yet (weet thou) was not borne
Of Beares and Tygres, nor so saluage mynded,
As that, albe all loue of men she scorne,
She yet forgets, that she of men was kynded:
And sooth oft scene, that proudest harts base loue hath
blynded.

Certes Clarinda, not of cancred will,
(Sayd he) nor obstinate disdainefull mind,
I haue forbore this duetie to fulfill:
For well I may this weene, by that I fynd,
That she a Queene, and come of Princely kynd,
Both worthie is for to be sewd vnto,
Chiefely by him, whose life her law doth bynd,
And eke of powre her owne doome to vndo,
And als' of princely grace to be inclyn'd thereto.

But want of meanes hath bene mine onely let,
From seeking fauour, where it doth abound;
Which if I might by your good office get,
I to your selfe should rest for euer bound,
And readie to deserue, what grace I found.
She feeling him thus bite vpon the bayt,
Yet doubting least his hold was but vnsound,
And not well fastened, would not strike him strayt,
But drew him on with hope, fit leasure to awayt.

But foolish Mayd, whyles heedlesse of the hooke,
She thus oft times was beating off and on,
Through slipperie footing, fell into the brooke,
And there was caught to her confusion.
For seeking thus to salue the Amazon,
She wounded was with her deceipts owne dart,
And gan thenceforth to cast affection,
Conceiued close in her beguiled hart,
To Artegall, through pittie of his causelesse smart.

Yet durst she not disclose her fancies wound,
Ne to himselfe, for doubt of being sdayned,
Ne yet to any other wight on ground,
For feare her mistresse shold haue knowledge gayned,
But to her selfe it secretly retayned,
Within the closet of her couert brest:
The more thereby her tender hart was payned.
Yet to awayt fit time she weened best,
And fairely did dissemble her sad thoughts vnrest.

One day her Ladie, calling her apart,
Gan to demaund of her some tydings good,
Touching her loues successe, her lingring smart.
Therewith she gan at first to change her mood,
As one adaw'd, and halfe confused stood;
But quickly she it ouerpast, so soone
As she her face had wypt, to fresh her blood:
Tho gan she tell her all, that she had donne,
And all the wayes she sought, his loue for to haue
wonne.

But sayd, that he was obstinate and sterne,
Scorning her offers and conditions vaine;
Ne would be taught with any termes, to lerne
So fond a lesson, as to loue againe.
Die rather would he in penurious paine,
And his abridged dayes in dolour wast,
Then his foes loue or liking entertaine:
His resolution was both first and last,
His bodie was her thrall, his hart was freely plast.

Which when the cruell Amazon perceiued,
She gan to storme, and rage, and rend her gall,
For very fell despight, which she conceiued,
To be so scorned of a base borne thrall,
Whose life did lie in her least eye-lids fall;
Of which she vow'd with many a cursed threat,
That she therefore would him ere long forestall.
Nathlesse when calmed was her furious heat,
She chang'd that threatfull mood, & mildly gan en
treat.

What now is left Clarinda? what remains,
That we may compasse this our enterprize?
Great shame to lose so long employed paines,
And greater shame t'abide so great misprize,
With which he dares our offers thus despize.
Yet that his guilt the greater may appeare,
And more my gracious mercie by this wize,
I will a while with his first folly beare,
Till thou haue tride againe, & tempted him more neare.

Say, and do all, that may thereto preuaile;
Leaue nought vnpromist, that may him perswade,
Life, freedome, grace, and gifts of great auaile,
With which the Gods themselues are mylder made:
Thereto adde art, euen womens witty trade,
The art of mightie words, that men can charme;
With which in case thou canst him not inuade,
Let him feele hardnesse of thy heauie arme:
Who will not stoupe with good, shall be made stoupe
with harme.

Some of his diet doe from him withdraw;
For I him find to be too proudly fed.
Giue him more labour, and with streighter law,
That he with worke may be forwearied.
Let him lodge hard, and lie in strawen bed,
That may pull downe the courage of his pride;
And lay vpon him, for his greater dread,
Cold yron chaines, with which let him be tide;
And let, what euer he desires, be him denide.

When thou hast all this doen, then bring me newes
Of his demeane: thenceforth not like a louer,
But like a rebell stout I will him vse.
For I resolute this siege not to giue ouer,
Till I the conquest of my will recouer.
So she departed, full of griefe and sdaine,
Which inly did to great impatience moue her.
But the false mayden shortly turn'd againe
Vnto the prison, where her hart did thrall remaine.

There all her subtile nets she did vnfold,
And all the engines of her wit display;
In which she meant him warelesse to enfold,
And of his innocence to make her pray.
So cunningly she wrought her crafts assay,
That both her Ladie, and her selfe withall,
And eke the knight attonce she did betray:
But most the knight, whom she with guilefull call
Did cast for to allure, into her trap to fall.

As a bad Nurse, which fayning to receiue
In her owne mouth the food, ment for her chyld,
Withholdes it to her selfe, and doeth deceiue
The infant, so for want of nourture spoyle:
Euen so Clarinda her owne Dame beguylde,
And turn'd the trust, which was in her affyde,
To feeding of her priuate fire, which boyle
Her inward brest, and in her entrayles fryde,
The more that she it sought to couer and to hyde.

For comming to this knight, she purpose fayned,
How earnest suit she earst for him had made
Vnto her Queene, his freedome to haue gayned;
But by no meanes could her thereto perswade:
But that in stead therof, she sternely bade
His miserie to be augmented more,
And many yron bands on him to lade.
All which nathlesse she for his loue forbore:
So praying him t'accept her seruice euermore.

And more then that, she promist that she would,
In case she might finde fauour in his eye,
Deuize how to enlarge him out of hould.
The Fayrie glad to gaine his libertie,
Can yeeld great thanks for such her curtesie,
And with faire words, fit for the time and place,
To feede the humour of her maladie;
Promist, if she would free him from that case,
He wold by all good means he might, deserue such
grace.

Canto VI.

So daily he faire semblant did her shew,
Yet neuer meant he in his noble mind,
To his owne absent loue to be vntrew:
Ne euer did deceitfull Clarin find
In her false hart, his bondage to vnbind;
But rather how she mote him faster tye.
Therefore vnto her mistresse most vnkind
She daily told, her loue he did defye,
And him she told, her Dame his freedome did denye.

Yet thus much friendship she to him did show,
That his scarce diet somewhat was amended,
And his worke lessened, that his loue mote grow:
Yet to her Dame him still she discommended,
That she with him mote be the more offended.
Thus he long while in thraldome there remayned,
Of both beloued well, but litle frended;
Vntill his owne true loue his freedome gayned,
Which in an other Canto will be best contayned.

Talus brings newes to Britomart
of Artegals mishap,
She goes to seeke him, Dolon meetes
who seekes her to entrap.

Some men, I wote, will deeme in Arte gall
Great weaknesse, and report of him much ill,
For yeelding so himselfe a wretched thrall,
To th'insolent commaund of womens will;
That all his former praise doth fowly spill.
But he the man, that say or doe so dare,
Be well aduiz'd, that he stand stedfast still:
For neuer yet was wight so well aware,
But he at first or last was trapt in womens snare.

Yet in the streightnesse of that captiue state,
This gentle knight himselfe so well behaved,
That notwithstanding all the subtill bait,
With which those Amazons his loue still craued,
To his owne loue his loialtie he sau'd:
Whose character in th'Adamantine mould
Of his true hart so firmly was engraued,
That no new loues impression euer could
Bereau'e it thence: such blot his honour blemish should.

Yet his owne loue, the noble Britomart,
Scarse so conceiued in her ieaious thought,
What time sad tydings of his balefull smart
In womans bondage, Talus to her brought;
Brought in vntimely houre, ere it was sought.
For after that the vtmost date, assynde
For his returne, she waited had for nought,
She gan to cast in her misdoubtfull mynde
A thousand feares, that loue-sicke fancies faine to
fynde.

Sometime she feared, least some hard mishap
Had him misfalne in his aduenturous quest;
Sometime least his false foe did him entrap
In traytrous traine, or had vnwares opprest:
But most she did her troubled mynd molest,
And secretly afflict with ieaious feare,
Least some new loue had him from her possest;
Yet loth she was, since she no ill did heare,
To thinke of him so ill: yet could she not forbear.

One while she blam'd her selfe; another whyle
She him condemn'd, as trustlesse and vntrew:
And then, her griefe with errour to beguyle,
She fayn'd to count the time againe anew,
As if before she had not counted trew.
For houres but dayes; for weekes, that passed were,
She told but moneths, to make them seeme more few:
Yet when she reckned them, still drawing neare,
Each hour did seeme a moneth, & euery moneth a
yeare.

But when as yet she saw him not returne,
She thought to send some one to seeke him out;
But none she found so fit to serue that turne,
As her owne selfe, to ease her selfe of dout.
Now she deuiz'd amongst the warlike rout
Of errant Knights, to seeke her errant Knight;
And then againe resolu'd to hunt him out
Amongst loose Ladies, lapped in delight:
And then both Knights enuide, & Ladies eke did
spight.

One day, when as she long had sought for ease
In euery place, and euery place thought best,
Yet found no place, that could her liking please,
She to a window came, that opened West,
Towards which coast her loue his way adrest.
There looking forth, shee in her heart did find
Many vaine fancies, working her vnrest;
And sent her winged thoughts, more swift then wind,
To beare vnto her loue the message of her mind.

There as she looked long, at last she spide
One comming towards her with hasty speede:
Well weend she then, ere him she plaine descride,
That it was one sent from her loue indeede.
Who when he nigh approcht, shee mote arede
That it was Talus, Artegall his groome;
Whereat her heart was fild with hope and drede;
Ne would she stay, till he in place could come,
But ran to meete him forth, to know his tidings
somme.

Euen in the dore him meeting, she begun;
And where is he thy Lord, and how far hence?
Declare at once; and hath he lost or wun?
The yron man, albe he wanted sence
And sorrowes feeling, yet with conscience
Of his ill newes, did inly chill and quake,
And stood still mute, as one in great suspence,
As if that by his silence he would make
Her rather reade his meaning, then him selfe it spake.

Till she againe thus sayd; Talus be bold,
And tell what euer it be, good or bad,
That from thy tongue thy hearts intent doth hold.
To whom he thus at length. The tidings sad,
That I would hide, will needs, I see, be rad.
My Lord, your Loue, by hard mishap doth lie
In wretched bondage, wofully bestad.
Ay me (quoth she) what wicked destinie?
And is he vanquisht by his tyrant enemy?

Not by that Tyrant, his intended foe;
But by a Tyrannesse (he then replide,)
That him captiued hath in haplesse woe.
Cease thou bad newes-man, badly doest thou hide
Thy maisters shame, in harlots bondage tide.
The rest my selfe too readily can spell.
With that in rage she turn'd from him aside,
Forcing in vaine the rest to her to tell,
And to her chamber went like solitary cell.

There she began to make her monefull plaint
Against her Knight, for being so vntrew;
And him to touch with falshoods fowle attaint,
That all his other honour ouerthrew.
Oft did she blame her selfe, and often rew,
For yeelding to a straungers loue so light,
Whose life and manners straunge she neuer knew;
And euermore she did him sharply twight
For breach of faith to her, which he had firmly plight.

And then she in her wrathfull will did cast,
How to reuenge that blot of honour blent;
To fight with him, and goodly die her last:
And then againe she did her selfe torment,
Inflicting on her selfe his punishment.
A while she walkt, and chaufft; a while she threw
Her selfe vppon her bed, and did lament:
Yet did she not lament with loude alew,
As women wont, but with deepe sighes, and singulfs
few.

Like as a wayward childe, whose sounder sleepe
Is broken with some fearefull dreames affright,
With froward will doth set him selfe to weepe;
Ne can be stild for all his nurses might,
But kicks, and squals, and shriekes for fell despight:
Now scratching her, and her loose locks misusing;
Now seeking darkenesse, and now seeking light;
Then crauing sucke, and then the sucke refusing.
Such was this Ladies fit, in her loues fond accusing.

But when she had with such vnquiet fits
Her selfe there close afflicted long in vaine,
Yet found no easement in her troubled wits,
She vnto Talus forth return'd againe,
By change of place seeking to ease her paine;
And gan enquire of him, with mylder mood,
The certaine cause of Artegals detainie;
And what he did, and in what state he stood,
And whether he did woo, or whether he were woo'd.

Ah wellaway (sayd then the yron man,)
That he is not the while in state to woo;
But lies in wretched thraldome, weake and wan,
Not by strong hand compelled thereunto,
But his owne doome, that none can now vndoo.
Sayd I not then (quoth shee) erwhile aright,
That this is things compacte betwixt you two,
Me to deceiue of faith vnto me plight,
Since that he was not forst, nor ouercome in fight?

With that he gan at large to her dilate
The whole discourse of his captiuaunce sad,
In sort as ye haue heard the same of late.
All which when she with hard enduraunce had
Heard to the end, she was right sore bestad,
With sodaine stounds of wrath and grieffe attone:
Ne would abide, till she had aunswere made,
But streight her selfe did dight, and armor don;
And mounting to her steede, bad Talus guide her on.

So forth she rode vppon her ready way,
To seeke her Knight, as Talus her did guide:
Sadly she rode, and neuer word did say,
Nor good nor bad, ne euer lookt aside,
But still right downe, and in her thought did hide
The felnesse of her heart, right fully bent
To fierce auengement of that womans pride,
Which had her Lord in her base prison pent,
And so great honour with so fowle reproch had blent.

So as she thus melancholicke did ride,
Chawing the cud of griefe and inward paine,
She chaunst to meete toward th'euen-tide
A Knight, that softly paced on the plaine,
As if him selfe to solace he were faine.
Well shot in yeares he seem'd, and rather bent
To peace, then needlesse trouble to constraine.
As well by view of that his vestiment,
As by his modest semblant, that no euill ment.

He comming neare, gan gently her salute,
With curteous words, in the most comely wize;
Who though desirous rather to rest mute,
Then termes to entertaine of common guize,
Yet rather then she kindnesse would despize,
She would her selfe displease, so him requite.
Then gan the other further to deuize
Of things abrode, as next to hand did light,
And many things demaund, to which she answer'd
light.

For little lust had she to talke of ought,
Or ought to heare, that mote delightfull bee;
Her minde was whole possessed of one thought,
That gaue none other place. Which when as hee
By outward signes, (as well he might) did see,
He list no lenger to vse lothfull speach,
But her besought to take it well in gree,
Sith shady dampe had dimd the heauens reach,
To lodge with him that night, vnles good cause empeach.

The Championesse, now seeing night at dore,
Was glad to yeeld vnto his good request:
And with him went without gaine-saying more.
Not farre away, but little wide by West,
His dwelling was, to which he him address;
Where soone arriuing they receiued were
In seemely wise, as them beseemed best:
For he their host them goodly well did cheare,
And talk't of pleasant things, the night away to weare.

Thus passing th'euening well, till time of rest,
Then Britomart vnto a bowre was brought;
Where groomes awayted her to haue vndrest.
But she ne would vndressed be for ought,
Ne doffe her armes, though he her much besought.
For she had vow'd, she sayd, not to forgo
Those warlike weedes, till she reuenge had wrought
Of a late wrong vppon a mortall foe;
Which she would sure performe, betide her wele or wo.

Which when their Host perceiu'd, right discontent
In minde he grew, for feare least by that art
He should his purpose misse, which close he ment:
Yet taking leaue of her, he did depart.
There all that night remained Britomart,
Restlesse, recomfortlesse, with heart deepe grieved,
Not suffering the least twinckling sleepe to start
Into her eye, which th'heart mote haue relieued,
But if the least appear'd, her eyes she streight repleued.

Ye guilty eyes (sayd she) the which with guyle
My heart at first betrayd, will ye betray
My life now to, for which a little whyle
Ye will not watch? false watches, wellaway,
I wote when ye did watch both night and day
Vnto your losse: and now needes will ye sleepe?
Now ye haue made my heart to wake alway,
Now will ye sleepe? ah wake, and rather weepe,
To thinke of your nights want, that should yee waking
keepe.

Thus did she watch, and weare the weary night
In wayfull plaints, that none was to appease;
Now walking soft, now sitting still vpright,
As sundry chaunge her seemed best to ease.
Ne lesse did Talus suffer sleepe to seaze
His eye-lids sad, but watcht continually,
Lying without her dore in great disease;
Like to a Spaniell wayting carefully
Least any should betray his Lady treacherously.

What time the natiue Belman of the night,
The bird, that warned Peter of his fall,
First rings his siluer Bell t'each sleepy wight,
That should their mindes vp to deuotion call,
She heard a wondrous noise below the hall.
All sodainely the bed, where she should lie,
By a false trap was let adowne to fall
Into a lower roome, and by and by
The loft was raysd againe, that no man could it spie.

With sight whereof she was dismayd right sore,
Perceiuing well the treason, which was ment:
Yet stirred not at all for doubt of more,
But kept her place with courage confident,
Wayting what would ensue of that euent.
It was not long, before she heard the sound
Of armed men, comming with close intent
Towards her chamber; at which dreadfull stound
She quickly caught her sword, & shield about her
bound.

With that there came vnto her chamber dore
Two Knights, all armed ready for to fight,
And after them full many other more,
A raskall rout, with weapons rudely dight.
Whom soone as Talus spide by glims of night,
He started vp, there where on ground he lay,
And in his hand his thresher ready keight.
They seeing that, let driue at him streight way,
And round about him preace in riotous aray.

But soone as he began to lay about
With his rude yron flaile, they gan to flie,
Both armed Knights, and eke vnarmed rout:
Yet Talus after them apace did plie,
Where euer in the darke he could them spie;
That here and there like scattred sheepe they lay.
Then backe returning, where his Dame did lie,
He to her told the story of that fray,
And all that treason there intended did bewray.

Wherewith though wondrous wroth, and inly burning,
To be auenged for so fowle a deede,
Yet being forst to abide the daies returning,
She there remain'd, but with right wary heede,
Least any more such practise should proceede.
Now mote ye know (that which to Britomart
Vnknownen was) whence all this did proceede,
And for what cause so great mischieuous smart
Was ment to her, that neuer euill ment in hart.

The goodman of this house was Dolon hight,
A man of subtill wit and wicked minde,
That whilome in his youth had bene a Knight,
And armes had borne, but little good could finde,
And much lesse honour by that warlike kinde
Of life: for he was nothing valorous,
But with slie shiftes and wiles did vnderminde
All noble Knights, which were aduenturous,
And many brought to shame by treason treacherous.

He had three sonnes, all three like fathers sonnes,
Like treacherous, like full of fraud and guile,
Of all that on this earthly compasse wonnes:
The eldest of the which was slaine erewhile
By Artegall, through his owne guilty wile;
His name was Guizor, whose vntimely fate
For to auenge, full many treasons vile
His father Dolon had deuiz'd of late
With these his wicked sons, and shewd his cankred hate.

For sure he weend, that this his present guest
Was Artegall, by many tokens plaine;
But chiefly by that yron page he ghest,
Which still was wont with Artegall remaine;
And therefore ment him surely to haue slaine.
But by Gods grace, and her good heedinesse,
She was preserued from their traytrous traine.
Thus she all night wore out in watchfulnesse,
Ne suffred slothfull sleepe her eyelids to oppresse.

The morrow next, so soone as dawning houre
Discouered had the light to liuing eye,
She forth yssew'd out of her loathed bowre,
With full intent t'auenge that villany,
On that vilde man, and all his family.
And comming down to seeke them, where they wond,
Nor sire, nor sonnes, nor any could she spie:
Each rowme she sought, but them all empty fond:
They all were fled for feare, but whether, nether kond.

She saw it vaine to make there lenger stay,
But tooke her steede, and thereon mounting light,
Gan her addresse vnto her former way.
She had not rid the mountenance of a flight,
But that she saw there present in her sight,
Those two false brethren, on that perillous Bridge,
On which Pollente with Artegall did fight.
Streight was the passage like a ploughed ridge,
That if two met, the one mote needes fall ouer the
 lidge.

There they did thinke them selues on her to wreake:
Who as she nigh vnto them drew, the one
These vile reproches gan vnto her speake;
Thou recreant false traytor, that with lone
Of armes has knighthood stolne, yet Knight art none,
No more shall now the darkenesse of the night
Defend thee from the vengeance of thy fone,
But with thy bloud thou shalt appease the spright
Of Guizor, by thee slaine, and murdred by thy slight.

Strange were the words in Britomartis eare;
Yet stayd she not for them, but forward fared,
Till to the perillous Bridge she came, and there
Talus desir'd, that he might haue prepared
The way to her, and those two losels scared.
But she thereat was wroth, that for despight
The glauncing sparkles through her beuer glared,
And from her eies did flash out fiery light,
Like coles, that through a siluer Censer sparkle bright.

She stayd not to aduise which way to take;
But putting spurres vnto her fiery beast,
Thorough the midst of them she way did make.
The one of them, which most her wrath increast,
Vppon her speare she bore before her breast,
Till to the Bridges further end she past,
Where falling downe, his challenge he releast:
The other ouer side the Bridge she cast
Into the riuer, where he drunke his deadly last.

As when the flashing Leuin haps to light
Vppon two stubborne oakes, which stand so neare,
That way betwixt them none appears in sight;
The Engin fiercely flying forth, doth teare
Th'one from the earth, & through the aire doth beare;
The other it with force doth ouerthrow,
Vppon one side, and from his rootes doth reare.
So did the Championesse those two there strow,
And to their sire their carcasses left to bestow.

Canto VII.

Britomart comes to Isis Church,
Where shee strange visions sees:
She fights with Radigund, her slaies,
And Artegall thence frees.

Nought is on earth more sacred or diuine,
That Gods and men doe equally adore,
Then this same vertue, that doth right define:
For th'heuens th'selues, whence mortal men implore
Right in their wrongs, are rul'd by righteous lore
Of highest Ioue, who doth true iustice deale
To his inferiour Gods, and euermore
Therewith containes his heauenly Common-weale,
The skill whereof to Princes hearts he doth reueale.

Well therefore did the antique world inuent,
That Iustice was a God of soueraine grace,
And altars vnto him, and temples lent,
And heauenly honours in the highest place;
Calling him great Osyris, of the race
Of th'old Ægyptian Kings, that whylome were;
With fayned colours shading a true case:
For that Osyris, whilst he liued here,
The iustest man aliue, and truest did appeare.

His wife was Isis, whom they likewise made
A Goddess of great powre and souerainty
And in her person cunningly did shade
That part of Iustice, which is Equity,
Whereof I haue to treat here presently.
Vnto whose temple when as Britomart
Arriued, shee with great humility
Did enter in, ne would that night depart;
But Talus mote not be admitted to her part.

There she receiued was in goodly wize
Of many Priests, which duely did attend
Vppon the rites and daily sacrificize,
All clad in linnen robes with siluer hemd;
And on their heads with long locks comely kemd,
They wore rich Mitres shaped like the Moone,
To shew that Isis doth the Moone portend;
Like as Osyris signifies the Sunne.
For that they both like race in equall iustice runne.

The Championesse them greeting, as she could,
Was thence by them into the Temple led;
Whose goodly building when she did behould,
Borne vppon stately pillours, all dispred
With shining gold, and arched ouer hed,
She wondred at the workemans passing skill,
Whose like before she neuer saw nor red;
And thereuppon long while stood gazing still,
But thought, that she thereon could neuer gaze her fill.

Thence forth vnto the Idoll they her brought,
The which was framed all of siluer fine,
So well as could with cunning hand be wrought,
And clothed all in garments made of line,
Hemd all about with fringe of siluer twine.
Vppon her head she wore a Crowne of gold,
To shew that she had powre in things diuine;
And at her feete a Crocodile was rold,
That with her wreathed taile her middle did enfold.

One foote was set vppon the Crocodile,
And on the ground the other fast did stand,
So meaning to suppress both forged guile,
And open force: and in her other hand
She stretched forth a long white sclder wand.
Such was the Goddess; whom when Britomart
Had long beheld, her selfe vppon the land
She did prostrate, and with right humble hart,
Vnto her selfe her silent prayers did impart.

To which the Idoll as it were inclining,
Her wand did moue with amiable looke,
By outward shew her inward sence defining,
Who well perceiuing, how her wand she shooke,
It as a token of good fortune tooke.
By this the day with dampe was ouercast,
And ioyous light the house of Ioue forsooke:
Which when she saw, her helmet she vnlaste,
And by the altars side her selfe to slumber plaste.

For other beds the Priests there vsed none,
But on their mother Earths deare lap did lie,
And bake their sides vppon the cold hard stone,
T'enure them selues to sufferance thereby
And proud rebellious flesh to mortify.
For by the vow of their religion
They tied were to stedfast chastity,
And continence of life, that all forgon,
They mote the better tend to their deuotion.

Therefore they mote not taste of fleshly food,
Ne feed on ought, the which doth bloud containe,
Ne drinke of wine, for wine they say is blood,
Euen the bloud of Gyants, which were slaine,
By thundring Ioue in the Phlegrean plaine.
For which the earth (as they the story tell)
Wroth with the Gods, which to perpetuall paine
Had damn'd her sonnes, which gainst them did rebell,
With inward grieffe and malice did against them swell.

And of their vitall bloud, the which was shed
Into her pregnant bosome, forth she brought
The fruitfull vine, whose liquor blouddy red
Hauing the mindes of men with fury fraught,
Mote in them stirre vp old rebellious thought,
To make new warre against the Gods againe:
Such is the powre of that same fruit, that nought
The fell contagion may thereof restraine,
Ne within reasons rule, her madding mood containe.

There did the warlike Maide her selfe repose,
Vnder the wings of Isis all that night,
And with sweete rest her heauy eyes did close,
After that long daies toile and weary plight.
Where whilst her earthly parts with soft delight
Of sencelesse sleepe did deeply drowned lie,
There did appeare vnto her heauenly spright
A wondrous vision, which did close implie
The course of all her fortune and posteritie.

Her seem'd, as she was doing sacrificize
To Isis, deckt with Mitre on her hed,
And linnen stole after those Priestes guise,
All sodainely she saw transfigured
Her linnen stole to robe of scarlet red,
And Moone-like Mitre to a Crowne of gold,
That euen she her selfe much wondered
At such a chaunge, and ioyed to behold
Her selfe, adorn'd with gems and iewels manifold.

And in the midst of her felicity,
An hideous tempest seemed from below,
To rise through all the Temple sodainely,
That from the Altar all about did blow
The holy fire, and all the embers strow
Vppon the ground, which kindled priuily,
Into outragious flames vnwares did grow,
That all the Temple put in ieopardy
Of flaming, and her selfe in great perplexity.

With that the Crocodile, which sleeping lay
Vnder the Idols feete in fearelesse bowre,
Seem'd to awake in horrible dismay,
As being troubled with that stormy stowre;
And gaping greedy wide, did streight deuoure
Both flames and tempest: with which growen great,
And swolne with pride of his owne peerelesse powre,
He gan to threaten her likewise to eat;
But that the Goddesses with her rod him backe did
beat.

Tho turning all his pride to humblesse meeke,
Him selfe before her feete he lowly threw,
And gan for grace and loue of her to seeke:
Which she accepting, he so neare her drew,
That of his game she soone enwombed grew,
And forth did bring a Lion of great might;
That shortly did all other beasts subdew.
With that she waked, full of fearefull fright,
And doubtfully dismayd through that so vncouth sight.

So thereuppon long while she musing lay,
With thousand thoughts feeding her fantasie,
Vntill she spide the lampe of lightsome day,
Vp-lifted in the porch of heauen hie.
Then vp she rose fraught with melancholy,
And forth into the lower parts did pas;
Whereas the Priestes she found full busily
About their holy things for morrow Mas:
Whom she saluting faire, faire resaluted was.

But by the change of her vnchearefull looke,
They might perceiue, she was not well in plight;
Or that some pensiuenesse to heart she tooke.
Therefore thus one of them, who seem'd in sight
To be the greatest, and the grauest wight,
To her bespake; Sir Knight it seemes to me,
That thorough euill rest of this last night,
Or ill apayd, or much dismayd ye be,
That by your change of cheare is easie for to see.

Certes (sayd she) sith ye so well haue spide
The troublous passion of my pensiuie mind,
I will not seeke the same from you to hide,
But will my cares vnfolde, in hope to find
Your aide, to guide me out of errour blind.
Say on (quoth he) the secret of your hart:
For by the holy vow, which me doth bind,
I am adiur'd, best counsell to impart
To all, that shall require my comfort in their smart.

Then gan she to declare the whole discourse
Of all that vision, which to her appeard,
As well as to her minde it had recourse.
All which when he vnto the end had heard,
Like to a weake faint-hearted man he fared,
Through great astonishment of that strange sight;
And with long locks vp-standing, stifly stared
Like one adawed with some dreadfull spright.
So fild with heauenly fury, thus he her behight.

Magnificke Virgin, that in queint disguise
Of British armes doest maske thy royall blood,
So to pursue a perillous emprize,
How coul[d]st thou weene, through that disguised hood,
To hide thy state from being vnderstood?
Can from th'immortall Gods ought hidden bee?
They doe thy linage, and thy Lordly brood;
They doe thy sire, lamenting sore for thee;
They doe thy loue, forlorne in womens thraldome see.

The end whereof, and all the long euent,
They doe to thee in this same dreame discover.
For that same Crocodile doth represent
The righteous Knight, that is thy faithfull louer.
Like to Osyris in all iust endeuer.
For that same Crocodile Osyris is,
That vnder Isis feete doth sleepe for euer:
To shew that clemence oft in things amis,
Restraines those sterne behests, and cruell doomes of
his.

That Knight shall all the troublous stormes asswage,
And raging flames, that many foes shall reare,
To hinder thee from the iust heritage
Of thy sires Crowne, and from thy countrey deare.
Then shalt thou take him to thy loued fere,
And ioyne in equall portion of thy realme:
And afterwards a sonne to him shalt beare,
That Lion-like shall shew his powre extream.
So blesse thee God, and giue thee ioyance of thy dreame

All which when she vnto the end had heard,
She much was eased in her troublous thought,
And on those Priests bestowed rich reward:
And royall gifts of gold and siluer wrought,
She for a present to their Goddesse brought.
Then taking leaue of them, she forward went,
To seeke her loue, where he was to be sought;
Ne rested till she cam without relent
Vnto the land of Amazons, as she was bent.

Whereof when newes to Radigund was brought,
Not with amaze, as women wonted bee,
She was confused in her troublous thought,
But fild with courage and with ioyous glee,
As glad to heare of armes, the which now she
Had long surceast, she bad to open bold,
That she the face of her new foe might see.
But when they of that yron man had told,
Which late her folke had slaine, she bad th' forth to
hold.

So there without the gate (as seemed best)
She caused her Pauilion be pight;
In which stout Britomart her selfe did rest,
Whiles Talus watched at the dore all night.
All night likewise, they of the towne in fright,
Vppon their wall good watch and ward did keepe.
The morrow next, so soone as dawning light
Bad doe away the dampe of drouzie sleepe,
The warlike Amazon out of her bowre did peepe.

And caused streight a Trumpet loud to shrill,
To warne her foe to battell soone be prest:
Who long before awoke (for she ful ill
Could sleepe all night, that in vnquiet brest
Did closely harbour such a ieaious guest)
Was to the battell whilome ready dight.
Eftsoones that warriouresse with haughty crest
Did forth issue, all ready for the fight:
On th'other side her foe appeared soone in sight.

But ere they reared hand, the Amazone
Began the streight conditions to propound,
With which she vsed still to tye her fone;
To serue her so, as she the rest had bound.
Which when the other heard, she sternly frownd
For high disdain of such indignity,
And would no lenger treat, but bad them sound.
For her no other termes should euer tie
Then what prescribed were by lawes of cheualrie.

The Trumpets sound, and they together run
With greedy rage, and with their faulchins smot;
Ne either sought the others strokes to shun,
But through great fury both their skill forgot,
And practicke vse in armes: ne spared not
Their dainty parts, which nature had created
So faire and tender, without staine or spot,
For other vses, then they them translated;
Which they now hackt & hewd, as if such vse they
hated,

As when a Tygre and a Lionesse
Are met at spoyling of some hungry pray,
Both challenge it with equall greedinesse:
But first the Tygre clawes thereon did lay;
And therefore loth to loose her right away,
Doth in defence thereof full stoutly stond:
To which the Lion strongly doth gainesay,
That she to hunt the beast first tooke in hond;
And therefore ought it haue, where euer she it fond.

Full fiercely layde the Amazon about,
And dealt her blowes vnmercifully sore:
Which Britomart withstood with courage stout,
And them repaide againe with double more.
So long they fought, that all the grassie flore
Was filld with bloud, which from their sides did flow,
And gushed through their armes, that all in gore
They trode, and on the ground their liues did strow,
Like fruitles seede, of which vntimely death should
grow.

At last proud Radigund with fell despight,
Hauing by chaunce espide aduantage neare,
Let driue at her with all her dreadfull might,
And thus vpbrayding sayd; This token beare
Vnto the man, whom thou doest loue so deare;
And tell him for his sake thy life thou gauest.
Which spitefull words she sore engriue'd to heare,
Thus answer'd; Lewdly thou my loue deprauest,
Who shortly must repent that now so vainely brauest.

Nath'lesse that stroke so cruell passage found,
That glauncing on her shoulder plate, it bit
Vnto the bone, and made a griesly wound,
That she her shield through raging smart of it
Could scarce vphold; yet soone she it requit.
For hauing force increast through furious paine,
She her so rudely on the helmet smit,
That it empierced to the very braine,
And her proud person low prostrated on the plaine.

Where being layd, the wrothfull Britonesse
Stayd not, till she came to her selfe againe,
But in reuenge both of her loues distresse,
And her late vile reproch, though vaunted vaine,
And also of her wound, which sore did paine,
She with one stroke both head and helmet cleft.
Which dreadfull sight, when all her warlike traine
There present saw, each one of sence bereft,
Fled fast into the towne, and her sole victor left.

But yet so fast they could not home retrate,
But that swift Talus did the formost win;
And pressing through the preace vnto the gate,
Pelmell with them attonce did enter in.
There then a piteous slaughter did begin:
For all that euer came within his reach,
He with his yron flale did thresh so thin,
That he no worke at all left for the leach:
Like to an hideous storme, which nothing may
empeach.

And now by this the noble Conqueresse
Her selfe came in, her glory to partake;
Where though reuengefull vow she did professe,
Yet when she saw the heapes, which he did make,
Of slaughtred carkasses, her heart did quake
For very ruth, which did it almost riue,
That she his fury willed him to slake:
For else he sure had left not one aliue,
But all in his reuenge of spirite would depriue.

Tho when she had his execution stayd,
She for that yron prison did enquire,
In which her wretched loue was captiue layd:
Which breaking open with indignant ire,
She entred into all the partes entire.
Where when she saw that lothly vncouth sight,
Of men disguiz'd in womanishe attire,
Her heart gan grudge, for very deepe despight
Of so vnmanly maske, in misery misdight.

At last when as to her owne Loue she came,
Whom like disguise no lesse deformed had,
At sight thereof abasht with secrete shame,
She turnd her head aside, as nothing glad,
To haue beheld a spectacle so bad:
And then too well beleeu'd, that which tofore
Iealous suspect as true vntruely drad,
Which vaine conceipt now nourishing no more,
She sought with ruth to salue his sad misfortunes sore.

Not so great wonder and astonishment,
Did the most chast Penelope possesse,
To see her Lord, that was reported drent,
And dead long since in dolorous distresse,
Come home to her in piteous wretchednesse,
After long trauell of full twenty yeares,
That she knew not his fauours likelynesse,
For many scarres and many hoary heares,
But stood long staring on him, mongst vncertaine
feares.

Ah my deare Lord, what sight is this (quoth she)
What May-game hath misfortune made of you?
Where is that dreadfull manly looke? where be
Those mighty palmes, the which ye wont t'embrew
In bloud of Kings, and great hoastes to subdew?
Could ought on earth so wondrous change haue wrought,
As to haue robde you of that manly hew?
Could so great courage stouped haue to ought?
Then farewell fleshly force; I see thy pride is nought.

Thenceforth she streight into a bowre him brought,
And causd him those vncomely weedes vndight;
And in their steede for other rayment sought,
Whereof there was great store, and armors bright,
Which had bene reft from many a noble Knight;
Whom that proud Amazon subdewed had,
Whilest Fortune fauourd her successe in fight,
In which when as she him anew had clad,
She was reuiu'd, and ioyd much in his semblance glad.

So there a while they afterwards remained,
Him to refresh, and her late wounds to heale:
During which space she there as Princess rained,
And changing all that forme of common weale,
The liberty of women did repeale,
Which they had long vsurpt; and them restoring
To mens subiection, did true Iustice deale:
That all they as a Goddesse her adoring,
Her wisdomedid admire, and hearkned to her loring.

For all those Knights, which long in captiue shade
Had shrowded bene, she did from thraldome free;
And magistrates of all that city made,
And gaue to them great liuing and large fee:
And that they should for euer faithfull bee,
Made them sweare fealty to Artegall.
Who when him selfe now well recur'd did see,
He purposd to proceed, what so be fall,
Vppon his first aduenture, which him forth did call.

Canto VIII.

Full sad and sorrowfull was Britomart
For his departure, her new cause of grieve;
Yet wisely moderated her owne smart,
Seeing his honor, which she tendred chiefe,
Consisted much in that aduentures priefe.
The care whereof, and hope of his successe
Gauē vnto her great comfort and reliefe,
That womanish complaints she did repress,
And tempred for the time her present heauinesse.

There she continu'd for a certaine space,
Till through his want her woe did more increase:
Then hoping that the change of aire and place
Would change her paine, and sorrow somewhat ease,
She parted thence, her anguish to appease.
Meane while her noble Lord sir Artegall
Went on his way, ne euer howre did cease,
Till he redeemed had that Lady thrall:
That for another Canto will more fitly fall.

Prince Arthure and Sir Artegall,
Free Samient from feare:
They slay the Soudan, driue his wife
Adicia to despaire.

Nought vnder heauen so strongly doth allure
The sence of man, and all his minde possesse,
As beauties louely baite, that doth procure
Great warriours oft their rigour to repress,
And mighty hands forget their manlinesse;
Drawne with the powre of an heart-robbing eye,
And wrapt in fetters of a golden tresse,
That can with melting pleasaunce mollifye
Their hardned hearts, enur'd to bloud and cruelty.

So whylome learnd that mighty Iewish swaine,
Each of whose lockes did match a man in might,
To lay his spoiles before his lemans traine:
So also did that great Oetean Knight
For his loues sake his Lions skin vndight:
And so did warlike Antony neglect
The worlds whole rule for Cleopatras sight.
Such wondrous powre hath wemens faire aspect,
To captiue men, and make them all the world reiect.

Yet could it not sterne Artegall retaine,
Nor hold from suite of his auowed quest,
Which he had vndertane to Gloriane;
But left his loue, albe her strong request,
Faire Britomart in languor and vnrest,
And rode him selfe vppon his first intent:
Ne day nor night did euer idly rest;
Ne wight but onely Talus with him went,
The true guide of his way and vertuous government.

So traueiling, he chaunst far off to heed
A Damzell, flying on a palfrey fast
Before two Knights, that after her did speed
With all their powre, and her full fiercely chast
In hope to haue her ouerhent at last:
Yet fled she fast, and both them farre outwent,
Carried with wings of feare, like fowle aghast,
With locks all loose, and rayment all to rent;
And euer as she rode, her eye was backward bent.

Soone after these he saw another Knight,
That after those two former rode apace,
With speare in rest, and prickt with all his might:
So ran they all, as they had bene at bace,
They being chased, that did others chase.
At length he saw the hindmost ouertake
One of those two, and force him turne his face;
How euer loth he were his way to slake,
Yet mote he algates now abide, and answere make.

But th'other still pursu'd the fearefull Mayd;
Who still from him as fast away did flie,
Ne once for ought her speedy passage stayd,
Till that at length she did before her spie
Sir Artegall, to whom she streight did hie
With gladfull hast, in hope of him to get
Succour against her greedy enemy:
Who seeing her approach gan forward set,
To saue her from her feare, and him from force to let.

But he like hound full greedy of his pray,
Being impatient of impediment,
Continu'd still his course, and by the way
Thought with his speare him quight haue ouerwent.
So both together ylike felly bent,
Like fiercely met. But Artegall was stronger,
And better skild in Tilt and Turnament,
And bore him quite out of his saddle, longer
Then two speares length; So mischief euermatcht the
 wronger.

And in his fall misfortune him mistooke;
For on his head vnhappily he pight,
That his owne waight his necke asunder broke,
And left there dead. Meane while the other Knight
Defeated had the other faytour quight,
And all his bowels in his body brast:
Whom leauing there in that dispiteous plight,
He ran still on, thinking to follow fast
His other fellow Pagan, which before him past.

In stead of whom finding there ready prest
Sir Artegall, without discretion
He at him ran, with ready speare in rest:
Who seeing him come still so fiercely on,
Against him made againe. So both anon
Together met, and strongly either strooke
And broke their speares; yet neither has forgon
His horses backe, yet to and fro long shooke,
And tottred like two towres, which through a tempest
 quooke.

But when againe they had recouered sence,
They drew their swords, in mind to make amends
For what their speares had fayld of their pretence.
Which when the Damzell, who those deadly ends
Of both her foes had seene, and now her frends
For her beginning a more fearefull fray,
She to them runnes in hast, and her haire rends,
Crying to them their cruell hands to stay,
Vntill they both doe heare, what she to them will say.

They stayd their hands, when she thus gan to speake;
Ah gentle Knights, what meane ye thus vnwise
Vpon your selues anothers wrong to wreake?
I am the wrong'd, whom ye did enterprise
Both to redresse, and both redrest likewise:
Witnesse the Paynims both, whom ye may see
There dead on ground. What doe ye then deuise
Of more reuenge? if more, then I am shee,
Which was the roote of all, end your reuenge on mee.

Whom when they heard so say, they lookt about,
To weete if it were true, as she had told;
Where when they saw their foes dead out of doubt,
Eftsoones they gan their wrothfull hands to hold,
And Ventailles reare, each other to behold.
Tho when as Artegall did Arthure vew,
So faire a creature, and so wondrous bold,
He much admired both his heart and hew,
And touched with intire affection, nigh him drew.

Saying, Sir Knight, of pardon I you pray,
That all vnweeting haue you wrong'd thus sore,
Suffring my hand against my heart to stray:
Which if ye please forgiue, I will therefore
Yeeld for amends my selfe yours euermore,
Or what so penaunce shall by you be red.
To whom the Prince; Certes me needeth more
To craue the same, whom error so misled,
As that I did mistake the liuing for the ded.

But sith ye please, that both our blames shall die,
Amends may for the trespasse soone be made,
Since neither is endamadg'd much thereby.
So can they both them selues full eath perswade
To faire accordaunce, and both faults to shade,
Either embracing other louingly,
And swearing faith to either on his blade,
Neuer thenceforth to nourish enmity,
But either others cause to maintaine mutually.

Then Artegall gan of the Prince enquire,
What were those knights, which there on grou'd were
 layd,
And had receiu'd their follies worthy hire,
And for what cause they chased so that Mayd.
Certes I wote not well (the Prince then sayd)
But by aduenture found them faring so,
As by the way vnweetingly I strayd,
And lo the Damzell selfe, whence all did grow,
Of whom we may at will the whole occasion know.

Then they that Damzell called to them nie,
And asked her, what were those two her fone,
From whom she earst so fast away did flie;
And what was she her selfe so woe begone,
And for what cause pursu'd of them attone.
To whom she thus; Then wote ye well, that I
Doe serue a Queene, that not far hence doth wone,
A Princesse of great powre and maiestie,
Famous through all the world, and honor'd far and nie.

Her name Mercilla most men vse to call;
That is a mayden Queene of high renowne,
For her great bounty knowen ouer all,
And soueraine grace, with which her royall crowne
She doth support, and strongly beateth downe
The malice of her foes, which her enuy,
And at her happinesse do fret and frowne:
Yet she her selfe the more doth magnify,
And euen to her foes her mercies multiply.

Mongst many which maligne her happy state,
There is a mighty man, which wonnes here by
That with most fell despight and deadly hate,
Seekes to subuert her Crowne and dignity,
And all his powre doth thereunto apply:
And her good Knights, of which so braue a band
Serues her, as any Princesse vnder sky,
He either spoiles, if they against him stand,
Or to his part allures, and bribeth vnder hand.

Ne him sufficeth all the wrong and ill,
Which he vnto her people does each day,
But that he seekes by traytrous traines to spill
Her person, and her sacred selfe to slay:
That O ye heauens defend, and turne away
From her, vnto the miscreant him selfe,
That neither hath religion nor fay,
But makes his God of his vngodly pelfe,
And Idols serues; so let his Idols serue the Elfe.

To all which cruell tyranny they say,
He is prouokt, and stird vp day and night
By his bad wife, that hight Adicia,
Who counsels him through confidence of might,
To breake all bonds of law, and rules of right.
For she her selfe professeth mortall foe
To Iustice, and against her still doth fight,
Working to all, that loue her, deadly woe,
And making all her Knights and people to doe so.

Which my liege Lady seeing, thought it best,
With that his wife in friendly wise to deale,
For stint of strife, and stablishment of rest
Both to her selfe, and to her commonweale,
And all forepast displeasures to repeale.
So me in message vnto her she sent,
To treat with her by way of enterdeale,
Of finall peace and faire attonement,
Which might concluded be by mutuall consent.

All times haue wont safe passage to afford
To messengers, that come for causes iust:
But this proude Dame disdayning all accord,
Not onely into bitter termes forth brust,
Reuiling me, and rayling as she lust,
But lastly to make prooffe of vtmost shame,
Me like a dog she out of dores did thrust,
Miscalling me by many a bitter name,
That neuer did her ill, ne once deserued blame.

And lastly, that no shame might wanting be,
When I was gone, soone after me she sent
These two false Knights, whom there ye lying see,
To be by them dishonoured and shent:
But thank be God, and your good hardiment,
They haue the price of their owne folly payd.
So said this Damzell, that hight Samient,
And to those knights, for their so noble ayd,
Her selfe most gratefull shew'd, & heaped thanks
repayd.

But they now hauing throughly heard, and seene
Al those great wrongs, the which that mayd com
plained
To haue bene done against her Lady Queene,
By that proud dame, which her so much disdained,
Were moued much thereat, and twixt them fained,
With all their force to worke auengement strong
Vppon the Souldan selfe, which it mayntained,
And on his Lady, th'author of that wrong,
And vppon all those Knights, that did to her belong.

But thinking best by counterfet disguise
To their deseigne to make the easier way,
They did this complot twixt them selues deuise,
First, that sir Artegall should him array,
Like one of those two Knights, which dead there lay.
And then that Damzell, the sad Samient,
Should as his purchast prize with him conuay
Vnto the Souldans court, her to present
Vnto his scornefull Lady, that for her had sent.

So as they had deuiz'd, sir Artegall
Him clad in th'armour of a Pagan knight,
And taking with him, as his vanquisht thrall,
That Damzell, led her to the Souldans right.
Where soone as his proud wife of her had sight,
Forth of her window as she looking lay,
She weened streight, it was her Paynim Knight,
Which brought that Damzell, as his purchast pray;
And sent to him a Page, that mote direct his way.

Who bringing them to their appointed place,
Offred his seruice to disarme the Knight;
But he refusing him to let vnlace,
For doubt to be discouered by his sight,
Kept himselfe still in his straunge armour dight.
Soone after whom the Prince arriued there,
And sending to the Souldan in despight
A bold defyançe, did of him requere
That Damzell, whom he held as wrongfull prisonere.

Wherewith the Souldan all with furie fraught,
Swearing, and banning most blasphemously,
Commaunded straight his armour to be brought,
And mounting straight vpon a charret hye,
With yron wheelles and hookes arm'd dreadfully,
And drawne of cruell steedes, which he had fed
With flesh of men, whom through fell tyranny
He slaughtred had, and ere they were halfe ded,
Their bodies to his beasts for prouender did spred.

So forth he came all in a cote of plate,
Burnisht with bloudie rust, whiles on the greene
The Briton Prince him readie did awayte,
In glistening armes right goodly well beseene,
That shone as bright, as doth the heauen sheene;
And by his stirrup Talus did attend,
Playing his pages part, as he had beene
Before directed by his Lord; to th'end
He should his flale to finall execution bend.

Thus goe they both together to their geare,
With like fierce minds, but meanings different:
For the proud Souldan with presumptuous cheare,
And countenance sublime and insolent,
Sought onely slaughter and auengement:
But the braue Prince for honour and for right,
Gainst tortious powre and lawlesse regiment,
In the behalfe of wronged weake did fight:
More in his causes truth he trusted then in might.

Like to the Thracian Tyrant, who they say
Vnto his horses gaue his guests for meat,
Till he himselfe was made their greedie pray,
And torne in peeces by Alcides great.
So thought the Souldan in his follies threat,
Either the Prince in peeces to haue torne
With his sharpe wheelles, in his first rages heat,
Or vnder his fierce horses feet haue borne
And trampled downe in dust his thoughts disdaind
scorene.

But the bold child that perill well espying,
If he too rashly to his charet drew,
Gaued way vnto his horses speedie flying,
And their resistlesse rigour did eschew.
Yet as he passed by, the Pagan threw
A shiuering dart with so impetuouse force,
That had he not it shun'd with heedfull vew,
It had himselfe transfixt, or his horse,
Or made them both one masse withouten more remorse.

Oft drew the Prince vnto his charret nigh,
In hope some stroke to fasten on him neare;
But he was mounted in his seat so high,
And his wingfooted coursers him did beare
So fast away, that ere his readie speare
He could aduance, he farre was gone and past.
Yet still he him did follow euerywhere,
And followed was of him likewise full fast;
So long as in his steedes the flaming breath did last.

Againe the Pagan threw another dart,
Of which he had with him abundant store,
On euery side of his embatteld cart,
And of all other weapons lesse or more,
Which warlike vses had deuiz'd of yore.
The wicked shaft guyded through th'ayrie wyde,
By some bad spirit, that it to mischief bore,
Stayd not, till through his curat it did glyde,
And made a griesly wound in his enriuen side.

Much was he grieued with that haplesse throe,
That opened had the welspring of his blood;
But much the more that to his hatefull foe
He mote not come, to wreake his wrathfull mood.
That made him raue, like to a Lyon wood,
Which being wounded of the huntsmans hand
Can not come neare him in the couert wood,
Where he with boughes hath built his shady stand,
And fenst himselfe about with many a flaming brand.

Still when he sought t'approch vnto him ny,
His charret wheelles about him whirled round,
And made him backe againe as fast to fly;
And eke his steedes like to an hungry hound,
That hunting after game hath carrion found,
So cruelly did him pursew and chace,
That his good steed, all were he much renound
For noble courage, and for hardie race,
Durst not endure their sight, but fled from place to
place.

Thus long they trast, and trauerst to and fro,
Seeking by euery way to make some breach,
Yet could the Prince not nigh vnto him goe,
That one sure stroke he might vnto him reach,
Whereby his strengthes assay he might him teach.
At last from his victorious shield he drew
The vaile, which did his powrefull light empeach;
And comming full before his horses vew,
As they vpon him prest, it plaine to them did shew.

Like lightening flash, that hath the gazer burned,
So did the sight thereof their sense dismay,
That backe againe vpon themselues they turned,
And with their ryder ranne perforce away:
Ne could the Souldan them from flying stay,
With raynes, or wonted rule, as well he knew.
Nought feared they, what he could do, or say,
But th'onely feare, that was before their vew;
From which like mazed deare, dismayfully they flew.

Fast did they fly, as them their feete could beare,
High ouer hilles, and lowly ouer dales,
As they were follow'd of their former feare.
In vaine the Pagan bannes, and swears, and rayles,
And backe with both his hands vnto him hayles
The resty raynes, regarded now no more:
He to them calles and speakes, yet nought auayles;
They heare him not, they haue forgot his lore,
But go, which way they list, their guide they haue
forlore.

As when the firie-mouthed steeds, which drew
The Sunnes bright wayne to Phaetons decay,
Soone as they did the monstrous Scorpion vew,
With vgly craples crawling in their way,
The dreadfull sight did them so sore affray,
That their well knowen courses they forwent,
And leading th'euer-burning lampe astray,
This lower world nigh all to ashes brent,
And left their scorched path yet in the firmament.

Such was the furie of these head-strong steeds,
Soone as the infants sunlike shield they saw,
That all obedience both to words and deeds
They quite forgot, and scornd all former law;
Through woods, and rocks, and mountaines they did
draw
The yron charet, and the wheelles did teare,
And tost the Paynim, without feare or awe;
From side to side they tost him here and there,
Crying to them in vaine, that nould his crying heare.

Yet still the Prince pursew'd him close behind,
Oft making offer him to smite, but found
No easie meanes according to his mind.
At last they haue all ouerthrowne to ground
Quite topside turuey, and the pagan hound
Amongst the yron hookes and graples keene,
Torne all to rags, and rent with many a wound,
That no whole peece of him was to be seene,
But scattred all about, and strow'd vpon the greene.

Like as the cursed sonne of Theseus,
That following his chace in dewy morne,
To fly his stepdames loues outrageous,
Of his owne steedes was all to peeces torne,
And his faire limbs left in the woods forlorne;
That for his sake Diana did lament,
And all the wooddy Nymphes did wayle and mourne.
So was this Souldan rapt and all to rent,
That of his shape appear'd no litle monument.

Onely his shield and armour, which there lay,
Though nothing whole, but all to brusd and broken,
He vp did take, and with him brought away,
That mote remaine for an eternall token
To all, mongst whom this storie should be spoken,
How worthily, by heauens high decree,
Iustice that day of wrong her selfe had wroken,
That all men which that spectacle did see,
By like ensample mote for euer warned bee.

So on a tree, before the Tyrants dore,
He caused them be hung in all mens sight,
To be a moniment for euermore.
Which when his Ladie from the castles hight
Beheld, it much appald her troubled spright:
Yet not, as women wont in dolefull fit,
She was dismayd, or faynted through affright,
But gathered vnto her her troubled wit,
And gan eftsoones deuize to be aueng'd for it.

Streight downe she ranne, like an enraged cow,
That is berobbed of her youngling dere,
With knife in hand, and fatallly did vow,
To wreake her on that mayden messengere,
Whom she had causd be kept as prisonere,
By Artegall, misween'd for her owne Knight,
That brought her backe. And comming present there,
She at her ran with all her force and might,
All flaming with reuenge and furious despight.

Like raging Ino, when with knife in hand
She threw her husbands murdred infant out,
Or fell Medea, when on Colchicke strand
Her brothers bones she scattered all about;
Or as that madding mother, mongst the rout
Of Bacchus Priests her owne deare flesh did teare.
Yet neither Ino, nor Medea stout,
Nor all the Moenades so furious were,
As this bold woman, when she saw that Damzell there.

But Artegall being thereof aware,
Did stay her cruell hand, ere she her raught,
And as she did her selfe to strike prepare,
Out of her fist the wicked weapon caught:
With that like one enfelon'd or distraught,
She forth did rome, whether her rage her bore,
With franticke passion, and with furie fraught;
And breaking forth out at a posterne dore,
Vnto the wyld wood ranne, her dolours to deplore.

As a mad bytch, when as the franticke fit
Her burning tongue with rage inflamed hath,
Doth runne at randon, and with furious bit
Snatching at euery thing, doth wreake her wrath
On man and beast, that commeth in her path.
There they doe say, that she transformed was
Into a Tygre, and that Tygres scath
In crueltie and outrage she did pas,
To proue her surname true, that she imposed has.

Canto IX.

Then Artegall himselfe dicouering plaine,
Did issue forth gainst all that warlike rout
Of knights and armed men, which did maintaine
That Ladies part, and to the Souldan lout:
All which he did assault with courage stout,
All were they nigh an hundred knights of name:
And like wyld Goates them chaced all about,
Flying from place to place with cowheard shame,
So that with finall force them all he ouercame.

Then caused he the gates be opened wyde,
And there the Prince, as victour of that day,
With tryumph entertayn'd and glorifyde,
Presenting him with all the rich array,
And roiall pompe, which there long hidden lay,
Purchast through lawlesse powre and tortious wrong
Of that proud Souldan, whom he earst did slay.
So both for rest there hauing stayd not long,
Marcht with that mayd, fit matter for another song.

Arthur and Artegall catch Guyle
whom Talus doth dismay,
They to Mercillaes pallace come,
and see her rich array.

What Tygre, or what other saluage wight
Is so exceeding furious and fell,
As Wrong, when it hath arm'd it selfe with might?
Not fit mongst men, that doe with reason mell,
But mongst wyld beasts and saluage woods to dwell;
Where still the stronger doth the weake deuoure,
And they that most in boldnesse doe excell,
Are dredded most, and feared for their powre:
Fit for Adicia, there to build her wicked bowre.

There let her wonne farre from resort of men,
Where righteous Artegall her late exyled;
There let her euer keepe her damned den,
Where none may be with her lewd parts defyled,
Nor none but beasts may be of her despoiled:
And turne we to the noble Prince, where late
We did him leaue, after that he had foyled
The cruell Souldan, and with dreadfull fate
Had vtterly subuerted his vnrighteous state.

Where hauing with Sir Artegall a space
Well solast in that Souldans late delight,
They both resolving now to leaue the place,
Both it and all the wealth therein behight
Vnto that Damzell in her Ladies right,
And so would haue departed on their way.
But she them woo'd by all the meanes she might,
And earnestly besought, to wend that day
With her, to see her Ladie thence no farre away.

By whose entreatie both they ouercommen,
Agree to goe with her, and by the way,
(As often falles) of sundry things did commen.
Mongst which that Damzell did to them bewray
A straunge aduerture, which not farre thence lay;
To weet a wicked villaine, bold and stout,
Which wonned in a rocke not farre away,
That robbed all the countrie there about,
And brought the pillage home, whence none could get
it out.

Thereto both his owne wylie wit, (she sayd)
And eke the fastnesse of his dwelling place,
Both vnassaylable, gaue him great ayde:
For he so crafty was to forge and face,
So light of hand, and nymble of his pace,
So smooth of tongue, and subtile in his tale.
That could deceiue one looking in his face;
Therefore by name Malengin they him call,
Well knownen by his feates, and famous ouer all.

Through these his slights he many doth confound,
And eke the rocke, in which he wonts to dwell,
Is wondrous strong, and hewen farre vnder ground
A dreadfull depth, how deepe no man can tell;
But some doe say, it goeth downe to hell.
And all within, it full of wyndings is,
And hidden wayes, that scarce an hound by smell
Can follow out those false footsteps of his,
Ne none can backe returne, that once are gone amis.

Which when those knights had heard, their harts gan
 earne,
To vnderstand that villeins dwelling place,
And greatly it desir'd of her to learne,
And by which way they towards it should trace.
Were not (sayd she) that it should let your pace
Towards my Ladies presence by you ment,
I would you guyde directly to the place.
Then let not that (said they) stay your intent;
For neither will one foot, till we that carle haue hent.

So froth they past, till they apporched ny
Vnto the rocke, where was the villains won:
Which when the Damzell neare at hand did spy,
She warn'd the knights thereof: who thereupon
Gan to aduize, what best were to be done.
So both agreed, to send that mayd afore,
Where she might sit nigh to the den alone,
Wayling, and raysing pittifull vprore,
As if she did some great calamitie deplore.

With noyse whereof when as the caytiue carle
Should issue forth, in hope to find some spoyle,
They in awayt would closely him ensnarle,
Ere to his den he backward could recoyle,
And so would hope him easily to foyle.
The Damzell straight went, as she was directed,
Vnto the rocke, and there vpon the soyle
Hauing her selfe in wretched wize abiected,
Gan weepe and wayle, as if great griefe had her af
 fected.

The cry whereof entring the hollow caue,
Eftsoones brought forth the villaine, as they ment,
With hope of her some wishfull boot to haue.
Full dreadfull wight he was, as euer went
Vpon the earth, with hollow eyes deepe pent,
And long curld locks, that downe his shoulders
 shagged,
And on his backe an vncouth vestiment
Made of straunge stuffe, but all to worne and ragged,
And vnderneath his breech was all to torne and iagged.

And in his hand an huge long staffe he held,
Whose top was arm'd with many an yron hooke,
Fit to catch hold of all that he could weld,
Or in the compasse of his clouches tooke;
And euer round about he cast his looke.
Als at his backe a great wyde net he bore,
With which he seldome fished at the brooke,
But vsd to fish for fooles on the dry shore,
Of which he in faire weather wont to take great store.

Him when the damzell saw fast by her side,
So vgly creature, she was nigh dismayd,
And now for helpe aloud in earnest cride.
But when the villaine saw her so affrayd,
He gan with guilefull words her to perswade,
To banish feare, and with Sardonian smyle
Laughing on her, his false intent to shade,
Gan forth to lay his bayte her to beguyle,
That from her self vnwares he might her steale the
 whyle.

Like as the fouler on his guilefull pype
Charmes to the birds full many a pleasant lay,
That they the whiles may take lesse heedie keepe,
How he his nets doth for their ruine lay:
So did the villaine to her prate and play,
And many pleasant trickes before her show,
To turne her eyes from his intent away:
For he in slights and iugling feates did flow,
And of legierdemayne the mysteries did know.

To which whilst she lent her intentiue mind,
He suddenly his net vpon her threw,
That ouersprad her like a puffe of wind;
And snatching her soone vp, ere well she knew,
Ran with her fast away vnto his mew,
Crying for helpe aloud. But when as ny
He came vnto his caue, and there did vew
The armed knights stopping his passage by,
He threw his burden downe, and fast away did fly.

But Artegal him after did pursew,
The whiles the Prince there kept the entrance still:
Vp to the rocke he ran, and thereon flew
Like a wyld Gote, leaping from hill to hill,
And dauncing on the craggy cliffes at will;
That deadly daunger seem'd in all mens sight,
To tempt such steps, where footing was so ill:
Ne ought auayled for the armed knight,
To thinke to follow him, that was so swift and light.

Which when he saw, his yron man he sent,
To follow him; for he was swift in chace.
He him pursewd, where euer that he went,
Both ouer rockes, and hilles, and euery place,
Where so he fled, he followd him apace:
So that he shortly forst him to forsake
The hight, and downe descend vnto the base.
There he him courst a fresh, and soone did make
To leaue his proper forme, and other shape to take.

Into a Foxe himselfe he first did tourne;
But he him hunted like a Foxe full fast:
Then to a bush himselfe he did transforme,
But he the bush did beat, till that at last
Into a bird it chaung'd, and from him past,
Flying from tree to tree, from wand to wand:
But he then stones at it so long did cast,
That like a stone it fell vpon the land,
But he then tooke it vp, and held fast in his hand.

So he it brought with him vnto the knights,
And to his Lord Sir Artegall it lent,
Warning him hold it fast, for feare of slights.
Who whilst in hand it gryping hard he hent,
Into a Hedgehogge all vnwares it went,
And prickt him so, that he away it threw.
Then gan it runne away incontinent,
Being returned to his former hew:
But Talus soone him ouertooke, and backward drew.

But when as he would to a snake againe
Haue turn'd himselfe, he with his yron flayle
Gan driue at him, with so huge might and maine,
That all his bones, as small as sandy grayle
He broke, and did his bowels disentrayne;
Crying in vaine for helpe, when helpe was past.
So did deceipt the selfe deceiuer fayle,
There they him left a carrion outcast;
For beasts and foules to feede vpon for their repast.

Thence forth they passed with that gentle Mayd,
To see her Ladie, as they did agree.
To which when she approched, thus she sayd;
Loe now, right noble knights, arriu'd ye bee
Nigh to the place, which ye desir'd to see:
There shall ye see my souerayne Lady Queene
Most sacred wight, most debonayre and free,
That euer yet vpon this earth was seene,
Or that with Diademe hath euer crowned beene.

The gentle knights reioyced much to heare
The prayes of that Prince so manifold:
And passing litle further, commen were,
Where they a stately pallace did behold,
Of pompous show, much more then she had told;
With many towres, and tarras mounted hye,
And all their tops bright glistering with gold,
That seemed to outshine the dimmed skye,
And with their brightnesse daz'd the straunge beholders
eye.

There they alighting, by that Damzell were
Directed in, and shewed all the sight:
Whose porch, that most magnificke did appeare,
Stood open wyde to all men day and night;
Yet warded well by one of mickle might,
That sate thereby, with gyantlike resemblance,
To keepe out guyle, and malice, and despight,
That vnder shew oftymes of fayned semblance,
Are wont in Princes courts to worke great scath and hindrance.

His name was Awe; by whom they passing in
Went vp the hall, that was a large wyde roome,
All full of people making troublous din,
And wondrous noyse, as if that there were some,
Which vnto them was dealing righteous doome.
By whom they passing, through the thickest preasse,
The marshall of the hall to them did come;
His name hight Order, who commaunding peace,
Them guyded through the throng, that did their
clamors cease.

They ceast their clamors vpon them to gaze;
Whom seeing all in armour bright as day,
Straunge there to see, it did them much amaze,
And with vnwonted terror halfe affray,
For neuer saw they there the like array.
Ne euer was the name of warre there spoken,
But ioyous peace and quietnesse alway,
Dealing iust iudgements, that mote not be broken
For any brybes, or threates of any to be wroken.

There as they entred at the Scriene, they saw
Some one, whose tongue was for his trespasse vyle
Nayld to a post, adiudged so by law:
For that therewith he falsely did reuyle,
And foule blaspheme that Queene for forged guyle,
Both with bold speaches, which he blazed had,
And with lewd poems, which he did compyle;
For the bold title of a Poet bad
He on himselfe had ta'en, and rayling rymes had sprad.

Thus there he stood, whylest high ouer his head,
There written was the purport of his sin,
In cyphers strange, that few could rightly read,
BON FONT: but bon that once had written bin,
Was raced out, and Mal was now put in.
So now Malfont was plainely to be red;
Eyther for th'euill, which he did therein,
Or that he likened was to a welhed
Of euill words, and wicked sclaunders by him shed.

They passing by, were guyded by degree
Vnto the presence of that gracious Queene:
Who sate on high, that she might all men see,
And might of all men royally be seene:
Vpon a throne of gold full bright and sheene,
Adorned all with gemmes of endlesse price,
As either might for wealth haue gotten bene,
Or could be fram'd by workmans rare deuce;
And all embost with Lyons and with Flourdelyce.

All ouer her a cloth of state was spred,
Not of rich tissew, nor of cloth of gold,
Nor of ought else, that may be richest red,
But like a cloud, as likest may be told,
That her brode spreading wings did wyde vnfold;
Whose skirts were bordred with bright sunny beams,
Glistring like gold, amongst the plights enrold,
And here and there shooting forth siluer streames,
Mongst which crept litle Angels through the glittering
gleames.

Seemed those litle Angels did vphold
The cloth of state, and on their purpled wings
Did beare the pendants, through their nimblesse bold:
Besides a thousand more of such, as sings
Hymnes to high God, and carols heauenly things,
Encompassed the throne, on which she sate:
She Angel-like, the heyre of ancient kings
And mightie Conquerors, in royall state,
Whylest kings and kesars at her feet did them prostrate.

Thus she did sit in souerayne Maiestie,
Holding a Scepter in her royall hand,
The sacred pledge of peace and clemencie,
With which high God had blest her happie land,
Maugre so many foes, which did withstand.
But at her feet her sword was likewise layde,
Whose long rest rusted the bright steely brand;
Yet when as foes enforst, or friends sought ayde,
She could it sternely draw, that all the world dismayde.

And round about, before her feet there sate
A beuie of faire Virgins clad in white,
That goodly seem'd t'adorne her royall state,
All louely daughters of high Ioue, that hight,
Litae, by him begot in loues delight,
Vpon the righteous Themis: those they say
Vpon Ioues iudgement seat wayt day and night,
And when in wrath he threats the worlds decay,
They doe his anger calme, and cruell vengeance stay.

They also doe by his diuine permission
Vpon the thrones of mortall Princes tend,
And often treat for pardon and remission
To suppliants, through frayltie which offend.
Those did vpon Mercillaes throne attend:
Iust Dice, wise Eunomie, myld Eirene,
And them amongst, her glorie to commend,
Sate goodly Temperance in garments clene,
And sacred Reuerence, yborne of heauenly strene,

Thus did she sit in royall rich estate,
Admyr'd of many, honoured of all,
Whylest vnderneath her feete, there as she sate,
An huge great Lyon lay, that mote appall
An hardie courage, like captiued thrall,
With a strong yron chaine and coller bound,
That once he could not moue, nor quich at all;
Yet did he murmure with rebellious sound,
And softly royne, when saluage choler gan redound.

So sitting high in dreaded souerayntie,
Those two strange knights were to her presence
brought;
Who bowing low before her Maiestie,
Did to her myld obeysance, as they ought,
And meekest boone, that they imagine mought.
To whom she eke inclyning her withall,
As a faire stoupe of her high soaring thought,
A chearefull countenance on them let fall,
Yet tempred with some maiestie imperiall.

As the bright sunne, what time his fierie teme
Towards the westerne brim begins to draw,
Gins to abate the brightnesse of his beme,
And feruour of his flames somewhat adaw:
So did this mightie Ladie, when she saw
Those two strange knights such homage to her make,
Bate somewhat of that Maiestie and awe,
That whylome wont to doe so many quake,
And with more myld aspect those two to entertake.

Now at that instant, as occasion fell,
When these two stranger knights arriu'd in place,
She was about affaires of common wele,
Dealing of Iustice with indifferent grace,
And hearing pleas of people meane and base.
Mongst which as then, there was for to be heard
The tryall of a great and weightie case,
Which on both sides was then debating hard:
But at the sight of these, those were a while debarde.

But after all her princely entertayne,
To th'hearing of that former cause in hand,
Her selfe eftsoones she gan conuert againe;
Which that those knights likewise mote vnderstand,
And witnesse forth aright in forrain land,
Taking them vp vnto her stately throne,
Where they mote heare the matter throughly scand
On either part, she placed th'one on th'one,
The other on the other side, and neare them none.

Then was there brought, as prisoner to the barre,
A Ladie of great countenance and place,
But that she it with foule abuse did marre;
Yet did appeare rare beautie in her face,
But blotted with condition vile and base,
That all her other honour did obscure,
And titles of nobilitie deface:
Yet in that wretched semblant, she did sure
The peoples great compassion vnto her allure.

Then vp arose a person of deepe reach,
And rare in-sight, hard matters to reuele;
That well could charme his tongue, and time his
 speach
To all assayes; his name was called Zele:
He gan that Ladie strongly to appele
Of many haynous crymes, by her enured,
And with sharpe reasons rang her such a pele,
That those, whom she to pitie had allured,
He now t'abhorre and loath her person had procured.

First gan he tell, how this that seem'd so faire
And royally arayd, Duessa hight,
That false Duessa, which had wrought great care,
And mickle mischief vnto many a knight,
By her beguyled, and confounded quight:
But not for those she now in question came,
Though also those mote question'd be aright,
But for vyld treasons, and outrageous shame,
Which she against the dred Mercilla oft did frame.

For she whylome (as ye mote yet right well
Remember) had her counsels false conspyred,
With faithlesse Blandamour and Paridell,
(Both two her paramours, both by her hyred,
And both with hope of shadowes vaine inspyred.)
And with them practiz'd, how for to depyue
Mercilla of her crowne, by her aspyred,
That she might it vnto her selfe deryue,
And triumph in their blood, whom she to death did
 dryue.

But through high heauens grace, which fauour not
The wicked driftes of trayterous desynes,
Gainst loiall Princes, all this cursed plot,
Ere prooffe it tooke, discouered was betymes,
And th'actours won the meede meet for their crymes.
Such be the meede of all, that by such mene
Vnto the type of kingdomes title clymes.
But false Duessa now vntitled Queene,
Was brought to her sad doome, as here was to be seene.

Strongly did Zele her haynous fact enforce,
And many other crimes of foule defame
Against her brought, to banish all remorse,
And aggrauate the horror of her blame.
And with him to make part against her, came
Many graue persons, that against her pled;
First was a sage old Syre, that had to name
The Kingdomes care, with a white siluer hed,
That many high regards and reasons gainst her red.

Then gan Authority her to appose
With peremptorie powre, that made all mute;
And then the law of Nations gainst her rose,
And reasons brought, that no man could refute;
Next gan Religion gainst her to impute
High Gods behest, and powre of holy lawes;
Then gan the Peoples cry and Commons sute,
Importune care of their owne publicke cause;
And lastly Iustice charged her with breach of lawes.

But then for her, on the contrarie part,
Rose many aduocates for her to plead:
First there came Pittie, with full tender hart,
And with her ioyn'd Regard of womanhead;
And then came Daunger threatning hidden dread,
And high alliance vnto forren powre;
Then came Nobilitie of birth, that bread
Great ruth through her misfortunes tragicke stowre;
And lastly Griefe did plead, and many teares forth
powre.

With the neare touch whereof in tender hart
The Briton Prince was sore empassionate,
And woxe inclined much vnto her part,
Through the sad terror of so dreadfull fate,
And wretched ruine of so high estate,
That for great ruth his courage gan relent.
Which when as Zele perceiued to abate,
He gan his earnest feruour to augment,
And many fearefull obiects to them to present.

He gan t'efforce the euidence anew,
And new accusements to produce in place:
He brought forth that old hag of hellish hew,
The cursed Ate, brought her face to face,
Who priuie was, and partie in the case:
She, glad of spoyle and ruinous decay,
Did her appeach, and to her more disgrace,
The plot of all her practise did display,
And all her traynes, and all her treasons forth did lay.

Then brought he forth, with griesly grim aspect,
Abhorred Murder, who with bloudie knyfe
Yet dropping fresh in hand did her detect,
And there with guiltie bloudshed charged ryfe:
Then brought he forth Sedition, breeding stryfe
In troublous wits, and mutinous vprore:
Then brought he forth Incontinence of lyfe,
Euen foule Adulterie her face before,
And lewd Impietie, that her accused sore.

All which when as the Prince had heard and seene,
His former fancies ruth he gan repent,
And from her partie eftsoones was drawen cleene.
But Artegall with constant firme intent,
For zeale of Iustice was against her bent.
So was she guiltie deemed of them all.
Then Zele began to vrge her punishment,
And to their Queene for iudgement loudly call,
Vnto Mercilla myld for Iustice gainst the thrall.

But she, whose Princely breast was touched nere
With piteous ruth of her so wretched plight,
Though plaine she saw by all, that she did heare,
That she of death was guiltie found by right,
Yet would not let iust vengeance on her light;
But rather let in stead thereof to fall
Few perling drops from her faire lampes of light;
The which she couering with her purple pall
Would haue the passion hid, and vp arose withall.

Canto X.

Prince Arthur takes the enterprize
for Belgee for to fight:
Gerioneos Seneschall
he slays in Belges right.

Some Clarkes doe doubt in their deuicefull art,
Whether this heauenly thing, whereof I treat,
To weeten Mercie, be of Iustice part,
Or drawne forth from her by diuine extreate.
This well I wote, that sure she is as great,
And meriteth to haue as high a place,
Sith in th'Almighties euerlasting seat
She first was bred, and borne of heauenly race;
From thence pour'd down on men, by influence of
grace.

For if that Vertue be of so great might,
Which from iust verdict will for nothing start,
But to preserue inuiolated right,
Oft spilles the principall, to saue the part;
So much more then is that of powre and art,
That seekes to saue the subiect of her skill,
Yet neuer doth from doome of right depart:
As it is greater prayse to saue, then spill,
And better to reforme, then to cut off the ill.

Who then can thee, Mercilla, throughly prayse,
That herein doest all earthly Princes pas?
What heauenly Muse shall thy great honour rayse
Vp to the skies, whence first deriu'd it was,
And now on earth it selfe enlarged has,
From th'vtmost brinke of the Armericke shore,
Vnto the margent of the Molucas?
Those Nations farre thy iustice doe adore:
But thine owne people do thy mercy prayse much
more.

Much more it prayed was of those two knights;
The noble Prince, and righteous Artegall,
When they had seene and heard her doome a rights
Against Duessa, damned by them all;
But by her tempred without grieffe or gall,
Till strong constraint did her thereto enforce.
And yet euen then ruing her wilfull fall,
With more then needfull naturall remorse,
And yeelding the last honour to her wretched corse.

During all which, those knights continu'd there,
Both doing and receiuing curtesies,
Of that great Ladie, who with goodly chere
Them entertayn'd, fit for their dignities,
Approuing dayly to their noble eyes
Royall examples of her mercies rare,
And worthie paterns of her clemencies;
Which till this day mongst many liuing are,
Who them to their posterities doe still declare.

Amongst the rest, which in that space befell,
There came two Springals of full tender yeares,
Farre thence from forrein land, where they did dwell,
To seeke for succour of her and of her Peares
With humble prayers and intreatfull teares;
Sent by their mother, who a widow was,
Wrapt in great dolours and in deadly feares,
By a strong Tyrant, who inuaded has
Her land, and slaine her children ruefully alas.

Her name was Belgæ, who in former age
A Ladie of great worth and wealth had beene,
And mother of a frutefull heritage,
Euen seuentene goodly sonnes; which who had seene
In their first flowre, before this fatall teene
Them ouertooke, and their faire blossomes blasted,
More happie mother would her surely weene,
Then famous Niobe, before she tasted
Latonaes childrens wrath, that all her issue wasted.

But this fell Tyrant, through his tortious powre,
Had left her now but fiue of all that brood:
For twelue of them he did by times deuoure,
And to his Idols sacrifice their blood,
Whylest he of none was stopped, nor withstood.
For soothly he was one of matchlesse might,
Of horrible aspect, and dreadfull mood,
And had three bodies in one wast empight,
And th'armes and legs of three, to succour him in fight.

And sooth they say, that he was borne and bred
Of Gyants race, the sonne of Geryon,
He that whylome in Spaine so sore was dred,
For his huge powre and great oppression,
Which brought that land to his subiection,
Through his three bodies powre, in one combynd;
And eke all strangers in that region
Arryuing, to his kyne for food assynd;
The fayrest kyne aliue, but of the fiercest kynd.

For they were all, they say, of purple hew,
Kept by a cowheard, hight Eurytion,
A cruell carle, the which all strangers slew,
Ne day nor night did sleepe, t'attend them on,
But walkt about them euer and anone,
With his two headed dogge, that Orthrus hight;
Orthrus begotten by great Typhaon,
And foule Echidna, in the house of night;
But Hercules them all did ouercome in fight.

His sonne was this, Geryoneo hight,
Who after that his monstrous father fell
Vnder Alcides club, streight tooke his flight
From that sad land, where he his syre did quell,
And came to this, where Belge then did dwell,
And flourish in all wealth and happinesse,
Being then new made widow (as befell)
After her Noble husbands late decesse;
Which gaue beginning to her woe and wretchednesse.

Then this bold Tyrant, of her widowed
Taking aduantage, and her yet fresh woes,
Himselfe and seruice to her offered,
Her to defend against all forrein foes,
That should their powre against her right oppose.
Whereof she glad, now needing strong defence,
Him entertayn'd, and did her champion chose:
Which long he vsd with carefull diligence,
The better to confirme her fearelesse confidence.

By meanes whereof, she did at last commit
All to his hands, and gaue him soueraine powre
To doe, what euer he thought good or fit.
Which hauing got, he gan forth from that howre
To stirre vp strife, and many a Tragicke stowre,
Giuing her dearest children one by one
Vnto a dreadfull Monster to deuoure,
And setting vp an Idole of his owne,
The image of his monstrous parent Geryone.

So tyrannizing, and oppressing all,
The woefull widow had no meanes now left,
But vnto gracious great Mercilla call
For ayde, against that cruell Tyrants theft,
Ere all her children he from her had reft.
Therefore these two, her eldest sonnes she sent,
To seeke for succour of this Ladies giest:
To whom their sute they humbly did present,
In th'hearing of full many Knights and Ladies gent.

Amongst the which then fortun'd to bee
The noble Briton Prince, with his braue Peare;
Who when he none of all those knights did see
Hastily bent, that enterprise to heare,
Nor vndertake the same, for cowheard feare,
He stepped forth with courage bold and great,
Admyr'd of all the rest in presence there,
And humbly gan that mightie Queene entreat,
To graunt him that aduenture for his former feat.

She gladly graunted it: then he straight way
Himselfe vnto his iourney gan prepare,
And all his armours readie dight that day,
That nought the morrow next mote stay his fare.
The morrow next appear'd, with purple hayre
Yet dropping fresh out of the Indian fount,
And bringing light into the heauens fayre,
When he was readie to his steede to mount
Vnto his way, which now was all his care and count.

Then taking humble leaue of that great Queene,
Who gaue him roiall giftes and riches rare,
As tokens of her thankefull mind beseene,
And leauing Artegall to his owne care;
Vpon his voyage forth he gan to fare,
With those two gentle youthes, which him did guide,
And all his way before him still prepare.
Ne after him did Artegall abide,
But on his first aduenture forward forth did ride.

It was not long, till that the Prince arriued
Within the land, where dwelt that Ladie sad,
Whereof that Tyrant had her now depriued,
And into moores and marshes banisht had,
Out of the pleasant soyle, and citties glad,
In which she went to harbour happily:
But now his cruelty so sore she drad,
That to those fennes for fastnesse she did fly,
And there her selfe did hyde from his hard tyranny.

There he her found in sorrow and dismay,
All solitarie without liuing wight;
For all her other children, through affray,
Had hid themselues, or taken further flight:
And eke her selfe through sudden strange affright,
When one in armes she saw, began to fly;
But when her owne two sonnes she had in sight,
She gan take hart, and looke vp ioyfully:
For well she wist this knight came, succour to supply.

And running vnto them with greedy ioyes,
Fell straight about their neckes, as they did kneele,
And bursting forth in teares; Ah my sweet boyes,
(Sayd she) yet now I gin new life to feele,
And feeble spirits, that gan faint and reele,
Now rise againe, at this your ioyous sight.
Alreadie seemes that fortunes headlong wheele
Begins to turne, and sunne to shine more bright,
Then it was wont, through comfort of this noble
knight.

Then turning vnto him; And you Sir knight
(Said she) that taken haue this toylesome paine
For wretched woman, miserable wight,
May you in heauen immortall guerdon gaine
For so great trauell, as you doe sustaine:
For other meede may hope for none of mee,
To whom nought else, but bare life doth remaine,
And that so wretched one, as ye do see
Is liker lingring death, then loathed life to bee.

Much was he moued with her piteous plight,
And low dismounting from his loftie steede,
Gan to recomfort her all that he might,
Seeking to driue away deepe rooted dreede,
With hope of helpe in that her greatest neede.
So thence he wished her with him to wend,
Vnto some place, where they mote rest and feede,
And she take comfort, which God now did send:
Good hart in euils doth the euils much amend.

Ay me (sayd she) and whether shall I goe?
Are not all places full of forraine powres?
My pallaces possessed of my foe,
My cities sackt, and their sky-threatening towres
Raced, and made smooth fields now full of flowres?
Onely these marishes, and myrie bogs,
In which the fearefull ewftes do build their bowres,
Yeeld me an hostry mongst the croking frogs,
And harbour here in safety from those rauenous dogs.

Nathlesse (said he) deare Ladie with me goe,
Some place shall vs receiue, and harbour yield;
If not, we will it force, maugre your foe,
And purchase it to vs with speare and shield:
And if all fayle, yet farewell open field:
The earth to all her creatures lodging lends.
With such his chearefull speaches he doth wield
Her mind so well, that to his will she bends
And bynding vp her locks and weeds, forth with him
wends.

They came vnto a Citie farre vp land,
The which whylome that Ladies owne had bene;
But now by force extort out of her hand,
By her strong foe, who had defaced cleene
Her stately towres, and buildings sunny sheene;
Shut vp her hauen, mard her marchants trade,
Robbed her people, that full rich had beene,
And in her necke a Castle huge had made,
The which did her cōmaund, without needing perswade.

That Castle was the strength of all that state,
Vntill that state by strength was pulled downe,
And that same citie, so now ruinate,
Had bene the keye of all that kingdomes crowne;
Both goodly Castle, and both goodly Towne,
Till that th'offended heauens list to lowre
Vpon their blisse, and balefull fortune frowne.
When those gainst states and kingdomes do coniure,
Who then can thinke their hedlong ruine to recure.

But he had brought it now in seruile bond,
And made it beare the yoke of inquisition,
Stryuing long time in vaine it to withstond;
Yet glad at last to make most base submission,
And life enioy for any composition.
So now he hath new lawes and orders new
Imposd on it, with many a hard condition,
And forced it, the honour that is dew
To God, to doe vnto his Idole most vntrew.

To him he hath, before this Castle greene,
Built a faire Chappell, and an Altar framed
Of costly Iuory, full rich beseene,
On which that cursed Idole farre proclaimed,
He hath set vp, and him his God hath named;
Offring to him in sinfull sacrifice
The flesh of men, to Gods owne likenesse framed,
And powring forth their bloud in brutishe wize,
That any yron eyes to see it would agrize.

And for more horror and more crueltie,
Vnder that cursed Idols altar stone;
An hideous monster doth in darknesse lie,
Whose dreadfull shape was neuer seene of none
That liues on earth; but vnto those alone
The which vnto him sacrificed bee.
Those he deuoures, they say, both flesh and bone:
What else they haue, is all the Tyrants fee;
So that no whit of them remaying one may see.

There eke he placed a strong garrison,
And set a Seneschall of dreaded might,
That by his powre oppressed euery one,
And vanquished all ventrous knights in fight;
To whom he wont shew all the shame he might,
After that them in battell he had wonne.
To which when now they gan approach in sight,
The Ladie counseld him the place to shonne,
Whereas so many knights had fouly bene fordonne.

Her fearefull speaches nought he did regard,
But ryding streight vnder the Castle wall,
Called aloud vnto the watchfull ward,
Which there did wayte, willing them forth to call
Into the field their Tyrants Seneschall.
To whom when tydings thereof came, he streight
Cals for his armes, and arming him withall,
Eftsoones forth pricked proudly in his might,
And gan with courage fierce addressse him to the fight.

They both encounter in the middle plaine,
And their sharpe speares doe both together smite
Amid their shields, with so huge might and maine,
That seem'd their soules they wold haue ryuen quight
Out of their breasts, with furious despight.
Yet could the Seneschals no entrance find
Into the Princes shield, where it empight;
So pure the mettall was, and well refynd,
But shiuered all about, and scattered in the wynd.

Not so the Princes, but with restlesse force,
Into his shield it readie passage found,
Both through his haberieon, and eke his corse:
Which tombling downe vpon the senselesse ground,
Gauē leaue vnto his ghost from thraldome bound,
To wander in the griesly shades of night.
There did the Prince him leaue in deadly swound,
And thence vnto the castle marched right,
To see if entrance there as yet obtaine he might.

But as he nigher drew, three knights he spyde,
All arm'd to point, issuing forth a pace,
Which towards him with all their powre did ryde,
And meeting him right in the middle race,
Did all their speares attonce on him enchace.
As three great Culuerings for battrie bent,
And leueld all against one certaine place,
Doe all attonce their thunders rage forth rent,
That makes the wals to stagger with astonishment:

So all attonce they on the Prince did thonder;
Who from his saddle swarued nought asyde,
Ne to their force gaue way, that was great wonder,
But like a bulwarke, firmly did abyde;
Rebutting him, which in the midst did ryde,
With so huge rigour, that his mortall speare
Past through his shield, & pierst through either syde,
That downe he fell vppon his mother deare,
And powred forth his wretched life in deadly dreare.

Whom when his other fellowes saw, they fled
As fast as feete could carry them away;
And after them the Prince as swiftly sped,
To be aueng'd of their vnknighly play.
There whilst they entring, th'one did th'other stay,
The hindmost in the gate he ouerhent,
And as he pressed in, him there did slay:
His carkasse tumbling on the threshold, sent
His groning soule vnto her place of punishment.

The other which was entred, laboured fast
To sperre the gate; but that same lumpe of clay,
Whose grudging ghost was thereout fled and past,
Right in the middest of the threshold lay,
That it the Posterne did from closing stay:
The whiles the Prince hard preased in betweene,
And entraunce wonne. Streight th'other fled away,
And ran into the Hall, where he did weene
Him selfe to saue: but he there slew him at the skreene.

Canto XI.

Then all the rest which in that Castle were,
Seeing that sad ensample them before,
Durst not abide, but fled away for feare,
And them conuayd out at a Posterne dore.
Long sought the Prince, but when he found no more
T'oppose against his powre, he forth issued
Vnto that Lady, where he her had lore,
And her gan cheare, with what she there had vewed,
And what she had not seene, within vnto her shewed.

Who with right humble thanks him goodly greeting,
For so great prowesse, as he there had proued,
Much greater then was euer in her weeting,
With great admiraunce inwardly was moued,
And honourd him, with all that her behoued.
Thenceforth into that Castle he her led,
With her two sonnes, right deare of her beloued,
Where all that night them selues they cherished,
And from her balefull minde all care he banished.

Prince Arthure ouercomes the great
Gerioneo in fight:
Doth slay the Monster, and restore
Belge vnto her right.

It often fals in course of common life,
That right long time is ouerborne of wrong,
Through auarice, or powre, or guile, or strife,
That weakens her, and makes her party strong:
But Iustice, though her dome she doe prolong,
Yet at the last she will her owne cause right.
As by sad Belge seemes, whose wrongs though long
She suffred, yet at length she did requight,
And sent redresse thereof by this braue Briton Knight.

Whereof when newes was to that Tyrant brought,
How that the Lady Belge now had found
A Champion, that had with his Champion fought,
And laid his Seneschall low on the ground,
And eke him selfe did threaten to confound,
He gan to burne in rage, and friese in feare,
Doubting sad end of principle vnsound:
Yet sith he heard but one, that did appeare,
He did him selfe encourage, and take better cheare.

Nathelesse him selfe he armed all in hast,
And forth he far'd with all his many bad,
Ne stayed step, till that he came at last
Vnto the Castle, which they conquerd had.
There with huge terrour, to be more ydrad,
He sternely marcht before the Castle gate,
And with bold vaunts, and ydle threatning bad
Deliuier him his owne, ere yet too late,
To which they had no right, nor any wrongfull state.

The Prince staid not his aunswere to deuize,
But opening streight the Sparre, forth to him came,
Full nobly mounted in right warlike wize;
And asked him, if that he were the same,
Who all that wrong vnto that wofull Dame
So long had done, and from her natiue land
Exiled her, that all the world spake shame.
He boldly aunswerd him, he there did stand
That would his doings iustifie with his owne hand.

With that so furiously at him he flew,
As if he would haue ouerrun him streight,
And with his huge great yron axe gan hew
So hideously vppon his armour bright,
As he to peeces would haue chopt it quight:
That the bold Prince was forced foote to giue
To his first rage, and yeeld to his despight;
The whilest at him so dreadfully he driue,
That seem'd a marble rocke asunder could haue riuie.

Thereto a great aduantage eke he has
Through his three double hands thrise multiplyde,
Besides the double strength, which in them was:
For stil when fit occasion did betyde,
He could his weapon shift from side to syde,
From hand to hand, and with such nimblesse sly
Could wield about, that ere it were espide,
The wicked stroke did wound his enemy,
Behinde, beside, before, as he it list apply.

Which vncouth vse when as the Prince perceiued,
He gan to watch the wielding of his hand,
Least by such slight he were vnwares deceiued;
And euer ere he saw the stroke to land,
He would it meete, and warily withstand.
One time, when he his weapon faynd to shift,
As he was wont, and chang'd from hand to hand,
He met him with a counterstroke so swift,
That quite smit off his arme, as he it vp did lift.

Therewith, all fraught with fury and disdain,
He brayd aloud for very fell despight;
And sodainely t'auenge him selfe againe,
Gan into one assemble all the might
Of all his hands, and heued them on hight,
Thinking to pay him with that one for all:
But the sad steele seizd not, where it was hight,
Vppon the childe, but somewhat short did fall,
And lighting on his horses head, him quite did mall.

Downe streight to ground fell his astonisht steed,
And eke to th'earth his burden with him bare:
But he him selfe full lightly from him freed,
And gan him selfe to fight on foote prepare.
Whereof when as the Gyant was aware,
He wox right blyth, as he had got thereby,
And laught so loud, that all his teeth wide bare
One might haue seene enraung'd disorderly,
Like to a rancke of piles, that pitched are awry.

Eftsoones againe his axe he raught on hie,
Ere he were throughly buckled to his geare;
And can let driue at him so dreadfullie,
That had he chaunced not his shield to reare,
Ere that huge stroke arriued on him neare,
He had him surely clouen quite in twaine.
But th'Adamantine shield, which he did beare,
So well was tempred, that for all his maine,
It would no passage yeeld vnto his purpose vaine.

Yet was the stroke so forcibly applide,
That made him stagger with vncertaine sway,
As if he would haue tottered to one side.
Wherewith full wroth, he fiercely gan assay,
That curt'sie with like kindnesse to repay;
And smote at him with so importune might,
That two more of his armes did fall away,
Like fruitlesse branches, which the hatchets slight
Hath pruned from the natiue tree, and cropped quight.

With that all mad and furious he grew,
Like a fell mastiffe through enraging heat,
And curst, and band, and blasphemies forth threw,
Against his Gods, and fire to them did threat,
And hell vnto him selfe with horroure great.
Thenceforth he car'd no more, which way he strooke,
Nor where it light, but gan to chaufe and sweat,
And gnasht his teeth, and his head at him shooke,
And sternely him beheld with grim and ghastly looke.

Nought fear'd the childe his lookes, ne yet his threats,
But onely wexed now the more aware,
To saue him selfe from those his furious heats,
And watch aduauntage, how to worke his care:
The which good Fortune to him offred faire.
For as he in his rage him ouerstrooke,
He ere he could his weapon backe repaire,
His side all bare and naked ouertooke,
And with his mortal steel quite through the body
strooke.

She humbly thankt him for that wondrous grace,
And further sayd; Ah Sir, but mote ye please,
Sith ye thus farre haue tendred my poore case,
As from my chiefest foe me to release,
That your victorious arme will not yet cease,
Till ye haue rooted all the relickes out
Of that vilde race, and stablished my peace.
What is there else (sayd he) left of their rout?
Declare it boldly Dame, and doe not stand in dout.

Then wote you, Sir, that in this Church hereby,
There stands an Idole of great note and name,
The which this Gyant reared first on hie,
And of his owne vaine fancies thought did frame:
To whom for endlesse horror of his shame,
He offred vp for daily sacrificize
My children and my people, burnt in flame;
With all the tortures, that he could deuize,
The more t'aggrate his God with such his blouddy
guize.

And vnderneath this Idoll there doth lie
An hideous monster, that doth it defend,
And feedes on all the carkasses, that die
In sacrificize vnto that cursed feend:
Whose vgly shape none euer saw, nor kend,
That euer scap'd: for of a man they say
It has the voice, that speaches forth doth send,
Euen blasphemous words, which she doth bray
Out of her poysnous entrails, fraught with dire decay.

Which when the Prince heard tell, his heart gan earne
For great desire, that Monster to assay,
And prayd the place of her abode to learne.
Which being shew'd, he gan him selfe streight way
Thereto addresse, and his bright shield display.
So to the Church he came, where it was told,
The Monster vnderneath the Altar lay;
There he that Idoll saw of massy gold
Most richly made, but there no Monster did behold.

Vpon the Image with his naked blade
Three times, as in defiance, there he strooke;
And the third time out of an hidden shade,
There forth issewd, from vnder th'Altars smooke,
A dreadfull feend, with fowle deformed looke,
That stretcht it selfe, as it had long lyen still;
And her long taile and fethers strongly shooke,
That all the Temple did with terrour fill;
Yet him nought terrifide, that feared nothing ill.

An huge great Beast it was, when it in length
Was stretched forth, that nigh fild all the place,
And seem'd to be of infinite great strength;
Horrible, hideous, and of hellish race,
Borne of the brooding of Echidna base,
Or other like infernall furies kinde:
For of a Mayd she had the outward face,
To hide the horrour, which did lurke behinde,
The better to beguile, whom she so fond did finde.

Thereto the body of a dog she had,
Full of fell rauin and fierce greedinesse;
A Lions clawes, with powre and rigour clad,
To rend and teare, what so she can oppresse;
A Dragons taile, whose sting without redresse
Full deadly wounds, where so it is empight;
And Eagles wings, for scope and speedinesse,
That nothing may escape her reaching might,
Whereto she euer list to make her hardy flight.

Much like in foulnesse and deformity
Vnto that Monster, whom the Theban Knight,
The father of that fatall progeny,
Made kill her selfe for very hearts despight,
That he had red her Riddle, which no wight
Could euer loose, but suffred deadly doole.
So also did this Monster vse like slight
To many a one, which came vnto her schoole,
Whom she did put to death, deceiued like a foole.

She comming forth, when as she first beheld
The armed Prince, with shield so blazing bright,
Her ready to assaile, was greatly queld,
And much dismayd with that dismayfull sight,
That backe she would haue turnd for great affright.
But he gan her with courage fierce assay,
That forst her turne againe in her despight,
To saue her selfe, least that he did her slay:
And sure he had her slaine, had she not turnd her way.

Tho when she saw, that she was forst to fight,
She flew at him, like to an hellish feend,
And on his shield tooke hold with all her might,
As if that it she would in peeces rend,
Or reauce out of the hand, that did it hend.
Strongly he stroue out of her greedy gripe
To loose his shield, and long while did contend:
But when he could not quite it, with one stripe
Her Lions clawes he from her feete away did wipe.

With that aloud she gan to bray and yell,
And fowle blasphemous speaches forth did cast,
And bitter curses, horrible to tell,
That euen the Temple, wherein she was plast,
Did quake to heare, and nigh asunder brast.
Tho with her huge long taile she at him strooke,
That made him stagger, and stand halfe agast
With trembling ioynts, as he for terrour shooke;
Who nought was terrifide, but greater courage tooke.

As when the Mast of some well timbred hulke
Is with the blast of some outrageous storme
Blowne downe, it shakes the bottome of the bulke,
And makes her ribs to cracke, as they were torne,
Whilest still she stands as stonisht and forlorne:
So was he stound with stroke of her huge taile.
But ere that it she backe againe had borne,
He with his sword it strooke, that without faile
He ioynted it, and mard the swinging of her flaile.

Then gan she cry much louder then afore,
That all the people there without it heard,
And Belge selfe was therewith stonied sore,
As if the onely sound thereof she feard.
But then the feend her selfe more fiercely reard
Vppon her wide great wings, and strongly flew
With all her body at his head and beard;
That had he not foreseene with heedfull vew,
And thrown his shield atween, she had him done to rew.

But as she prest on him with heauy sway,
Vnder her wombe his fatall sword he thrust,
And for her entrailes made an open way,
To issue forth; the which once being brust,
Like to a great Mill damb forth fiercely gusht,
And powred out of her infernall sinke
Most vgly filth, and poyson therewith rusht,
That him nigh choked with the deadly stinke:
Such loathly matter were small lust to speake, or
thinke.

Then downe to ground fell that deformed Masse,
Breathing out clouds of sulphure fowle and blacke,
In which a puddle of contagion was,
More loathd then Lerna, or then Stygian lake,
That any man would nigh awhaped make.
Whom when he saw on ground, he was full glad,
And streight went forth his gladnesse to partake
With Belge, who watcht all this while full sad,
Wayting what end would be of that same daunger drad.

Whom when she saw so ioyously come forth,
She gan reioyce, and shew triumphant chere,
Lauding and praying his renowned worth,
By all the names that honorable were.
Then in he brought her, and her shewed there
The present of his paines, that Monsters spoyle,
And eke that Idoll deem'd so costly dere;
Whom he did all to peeces breake and foyle
In filthy durt, and left so in the loathely soyle.

Then all the people, which beheld that day,
Gan shout aloud, that vnto heauen it rong;
And all the damzels of that towne in ray,
Came dauncing forth, and ioyous carrols song:
So him they led through all their streetes along,
Crowned with girlonds of immortall baies,
And all the vulgar did about them throng,
To see the man, whose euerlasting praise
They all were bound to all posterities to raise.

There he with Belge did a while remaine,
Making great feast and ioyous merriment,
Vntill he had her settled in her raine,
With safe assuraunce and establishment.
Then to his first emprize his mind he lent,
Full loath to Belge, and to all the rest:
Of whom yet taking leaue, thenceforth he went
And to his former iourney him address,
On which long way he rode, ne euer day did rest.

But turne we now to noble Artegall;
Who hauing left Mercilla, streight way went
On his first quest, the which him forth did call,
To weet to worke Irenaes franchisement,
And eke Grantortoes worthy punishment.
So forth he fared as his manner was,
With onely Talus wayting diligent,
Through many perils and much way did pas,
Till nigh vnto the place at length approcht he has.

There as he traueld by the way, he met
An aged wight, wayfaring all alone,
Who through his yeares long since aside had set
The vse of armes, and battell quite forgone:
To whom as he approcht, he knew anone,
That it was he which whilome did attend
On faire Irene in her affliction,
When first to Faery court he saw her wend,
Vnto his soueraine Queene her suite for to commend.

Whom by his name saluting, thus he gan;
Haile good Sir Sergis, truest Knight aliue,
Well tride in all thy Ladies troubles than,
When her that Tyrant did of Crowne depriue;
What new ocasion doth thee hither driue,
Whiles she alone is left, and thou here found?
Or is she thrall, or doth she not suruiue?
To whom he thus; She liueth sure and sound;
But by that Tyrant is in wretched thraldome bound.

For she presuming on th'appointed tyde,
In which ye promist, as ye were a Knight,
To meete her at the saluage Ilands syde,
And then and there for triall of her right
With her vnrighteous enemy to fight,
Did thither come, where she afrayd of nought,
By guilefull treason and by subtill slight
Surprized was, and to Grantorto brought,
Who her imprisond hath, and her life often sought.

And now he hath to her prefixt a day,
By which if that no champion doe appeare,
Which will her cause in battailous array
Against him iustifie, and proue her cleare
Of all those crimes, that he gainst her doth reare,
She death shall by. Those tidings sad
Did much abash Sir Artegall to heare,
And griued sore, that through his fault she had
Fallen into that Tyrants hand and vsage bad.

Then thus replide; Now sure and by my life,
Too much am I to blame for that faire Maide,
That haue her drawne to all this troublous strife,
Through promise to afford her timely aide,
Which by default I haue not yet defraide.
But witnesse vnto me, ye heauens, that know
How cleare I am from blame of this vpbraide:
For ye into like thraldome me did throw,
And kept from complishing the faith, which I did owe.

But now aread, Sir Sergis, how long space,
Hath he her lent, a Champion to prouide?
Ten daies (quoth he) he graunted hath of grace,
For that he weeneth well, before that tide
None can haue tidings to assist her side.
For all the shores, which to the sea accoste,
He day and night doth ward both far and wide,
That none can there arriue without an hoste:
So her he deemes already but a damned ghoste.

Now turne againe (Sir Artegall then sayd)
For if I liue till those ten daies haue end,
Assure your selfe, Sir Knight, she shall haue ayd,
Though I this dearest life for her doe spend;
So backward he attone with him did wend.
Tho as they rode together on their way,
A rout of people they before them kend,
Flocking together in confusde array,
As if that there were some tumultuous affray.

To which as they approcht, the cause to know,
They saw a Knight in daungerous distresse
Of a rude rout him chasing to and fro,
That sought with lawlesse powre him to oppresse,
And bring in bondage of their brutishnesse:
And farre away, amid their rakehell bands,
They spide a Lady left all succourlesse,
Crying, and holding vp her wretched hands
To him for aide, who long in vaine their rage with
stands.

Yet still he striues, ne any perill spares,
To reskue her from their rude violence,
And like a Lion wood amongst them fares,
Dealing his dreadfull blowes with large dispence,
Gainst which the pallid death findes no defence.
But all in vaine, their numbers are so great,
That naught may boot to banishe them from thence:
For soone as he their outrage backe doth beat,
They turne afresh, and oft renew their former threat.

And now they doe so sharpely him assay,
That they his shield in peeces battred haue,
And forced him to throw it quite away,
Fro dangers dread his doubtfull life to saue;
Albe that it most safety to him gaue,
And much did magnifie his noble name.
For from the day that he thus did it leaue,
Amongst all Knights he blotted was with blame,
And counted but a recreant Knight, with endles shame.

Whom when they thus distressed did behold,
They drew vnto his aide; but that rude rout
Them also gan assaile with outrage bold,
And forced them, how euer strong and stout
They were, as well approu'd in many a doubt,
Backe to recule; vntill that yron man
With his huge flaile began to lay about;
From whose sterne presence they diffused ran,
Like scattred chaffe, the which the wind away doth
fan.

So when that Knight from perill cleare was freed,
He drawing neare, began to greeete them faire,
And yeeld great thanks for their so goodly deed,
In sauing him from daungerous despaire
Of those, which sought his life for to empaire.
Of whom Sir Artegall gan then enquire
The whole occasion of his late misfare,
And who he was, and what those villaines were,
The which with mortall malice him pursu'd so nere.

To whom he thus; My name is Burbon hight,
Well knowne, and far renommed heretofore,
Vntill late mischief did vpon me light,
That all my former praise hath blemisht sore;
And that faire Lady, which in that vprore
Ye with those caytiues saw, Flourdelis hight,
Is mine owne loue, though me she haue forlore,
Whether withheld from me by wrongfull might,
Or with her owne good will, I cannot read aright.

But sure to me her faith she first did plight,
To be my loue, and take me for her Lord,
Till that a Tyrant, which Grandtorto hight,
With golden giftes and many a guilefull word
Entyced her, to him for to accord.
O who may not with gifts and words be tempted?
Sith which she hath me euer since abhord,
And to my foe hath guilefully consented:
Ay me, that euer guyle in wemen was inuented.

And now he hath this troupe of villains sent,
By open force to fetch her quite away:
Gainst whom my selfe I long in vaine haue bent,
To rescue her, and daily meanes assay,
Yet rescue her thence by no meanes I may:
For they doe me with multitude oppresse,
And with vnequall might doe ouerlay,
That oft I driuen am to great distresse,
And forced to forgoe th'attempt remedillesse.

But why haue ye (said Artegall) forborne
Your owne good shield in daungerous dismay?
That is the greatest shame and foulest scorne,
Which vnto any knight behappen may
To loose the badge, that should his deedes display.
To whom Sir Burbon, blushing halfe for shame,
That shall I vnto you (quoth he) bewray;
Least ye therefore mote happily me blame,
And deeme it doen of will, that through inforcement
came.

True is, that I at first was dubbed knight
By a good knight, the knight of the Redcrosse;
Who when he gaue me armes, in field to fight,
Gaued me a shield, in which he did endosse
His deare Redeemers badge vpon the bosse:
The same longwhile I bore, and therewithall
Fought many battels without wound or losse;
Therewith Grandtorto selfe I did appall,
And made him oftentimes in field before me fall.

But for that many did that shield enuie,
And cruell enemies increased more;
To stint all strife and troublous enmitie,
That bloudie scutchin being battered sore,
I layd aside, and haue of late forbore,
Hoping thereby to haue my loue obtained:
Yet can I not my loue haue nathemore;
For she by force is still fro me detayned,
And with corruptfull brybes is to vntruth mis-trayned.

To whom thus Artegall; Certes Sir knight,
Hard is the case, the which ye doe complaine;
Yet not so hard (for nought so hard may light,
That it to such a streight mote you constraine)
As to abandon, that which doth containe
Your honours stile, that is your warlike shield.
All perill ought be lesse, and lesse all paine
Then losse of fame in disauentrous field;
Dye rather, then doe ought, that mote dishonour yield.

Not so; (quoth he) for yet when time doth serue,
My former shield I may resume againe:
To temporize is not from truth to swerue,
Ne for aduantage terme to entertaine,
When as necessitie doth it constraine.
Fie on such forgerie (said Artegall)
Vnder one hood to shadow faces twaine.
Knights ought be true, and truth is one in all:
Of all things to dissemble fouly may befall.

Yet let me you of courtesie request,
(Said Burbon) to assist me now at need
Against these pesants, which haue me opprest,
And forced me to so infamous deed,
That yet my loue may from their hands be freed.
Sir Artegall, albe he earst did wyte
His wauering mind, yet to his aide agreed,
And buckling him eftsoones vnto the fight,
Did set vpon those troupes with all his powre and
might.

Who flocking round about them, as a swarme
Of flyes vpon a birchen bough doth cluster,
Did them assault with terrible allarme,
And ouer all the fields themselues did muster,
With bils and glayues making a dreadfull luster;
That forst at first those knights backe to retyre:
As when the wrathfull Boreas doth bluster,
Nought may abide the tempest of his yre,
Both man and beast doe fly, and succour doe inquiryre.

But when as ouerblowen was that brunt,
Those knights began a fresh them to assayle,
And all about the fields like Squirrels hunt;
But chiefly Talus with his yron flayle,
Gainst which no flight nor rescue mote auayle,
Made cruell hauocke of the baser crew,
And chaced them both ouer hill and dale:
The raskall manie soone they ouerthrew,
But the two knights themselues their captains did
subdew.

At last they came whereas that Ladie bode,
Whom now her keepers had forsaken quight,
To saue themselues, and scattered were abroad:
Her halfe dismayd they found in doubtfull plight,
As neither glad nor sorie for their sight;
Yet wondrous faire she was, and richly clad
In roiall robes, and many Iewels dight,
But that those villens through their vsage bad
Them fouly rent, and shamefully defaced had.

But Burbon streight dismounting from his steed,
Vnto her ran with greedie great desyre,
And catching her fast by her ragged weed,
Would haue embraced her with hart entyre.
But she backstarting with disdainefull yre,
Bad him auaunt, ne would vnto his lore
Allured be, for prayer nor for meed.
Whom when those knights so froward and forlore
Beheld, they her rebuked and vpbrayded sore.

Sayd Artegall; What foule disgrace is this,
To so faire Ladie, as ye seeme in sight,
To blot your beautie, that vnblemisht is,
With so foule blame, as breach of faith once plight,
Or change of loue for any worlds delight?
Is ought on earth so pretious or deare,
As prayse and honour? Or is ought so bright
And beautifull, as glories beames appeare,
Whose goodly light then Phebus lampe doth shine more cleare?

Why then will ye, fond Dame, attempted bee
Vnto a strangers loue so lightly placed,
For guiftes of gold, or any worldly glee,
To leaue the loue, that ye before embraced,
And let your fame with falshood be defaced?
Fie on the pelfe, for which good name is sold,
And honour with indignitie debased:
Dearer is loue then life, and fame then gold;
But dearer then th' both, your faith once plighted hold.

Much was the Ladie in her gentle mind
Abasht at his rebuke, that bit her neare,
Ne ought to answere thereunto did find;
But hanging downe her head with heauie cheare,
Stood long amaz'd, as she amated weare.
Which Burbon seeing, her againe assayd,
And clasping twixt his armes, her vp did reare
Vpon his steede, whiles she no whit gainesayd,
So bore her quite away, nor well nor ill apayd.

Nathlesse the yron man did still pursew
That raskall many with vnpittied spoyle;
Ne ceased not, till all their scattred crew
Into the sea he droue quite from that soyle,
The which they troubled had with great turmoyle.
But Artegall seeing his cruell deed,
Commaunded him from slaughter to recoyle,
And to his voyage gan againe proceed:
For that the terme approaching fast, required speed.

Canto XII.

Artegall doth Sir Burbon aide,
And blames for changing shield:
He with the great Grantorto fights,
And slaieth him in field.

O sacred hunger of ambitious mindes,
And impotent desire of men to raine,
Whom neither dread of God, that deuils bindes,
Nor lawes of men, that common weales containe,
Nor bands of nature, that wilde beastes restraine,
Can keepe from outrage, and from doing wrong,
Where they may hope a kingdome to obtaine.
No faith so firme, no trust can be so strong,
No loue so lasting then, that may endure long.

Witnesse may Burbon be, whom all the bands,
Which may a Knight assure, had surely bound,
Vntill the loue of Lordship and of lands
Made him become most faithlesse and vnsound:
And witnesse be Gerioneo found,
Who for like cause faire Belge did oppresse,
And right and wrong most cruelly confound:
And so be now Grantorto, who no lesse
Then all the rest burst out to all outragiousnesse.

Gainst whom Sir Artgall, long hauing since
Taken in hand th'exploit, being theretoo
Appointed by that mightie Faerie Prince,
Great Gloriane, that Tyrant to fordoo,
Through other great aduentures hethertoo
Had it forsackt. But now time drawing ny,
To him assynd, her high beheast to doo,
To the sea shore he gan his way apply,
To weete if shipping readie he mote there descry.

Tho when they came to the sea coast, they found
A ship all readie (as good fortune fell)
To put to sea, with whom they did compound,
To passe them ouer, where them list to tell:
The winde and weather serued them so well,
That in one day they with the coast did fall;
Whereas they readie found them to repell,
Great hostes of men in order martiall,
Which them forbad to land, and footing did forstall.

But nathemore would they from land refraine,
But when as nigh vnto the shore they drew,
That foot of man might sound the bottome plaine,
Talus into the sea did forth issew,
Though darts from shore and stones they at him threw;
And wading through the waues with stedfast sway,
Maugre the might of all those troupes in vew,
Did win the shore, whence he them chast away,
And made to fly, like doues, whom the Eagle doth
affray.

The whyles Sir Artegal, with that old knight
Did forth descend, there being none them neare,
And forward marched to a towne in sight.
By this came tydings to the Tyrants eare,
By those, which earst did fly away for feare
Of their arriuall: wherewith troubled sore,
He all his forces streight to him did reare,
And forth issuing with his scouts afore,
Meant them to haue incountred, ere they left the
shore.

But ere he marched farre, he with them met,
And fiercely charged them with all his force;
But Talus sternely did vpon them set,
And brusht, and battred them without remorse,
That on the ground he left full many a corse;
Ne any able was him to withstand,
But he them ouerthrew both man and horse,
That they lay scattred ouer all the land,
As thicke as doth the seede after the sowers hand;

Till Artegall him seeing so to rage,
Willd him to stay, and signe of truce did make:
To which all harkning, did a while asswage
Their forces furie, and their terror slake;
Till he an Herauld cald, and to him spake,
Willing him wend vnto the Tyrant streight,
And tell him that not for such slaughters sake
He thether came, but for to trie the right
Of fayre Irenas cause with him in single fight.

And willed him for to reclayme with speed
His scattred people, ere they all were slaine,
And time and place conuenient to areed,
In which they two the combat might darraine.
Which message when Grantorto heard, full fayne
And glad he was the slaughter so to stay,
And pointed for the combat twixt them twayne
The morrow next, ne gaue him longer day;
So sounded the retraite, and drew his folke away.

That night Sir Artegall did cause his tent
There to be pitched on the open plaine;
For he had giuen streight commaundement,
That none should dare him once to entertaine:
Which none durst breake, though many would right
faine
For fayre Irena, whom they loued deare.
But yet old Sergis did so well him paine,
That from close friends, that dar'd not to appeare,
He all things did puruay, which for them needfull weare.

The morrow next, that was the dismall day,
Appointed for Irenas death before,
So soone as it did to the world display
His chearefull face, and light to men restore,
The heauy Mayd, to whom none tydings bore
Of Artegals arryuall, her to free,
Lookt vp with eyes full sad and hart full sore;
Weening her lifes last howre then neare to bee,
Sith no redemption nigh she did nor heare nor see.

Then vp she rose, and on her selfe did dight
Most squalid garments, fit for such a day,
And with dull countenance, and with doleful spright,
She forth was brought in sorrowfull dismay,
For to receiue the doome of her decay.
But comming to the place, and finding there
Sir Artegall, in battailous array
Wayting his foe, it did her dead hart cheare,
And new life to her lent, in midst of deadly feare.

Like as a tender Rose in open plaine,
That with vntimely drought nigh withered was,
And hung the head, soone as few drops of raine
Thereon distill, and deaw her daintie face,
Gins to looke vp, and with fresh wonted grace
Dispreds the glorie of her leaues gay;
Such was Irenas countenance, such her case,
When Artegall she saw in that array,
There wayting for the Tyrant, till it was farre day.

Who came at length, with proud presumptuous gate,
Into the field, as if he fearelesse were,
All armed in a cote of yron plate,
Of great defence to ward the deadly feare,
And on his head a steele cap he did weare
Of colour rustie browne, but sure and strong;
And in his hand an huge Polaxe did beare,
Whose steale was yron studded, but not long,
With which he wont to fight, to iustifie his wrong.

Of stature huge and hideous he was,
Like to a Giant for his monstrous hight,
And did in strength most sorts of men surpas,
Ne euer any found his match in might;
Thereto he had great skill in single fight:
His face was vgly, and his countenance sterne,
That could haue frayd one with the very sight,
And gaped like a gulfe, when he did gerne,
That whether man or monster one could scarce discern.

Soone as he did within the listes appeare,
With dreadfull looke he Artegall beheld,
As if he would haue daunted him with feare,
And grinning griesly, did against him weld
His deadly weapon, which in hand he held.
But th'Elfin swayne, that oft had seene like sight,
Was with his ghastly count'nance nothing queld,
But gan him streight to buckle to the fight,
And cast his shield about, to be in readie plight.

The trumpets sound, and they together goe,
With dreadfull terror, and with fell intent;
And their huge strokes full daungerously bestow,
To doe most dammage, where as most they ment.
But with such force and furie violent,
The tyrant thundred his thicke blowes so fast,
That through the yron walles their way they rent,
And euen to the vitall parts they past,
Ne ought could them endure, but all they cleft or
brast.

Which cruell outrage when as Artegall
Did well auize, thenceforth with warie heed
He shund his strokes, where euer they did fall,
And way did giue vnto their gracelesse speed:
As when a skilfull Marriner doth reed
A storme approaching, that doth perill threat,
He will not bide the daunger of such dread,
But strikes his sayles, and vereth his mainsheat,
And lends vnto it leaue the emptie ayre to beat.

So did the Faerie knight himselfe abeare,
And stouped oft his head from shame to shield;
No shame to stoupe, ones head more high to reare,
And much to gaine, a litle for to yield;
So stoutest knights doen oftentimes in field.
But still the tyrant sternely at him layd,
And did his yron axe so nimble wield,
That many wounds into his flesh it made,
And with his burdenous blowes him sore did ouerlade.

Yet when as fit aduantage he did spy,
The whiles the cursed felon high did reare
His cruell hand, to smite him mortally,
Vnder his stroke he to him stepping neare,
Right in the flanke him strooke with deadly dreare,
That the gore bloud thence gushing grieuously,
Did vnderneath him like a pond appeare,
And all his armour did with purple dye;
Thereat he brayed loud, and yelled dreadfully.

Yet the huge stroke, which he before intended,
Kept on his course, as he did it direct,
And with such monstrous poise adowne descended,
That seemed nought could him from death protect:
But he it well did ward with wise respect,
And twixt him and the blow his shield did cast,
Which thereon seizing, tooke no great effect;
But byting deepe therein did sticke so fast,
That by no meanes it backe againe he forth could
wrast.

Long while he tug'd and stroue, to get it out,
And all his powre applyed thereunto,
That he therewith the knight drew all about:
Nathlesse, for all that euer he could doe,
His axe he could not from his shield vndoe.
Which Artegall perceiuing, strooke no more,
But loosing soone his shield, did it forgoe,
And whiles he combred was therewith so sore,
He gan at him let driue more fiercely then afore.

So well he him pursew'd, that at the last,
He stroke him with Chrysaor on the hed,
That with the souse thereof full sore aghast,
He staggered to and fro in doubtfull sted.
Againe whiles he him saw so ill bested,
He did him smite with all his might and maine,
That falling on his mother earth he fed:
Whom when he saw prostrated on the plaine,
He lightly reft his head, to ease him of his paine.

Which when the people round about him saw,
They shouted all for ioy of his successe,
Glad to be quit from that proud Tyrants awe,
Which with strong powre did them long time oppresse;
And running all with greedie ioyfulnessse
To faire Irena, at her feet did fall,
And her adored with due humblenesse,
As their true Liege and Princesse naturall;
And eke her champions glorie sounded ouer all.

Who streight her leading with meete maiestie
Vnto the pallace, where their kings did rayne,
Did her therein establish peaceable,
And to her kingdomes seat restore agayne;
And all such persons, as did late maintayne
That Tyrants part, with close or open ayde,
He sorely punished with heauie payne;
That in short space, whiles there with her he stayd,
Not one was left, that durst her once haue disobayd.

During which time, that he did there remaine,
His studie was true Iustice how to deale,
And day and night employ'd his busie paine
How to reforme that ragged common-weale:
And that same yron man which could reueale
All hidden crimes, through all that realme he sent,
To search out those, that vsd to rob and steale,
Or did rebell gainst lawfull government;
On whom he did inflict most grieuous punishment.

But ere he could reforme it thoroughly,
He through occasion called was away,
To Faerie Court, that of necessity
His course of Iustice he was forst to stay,
And Talus to reuoke from the right way,
In which he was that Realme for to redresse.
But enuies cloud still dimmeth vertues ray.
So hauing freed Irena from distresse,
He tooke his leaue of her, there left in heuinesse.

Tho as he backe returned from that land,
And there arriu'd againe, whence forth he set,
He had not passed farre vpon the strand,
When as two old ill fauour'd Hags he met,
By the way side being together set,
Two griesly creatures; and, to that their faces
Most foule and filthie were, their garments yet
Being all rag'd and tatter'd, their disgraces
Did much the more augment, and made most vgly
cases.

The one of them, that elder did appeare,
With her dull eyes did seeme to looke askew,
That her mis-shape much helpt; and her foule heare
Hung loose and loathsomely: Thereto her hew
Was wan and leane, that all her teeth arew,
And all her bones might through her cheekes be red;
Her lips were like raw lether, pale and blew,
And as she spake, therewith she slauered;
Yet spake she seldom, but thought more, the lesse she sed.

Her hands were foule and durtie, neuer washt
In all her life, with long nayles ouer raught,
Like puttocks clawes: with th'one of which she scracht
Her cursed head, although it itched naught;
The other held a snake with venime fraught,
On which she fed, and gnawed hungrily,
As if that long she had not eaten ought;
That round about her iawes one might descry
The bloudie gore and poyson dropping lothsomely.

Her name was Enuie, knowen well thereby;
Whose nature is to grieue, and grudge at all,
That euer she sees doen prays-worthily,
Whose sight to her is greatest crosse, may fall,
And vexeth so, that makes her eat her gall.
For when she wanteth other thing to eat,
She feedes on her owne maw vnnaturall,
And of her owne foule entrayles makes her meat;
Meat fit for such a monsters monstrous dyeat.

And if she hapt of any good to heare,
That had to any happily betid,
Then would she inly fret, and grieue, and teare
Her flesh for felnesse, which she inward hid:
But if she heard of ill, that any did,
Or harme, that any had, then would she make
Great cheare, like one vnto a banquet bid;
And in anothers losse great pleasure take,
As she had got thereby, and gayned a great stake.

The other nothing better was, then shee;
Agreeing in bad will and cancred kynd,
But in bad maner they did disagree:
For what so Enuie good or bad did fynd,
She did conceale, and murder her owne mynd;
But this, what euer euill she conceiued,
Did spread abroad, and throw in th'open wynd.
Yet this in all her words might be perceiued,
That all she sought, was mens good name to haue
bereaued.

For what soeuer good by any sayd,
Or doen she heard, she would streightwayes inuent,
How to depraue, or slaunderously vpbrayd,
Or to misconstrue of a mans intent,
And turne to ill the thing, that well was ment.
Therefore she vsed often to resort,
To common haunts, and companies frequent,
To hearke what any one did good report,
To blot the same with blame, or wrest in wicked sort.

And if that any ill she heard of any,
She would it eeke, and make much worse by telling,
And take great ioy to publish it to many,
That euery matter worse was for her melling,
Her name was hight Detraction, and her dwelling
Was neare to Enuie, euen her neighbour next;
A wicked hag, and Enuy selfe excelling
In mischief: for her selfe she onely vext;
But this same both her selfe, and others eke perplext.

Her face was vgly, and her mouth distort,
Foming with poyson round about her gils,
In which her cursed tongue full sharpe and short
Appear'd like Aspiss sting, that closely kills,
Or cruelly does wound, whom so she wils:
A distaffe in her other hand she had,
Vpon the which she litle spinnes, but spils,
And faynes to weaue false tales and leasings bad,
To throw amongst the good, which others had disprad.

These two now had themselues combynd in one,
And linckt together gainst Sir Artegall,
For whom they wayted as his mortall fone,
How they might make him into mischief fall,
For freeing from their snares Irena thrall:
Besides vnto themselues they gotten had
A monster, which the Blatant beast men call,
A dreadfull feend of gods and men ydrad,
Whom they by slights allur'd, and to their purpose lad.

Such were these Hags, and so vnhandsome drest:
Who when they nigh approaching, had espyde
Sir Artegall return'd from his late quest,
They both arose, and at him loudly cryde,
As it had bene two shepheards cures, had scryde
A rauenous Wolfe amongst the scattered flockes.
And Enuie first, as she that first him eyde,
Towardes him runs, and with rude flaring lockes
About her eares, does beat her brest, & forehead
knockes.

Then from her mouth the gobbet she does take,
The which whyleare she was so greedily
Deuouring, euen that halfe-gnawen snake,
And at him throwes it most despightfully.
The cursed Serpent, though she hungrily
Earst chawd thereon, yet was not all so dead,
But that some life remayned secretly,
And as he past afore withouten dread,
Bit him behind, that long the marke was to be read.

Then th'other comming neare, gan him reuile,
And fouly rayle, with all she could inuent;
Saying, that he had with vnmanly guile,
And foule abusion both his honour blent,
And that bright sword, the sword of Iustice lent,
Had stayned with reprochfull crueltie,
In guiltlesse blood of many an innocent:
As for Grandtorto, him with treacherie
And traynes hauing surpriz'd, he fouly did to die.

There to the Blatant beast by them set on
At him began aloud to barke and bay,
With bitter rage and fell contention,
That all the woods and rockes nigh to that way,
Began to quake and tremble with dismay;
And all the aire rebellowed againe.
So dreadfully his hundred tongues did bray,
And euermore those hags them selues did paine,
To sharpen him, and their owne cursed tongs did
 straine.

And still among most bitter wordes they spake,
Most shamefull, most vnrighteous, most vntrew,
That they the mildest man aliue would make
Forget his patience, and yeeld vengeance dew
To her, that so false sclaunders at him threw.
And more to make th' pierce & wound more deepe,
She with the sting, which in her vile tongue grew,
Did sharpen them, and in fresh poyson steepe:
Yet he past on, and seem'd of them to take no keepe.

But Talus hearing her so lewdly raile,
And speake so ill of him, that well deserued,
Would her haue chastiz'd with his yron flaile,
If her Sir Artegall had not preserued,
And him forbidden, who his heast obserued.
So much the more at him still did she scold,
And stones did cast, yet he for nought would swerue
From his right course, but still the way did hold
To Faery Court, where what him fell shall else be told.

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