

THE FAERIE
QUEENE.

Disposed into twelue bookes,
Fashioning
XII. Morall vertues.

LONDON
Printed for VVilliam Ponsonbie.
1596.

TO
THE MOST HIGH,
MIGHTIE
And
MAGNIFICENT
EMPRESSE RENOVV-
MED FOR PIETIE, VER-
TVE, AND ALL GRATIOVS
GOVERNMENT ELIZABETH BY
THE GRACE OF GOD QVEENE
OF ENGLAND FRAVNCE AND
IRELAND AND OF VIRGI-
NIA, DEFENDOVR OF THE
FAITH, &c. HER MOST
HVMBLE SERVAVNT
EDMVND SPENSER
DOTH IN ALL HV-
MILITIE DEDI-
CATE, PRE-
SENT
AND CONSECRATE THESE
HIS LABOVRS TO LIVE
VVITH THE ETERNI-
TIE OF HER
FAME.

THE FIRST
BOOKE OF THE
FAERIE QVEENE.

Contayning

THE LEGENDE OF THE
KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSSE,
OR
OF HOLINESSE.

[1]

LO I THE MAN, whose Muse whilome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shepherds weeds,
Am now enforst a far vnfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
Whose prayes hauing slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broad emongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres, and faithfull loues shall moralize my song.

[2]

Helpe then, ô holy Virgin chiefe of nine,
Thy weaker Nouice to performe thy will,
Lay forth out of thine euerlasting scryne
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Færie knights, and fairest *Tanaquill*,
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his vnderued wrong:
O helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong.

[3]

And thou most dreaded impe of highest *Ioue*,
Faire *Venus* sonne, that with thy cruell dart
At that good knight so cunningly didst roue,
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart,
Lay now thy deadly Heben bow apart,
And with thy mother milde come to mine ayde:

Come both, and with you bring triumphant *Mart*,
In lous and gentle iollities arrayd,
After his murtherous spoiles and bloody rage allayd.

[4]

And with them eke, ô Goddesses heavenly bright,
Mirrour of grace and Maiestie diuine,
Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light
Like *Phoebus* lampe throughout the world doth shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughts too humble and too vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted stile:
The which to heare, vouchsafe, ô dearest dred a-while.

[Original content ©2018 by Dirk Jol.]